

# **LWVTN OPERATING POLICIES**

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

These policies along with the adopted bylaws of the League of Women Voters of Tennessee govern how the LWVTN conducts its business as well as how it relates to the local leagues in Tennessee. Future changes to these policies as approved by the State Board, shall be sent to local presidents and State Board members.

The principal office of the LWVTN is in Nashville, though it may be changed as the Board of Directors of the LWVTN determines is in the best interest of the organization. The Board of Directors may approve a cost sharing arrangement with the LWV Nashville for office expenses including office rent, administrative services, supplies, equipment, telephone, storage facilities, etc.

## **2.0 STATE BOARD**

**A. Political Policy (Nonpartisan Policy):** At the first board meeting of each fiscal year, the LWVTN board will review the approved nonpartisan policy. State Board members may participate in limited political activity: vote in primaries, attend and vote in caucuses/primaries and make financial contributions. The protection of the League's nonpartisanship should be the primary consideration. The president, voter service chair, action chair and any board member involved in fund raising should refrain from visible partisan activity. Board members should not post comments supporting or opposing candidates on Facebook or other social media. Persons holding sensitive League positions should be urged to resign before working in a political campaign; at the President's discretion, a leave of absence may be granted to a state board member participating in election activities that may be viewed as partisan. In addition, any league lobbyist or LWV action committee member should exercise extreme caution in allowing any legislator, lobbyist or other outside organization to pay for any meals or other expenses.

**B. Public Relations:** The State President is the official spokesperson for the League of Women Voters of Tennessee. Official statements shall be made for the League by the President or someone authorized by the President. The President may delegate this authority on a case by case basis. The President receives and approves all written material that is published, distributed, or posted online or in social media in the name of the League. (Exceptions: Thank you notes and routine correspondence.)

**C. Contracts and Agreements:** No contract or agreement shall be consummated in the name of the LWVTN unless authorized by the Board of Directors or, if necessary, the Executive Committee. The President may enter into routine contracts without Board authorization after consultation with the Executive Committee. This applies to both contracts for services or other purchases as well as coalition agreements.

**D. Board Meetings:** Board members shall attend meetings of the State Board except in case of

emergency. In such case, the Board members shall notify the President. Each Board member shall submit a report as background information for Board decisions to be included in the Board agenda.

**E. Board Responsibility:** Where feasible, Board members should have a portfolio and should be encouraged to have a statewide off-Board committee.

**F. State Board Expenses:** Expenses to meetings (Board meetings, Fall Conference, State Council and Convention) will be paid according to LWVTN reimbursement rates.

**G. Board Member Files:** At the expiration of the term of office or upon resignation, each State Board member shall turn in complete files including notebook, leadership and program material, supplies and equipment.

**H. Communications with Local Leagues:** State board members are encouraged to be active in their local leagues and to serve as both a formal and informal liaison to local leagues as requested. At a minimum this should include copying the local league Presidents on important LWVTN league board communications and minutes if a separate communication is not prepared for the local league Presidents.

**I. Budget:** If it should become necessary to adjust the State budget, the president, treasurer and 1st Vice President shall propose any changes and present them to the next Board meeting for adoption. Board members shall submit their estimated budget needs to the budget committee prior to the Fall Board Meeting. The budget should be presented at the January State Board Meeting.

**J. National Publications:** State Board members seeking reimbursement for publications ordered from the National Office must have prior approval of the State President or state board.

**K. National Convention and Council:** The registration fee will be paid for at least two state Board delegates, and travel and lodging costs to the extent the budget allows. If the Board decides to send more than two delegates, the delegates will divide the budgeted funds and each delegate will pay a part of the expenses.

**L. Membership List:** We will not share our membership list.

**M. Board Member reimbursement:** Board members will attend all LWVTN sponsored meetings without charge. In addition, in accordance with the reimbursement policy, board members will be reimbursed for attendance at board meetings, other state meetings and for travel related to their LWVTN Board role as provided for in the budget and approved by the President. If preferred, the board member may cover these expenses personally and report them to the Treasurer as in-kind donations.

