



League of Women Voters of Licking County
Guidelines and Procedures

MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK

Democracy is Not a Spectator Sport...Get Involved!

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League of Women Voters of Licking County

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Vision

The League of Women Voters of Licking County (LWVLC), a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

The goal of the LWVLC is to empower the citizens of Licking County, Ohio to shape better communities locally, regionally, and nationally.

The LWVLC is a nonpartisan political membership organization, which:

- ❖ **Acts** after study and member agreement to achieve solutions in the public interest on key community issues at all government levels.
- ❖ **Builds** citizen participation in the democratic process.
- ❖ **Engages** communities in promoting positive solutions to public policy issues through education and advocacy.

Beliefs and Core Values

We believe in:

- ❖ **Respect** for individuals.
- ❖ The **value** of diversity.
- ❖ The **empowerment** of the grassroots, both within the League and in communities.
- ❖ The power of **collective decision-making** for the common good.
- ❖ The strength of **grassroots initiatives and consensus building**.
- ❖ Modeling **the principles of good governance in our organization**.
- ❖ **Providing citizens with the knowledge**, as well as the ability and will to act.
- ❖ The **interdependence** of the rights of citizens at home and abroad.

We will:

- ❖ Consider and prepare well before taking action.
- ❖ Act with trust, integrity and professionalism.
- ❖ Operate in an open and effective manner to meet the needs of those we serve, both members and the public.
- ❖ Take the initiative in seeking diversity in membership.
- ❖ Acknowledge our heritage as we seek our path to the future.

Adapted from LWVUS

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Nonpartisan Policy Statement

Although the League of Women Voters of Licking County (LWVLC) routinely studies, comments and takes action with respect to governmental issues, measures, and policies, it does not support or oppose any political party or any candidate. Communication with an official or a candidate, when identifying oneself as a LWVLC Board member, should reflect established LWV positions. Members may act in the name of the LWVLC only when authorized to do so by the Officers and Board of Directors. At such times, they act only in conformity with, and not contrary to, a position taken by the LWVLC, the LWVO, and the LWVUS.

The LWVLC values and relies upon the many skills and types of experience that individual board members bring to the League, including those acquired in public life through elective or appointive office. Involvement in public and political activities is encouraged by the LWV for all citizens.

The protection of the nonpartisan policy is critical. Therefore, due to the visibility of the President and certain others, additional guidelines apply. The President and the chairs of Voter Education and Membership will refrain from seeking or holding political office, participating publicly in political campaigns, including the circulation of candidate petitions or the display of campaign materials. They may sign petitions, attend campaign events, and support candidates, if done so discreetly and in a private capacity. Additionally, these individuals shall not indicate their political affiliations or candidate preferences at any level of government in the media, nor on social networking sites or other public venues that also prominently identify the individual as a member of the LWVLC Board.

Members of the LWVLC Board may serve on other boards, except where a requirement for such service is affiliation with a particular political party.

In order to balance these goals, this policy will be reviewed annually.

Social Media

Our values and beliefs guide our programs, policies, and communications. This includes respect for individuals, the importance of diversity, and the significance of remaining non-partisan. The Board of the League of Women Voters of Licking County reserves the right to remove posts or comments that in the Board's judgment are unwarranted according to these values and beliefs. Such a judgment can apply but is not restricted to comments that offend community standards of civil, informative, and non-partisan discourse.

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Conflict of Interest

If Board members of the LWVLC have an interest in a proposed League transaction that may result in a personal gain for that Board member or for their immediate family or that may result in a benefit to another organization to which they have an allegiance, they must make full disclosure of such interest before any discussion or negotiation of such transaction. The minutes of the meeting shall reflect that the conflict of interest was disclosed and that the interested person was not present during a vote on the matter.

Diversity and Inclusion

The LWVLC is committed to diversity and inclusion. There shall be no barriers to participation in any activity of the LWVLC on the basis of gender, gender expression, gender identity, race, ethnicity, political or religious beliefs, age, sexual orientation, national origin, citizenship, disability or socio-economic status.

The LWVLC is committed to actively pursuing diverse perspectives as important and necessary for responsible and representative decision making. The LWVLC believes that this inclusiveness enhances the organization's ability to respond effectively to changing conditions and needs.

The LWVLC is committed to reflecting the diversity of Licking County in its Board, membership, and programs by intentionally fostering an inclusive environment.

Program Adoption

The Annual Meeting shall act upon the Program using the following procedures:

- a) The Leadership team shall solicit input from members prior to the Annual Meeting.
- b) The Board of Directors shall consider the recommendations sent in by the voting members and shall formulate a proposed Program.
- c) The proposed Program shall be sent to all members two weeks before the Annual Meeting.
- d) A majority vote of members present, qualified to vote, and voting at the Annual Meeting shall be required for adoption of subjects in the proposed Program as presented to the Annual Meeting by the Board of Directors.
- e) Recommendations for Program items submitted by voting members prior to the Annual Meeting but not recommended by the Board of Directors may be considered during the

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- Annual Meeting provided that: (1) the Annual Meeting shall order consideration by a majority vote, and (2) the Annual Meeting shall adopt the item by a two-thirds vote.
- f) Changes in the Program, in case of altered conditions, may be made provided that: (1) information concerning the proposed changes has been sent to all members at least two weeks prior to a general membership meeting at which the change is to be discussed, and (2) final action by the membership is taken at a succeeding meeting.
 - g) The adopted Program will be posted on the LWVLC website following the Annual Meeting.

Meeting with Our Ohio Representatives

LWV Ohio provides guidance for meeting or corresponding with our legislative representatives. A key component of creating an atmosphere of trust is building a relationship over time.