### **3.0 STATE MEETINGS**

**A. State Convention or Council:** The State Board shall determine the date, place and time of the Convention or Council:

- In September of the year preceding the Convention or Council, the State Board will form a Steering Committee. The committee should consist of members appointed by the president, one of whom shall serve as chair, and members of the host local League. The state members of the Steering Committee are responsible for the preparation, with the advice and consent of the president, of the Call to Convention/Council, the conduct of business by the Convention/Council.
- A registration fee shall be paid by each delegate, League member and visitor attending the Convention/Council. It should be as low as possible to encourage attendance.

**B. Other State Meetings:** The State Board shall determine the type, time, place, date and fees of all State Meetings (Fall Conference, Legislative Days and workshops). The State president shall designate a State Board member to coordinate the program and/or conduct the business. Detailed information shall be sent to each local League in advance. The schedule of events and a registration form for these events including Fall Conference and Legislative Day will be put in the TN Voter and on the website so that every member is notified. A registration fee should be determined to cover all necessary costs, excluding state Board member attendance.

#### **4.0 STATE PUBLICATIONS**

**A. Reading Committee:** Any material to be published by the State Board and distributed to the public shall be reviewed by a reading committee. The reading committee shall be appointed by the president and may include Board and off-Board persons. A minimum of three outside experts in the field should read and comment on the draft copy of any study or major report.

**C. Leadership Publications:** One copy of the LWVTN Yearbook will be sent to each local League and State Unit when published. One copy will be sent to each state Board member. Additional copies will be available as a PDF.

#### **5.0 LOCAL LEAGUES**

**A. Communication:** Local leagues are encouraged to stay in communication with the LWVTN President and their liaison on the state board. At a minimum this should include copying the President and any state board liaison on any local league board and member communications.

**B. Local League Annual Meetings:** Local Leagues shall forward a copy of their annual meeting minutes to the state president and other officers. Copies of local Voters should go to the state board.

**C. Local League Bylaws:** Local Leagues must ensure their current bylaws are provided to LWVTN (web access is acceptable).

**D. Local League Filings:** Local Leagues will provide LWVTN with proof of filing their annual IRS Form 990 (postcard form) and, if applicable, their state charitable solicitation permit or exemption request..

**E. Calculation of Local League Membership:** Local League membership numbers for purposes of Per Member Payment (PMP) calculation shall be the numbers reported on the online database submitted to LWVUS each January. When calculating PMP amounts, the LWVTN will follow the same policy as the LWVUS regarding what to charge for household members.

**F. State Units:**

- A minimum of 8 statewide members in the same geographic area are required to form a state unit.
- Minimum dues for statewide members shall be \$40.00. Dues are set by the State Board and reviewed annually in conjunction with preparation of the budget
- Each newly organized State Unit shall receive \$100 from the LWVTN operating fund as initial operating funds. The Unit will receive a dues rebate of \$5 for each member renewing for a second year in the Unit.
- The advisor to a State Unit should attend as many board meetings as possible.
- The LWVTN shall furnish organizing State Units with basic League publications.
- Action by a State Unit based on a national or state position can be taken only with the approval of the State Board, upon recommendation of the advisor

**6.0 CONSENSUS ON STATE OR NATIONAL STUDIES**

**A. Local League role:** Local Leagues, if at all possible, should schedule at least one information meeting prior to when the consensus or membership agreement is to be sought. The State resource committee will furnish the local League resource committee with consensus questions, bibliographies, and other resource materials, as appropriate, to assist in bringing State study items to a successful conclusion. At the conclusion of study and consensus meetings the local League board shall determine whether or not member agreement has been achieved, evaluate and consolidate the consensus report, and forward the report to the State office within the deadline set. The report shall include a statement answering the following questions:

- Was there a continuing resource committee? How many and what type of meetings were held?
- How was material and information disseminated to the general membership?
- How many members participated in the consensus report?