All Local Leagues have been encouraged to cultivate these relationships in a purposeful way. Then, when and if there is legislation pending that is in line with LWVLC priorities, we are more likely to know where our representatives stand. We are more likely to have a productive discussion about why we do or do not support the legislation or position as constructed. To that end, the League of Women Voters of Licking County has developed the following approach to create this atmosphere of dialog.

Our annual meeting is held in April. At this meeting, we update members, assess current concerns, and confirm our policies and priorities (our “program”) for the following year. Following this meeting, we can schedule time with our representatives to request input from them on their priorities and how our league can be of support and share with them information about our membership, activities, and priorities.

- a) Meeting objective “Getting to know you.” *
- b) Meeting request to our Senator and Representatives
- c) Meeting request from President or Vice President. Meeting may be in person or remote.
- d) Potential agenda: Plan for approximately 15-20 minutes.
 - o Introductions (should be a small group)
 - o Provide information on the LWVLC (depending on familiarity of the representative with us, this could be history or more current activities).
 - o With awareness of any bills pending that have been sponsored by this representative, ask about the bill’s objective and how it fits in the overall priorities of this representative.

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- o Ask about what other areas of concern does this representative have; is there be a potential for support from the league – in developing awareness, providing education, or requesting action for/ by members.
- o Describe our League’s program for the coming year and our membership’s priorities or concerns.
- o Thank you.
- e) Follow up – with a written thank you, noting any commitments made or follow up information requested.

*Reference and additional information:

<https://www.lwvohio.org/contact-your-legislator>

<https://www.lwvohio.org/advocacy-training>

Membership

The dues of the LWVLC will be set or confirmed at the Annual Meeting and posted on the LWVLC website and membership forms.

This aims to elaborate or clarify the categories of membership as our bylaws define them. The categories listed here reflect how members are classified in the official roster of the LWVUS. All members of LWVLC are voting members and also belong to LWVO and LWVUS; annually, a portion of LWVLC dues is paid to LWVO and LWVUS.

- a) Individual Members. Persons at least 16 years of age who pay annual dues to the LWVLC are voting members. When joining LWVLC, they automatically join the League of Women Voters of Ohio (LWVO) and the League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS).
- b) Household Memberships. When two or more persons reside at the same address in a common household, they may join as a unit and pay dues in common. Within the household, one member is designated as primary and the others as additional. Each household member, whether primary or additional, enjoys voting rights and also belongs to LWVO and LWVUS.
- c) Student Members. Students enrolled full time pay annual dues at a reduced level and enjoy voting rights.
- d) LWVLC has defined the following membership levels.
 - 1. \$5 Student: Available to any full-time student.
 - 2. \$65 Individual: Available to individuals ages 16 and up.

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3. \$100 Household: Two or more people residing at the same address may join as a household, with one member designated as primary and others as additional. Each household member has full voting rights and membership.
 4. Pay what you can: The League of Women Voters for Licking County does not want the cost of dues to be a barrier to membership or involvement and offers a flexible Pay What You Can membership option.
 5. Honorary: Members of the League for 50 years or more are waived from paying annual dues.
- e) Life Members. Members of the League for 50 years or more shall be life members excused from the payment of dues.
- f) Enhanced Support: Support the League's work at the local level with an additional contribution. We recognize these sponsor levels.
1. \$50+ Susan B. Anthony -- Advocate
 2. \$100+ Sojourner Truth – Sustainer
 3. \$250+ Alice Paul – Patron
 4. \$500+ Elizabeth Cady Stanton – Champion

Approved by the Board of Directors, April 16, 2023

LWVLC Leadership

- a) Term Limits: The LWVLC recognizes the importance of leadership continuity. Therefore, no term limits are in force for any elected or appointed position. Officers and members of the Board of Directors shall assume their roles following the Annual Meeting elections and/or upon appointment.
- b) Past Presidents' Role: LWVLC believes that continuity of leadership and organizational knowledge is a key to the success of our League. Therefore, we recommend that at the termination of a President's term, he or she assumes a Board or committee position best suited to the needs of the organization for at least one additional year. Like all leadership positions in the LWVLC, it may be renewed.
- c) Nominating Committee and Leadership: It is important that Nominating Committee members be familiar with the Board's working style, priorities, and communication. Additionally, the Nominating Committee should be acquainted with League's members and others who show leadership potential. As a result, the members of the Nominating Committee should work closely with the Board of Directors throughout the year.

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The chair of the Nominating Committee is one of the six elected directors. The two remaining members of the Committee (also elected to their position) are invited to attend as many meetings of the directors as they wish. They are encouraged to attend at least four meetings during their one-year term.

When they participate in meetings of the directors, whether in person or virtually, they do so with voice but without vote.

They will be added to the president's email distribution list for the directors, receiving the agendas, notes of meetings, and other correspondence intended for directors. They are most welcome to volunteer for any tasks or activities that the directors also undertake.

With the consent of the directors, members of the Nominating Committee may stand for election for one or more consecutive terms. A member of the Nominating Committee may also be recruited to serve temporarily on the board of directors when illness, death, or a resignation creates a vacancy.

Approved by the Board of Directors April 16, 2023

Candidate Forums

LWVLC conducts candidate forums for the purpose of educating voters. Sponsoring candidate forums requires careful decision-making by the whole Board to protect the League's nonpartisanship and to assure a reasonable workload for the LWVLC. All candidates who have met the requirements of the Ohio Board of Elections to appear on the ballot for a contested election would be eligible to participate in any planned forum for that position.

Should the LWVLC be invited to conduct a forum with or for another organization, it must assure that the format guarantees and protects fairness and nonpartisanship. All candidate forums in which LWVLC participates must be open to the public and publicized.

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The Board of Directors of LWVLC shall review these policies and procedures annually. They may make necessary modifications by majority vote and shall communicate all modifications to the membership.