The local League report of a State consensus should not be published in the local VOTER or be distributed to the local membership in any way.

**B. LWVTN role:** The local consensus reports will be evaluated along with the consensus reports submitted by other participating Leagues. The consensus report of any individual League may or may not be in total agreement with the position statements as determined by the State Board. Individual League reports will not be published by either the local leagues or the state league. The State president will appoint a three-to-five person committee that includes the State item chair to review the local League responses and draft, sign and date the final report for approval

by the State Board. Consensus will have been achieved if there is agreement by a majority of local League representing a majority of the statewide membership as of January 1. The statement of position will be approved and announced by the State Board.

## **7.0 FINANCIAL**

**A. Reimbursement:** Requests for reimbursement must include documentation (receipts) of the expenses. Bills for reimbursement must be submitted within 60 days of incurring the expense.

**B. Travel Reimbursement:** If in the budget and/or approved by the LWVTN President, travel reimbursement rates:

Out of Town

- Car - 20 cents per mile between cities
- Parking expense when on League business.
- Other travel - least expensive transportation should be used. With the President's permission, tourist class air transportation may be used if less expensive, or when League considerations justify the added expense.
- Room (for LWV functions) Minimum rates at hotels should be secured. If separate accommodations are desired, the difference should be paid by the Board member.
- Meals - per diem allowed for in-state travel--\$30.00.
- League-sponsored luncheon or dinner will be paid, regardless of cost.
- Reasonable out-of-state meal expenses will be paid

Local Travel

- When a Board or Off-Board person is on authorized League business, taxi or public transportation expenses will be paid.

**C. LWVTN Convention and Council Expenses Covered:** The Convention and Council registration fee and expenses of the following shall be paid from LWVTN general funds: all current Board members, the budget, nominating and bylaws chairs. Expenses for the president-elect for pre-Convention Board meetings as well as Convention and Council registration fees and expenses shall be paid from the general funds. When a Board Member-Elect is also a local League delegate, the registration expense shall be shared with the local League. Local Leagues should be encouraged to have State Board Members-elect as members of their local delegations. Otherwise, the Board Member-Elect cannot speak on the floor. If the Board Member-Elect is not a delegate of the local League, the LWVTN general fund will pay for the full expenses.

**D. Insurance:** The LWVTN shall maintain a liability policy that covers the state league and all the local leagues in the state. Local leagues may obtain certificates of coverage for events requiring them. Local leagues will contact the insurance agent to obtain the certificate and also notify the LWVTN treasurer of their request. If the local league event meets the criteria for

Education Fund projects, LWVTN Education Fund monies shall be used to cover the certificate cost. If not, the local league will be responsible for the cost.

**E. Recordkeeping:** Bills, receipts and bank statements may be destroyed when they are five years old.

Revised: May 3, 2013

Amended: State Board Meetings, August 10, 2014; October 18, 2014; July 23, 2016, July 15, 2017; July 28, 2018

## **GUIDELINES FOR LOCAL LEAGUE ACTION UNDER STATE POSITIONS**

**A. State Level:** The state League will continue to follow legislation in the General Assembly, implementation by the Executive Branch, and the interpretation by the Judiciary. The state League will take action on appropriate legislation and implementation when they fall within the state position and will notify members when it is “time for action.”

Local Leagues are expected to respond to Action Alerts except when local Leagues are not in support of this position and should then inform state that no action will be taken.

Local Leagues are urged to have at least one member participate on the state action committee.

If a local league wishes to take action at the *state level*, it shall obtain permission of the State President and Action Chair.

**B. Local Level:** Leagues may take local governmental action under a state position without requesting specific permission from the State Board *if the contemplated action falls within the state position, is based on criteria to which leagues have agreed state-wide, and is authorized by the local League Board*. Refer to “Working Together to Influence Public Policy” (League Basics, pages 14 & 15)

**C. Lawsuits:** No local League shall enter into a lawsuit without the permission of the state League.