

**League of Women Voters of Evanston
Board and Committee Handbook**
Updated January 2019

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Board Description and Responsibilities

The Board of the League of Women Voters of Evanston (LWVE) is responsible for making decisions on behalf of the membership, providing leadership and guidance for the League's activities. Each Board member holds a fiduciary responsibility for the organization. Board members are expected to:

- Attend board meetings regularly
- Give thoughtful and unbiased consideration to all aspects of League work
- Assist in overall planning and decision-making
- Ensure that League principles and guidelines are followed consistently, including the League's nonpartisan policy
- Promote membership and leadership development, and engage in leadership succession planning
- Promote the League in the larger community
- Support the work of LWVE committees and activities
- Assist in fundraising activities and, if feasible, make a personal contribution to the LWVE operating fund and/or education fund
- Attend state, regional and national League meetings as delegated

The Board must meet at least 6 times per year. Typically, the board meets on a monthly basis, except in December, May (in favor of the annual meeting), and July and/or August. Two consecutive absences from meetings without a valid reason constitute a resignation from the Board.

LWVE Board Composition

The Board consists of elected Officers and up to 10 elected Directors, all of whom are members of the organization. The Officers are the President or Co-Presidents, one or two Vice Presidents, the Treasurer, and the Secretary. A Vice President typically chairs a key committee, such as Membership, Voter Service, or Communications. The elected directors typically either serve as chairs of a committee or else serve as "at large" board members who select a portfolio of responsibilities (such as co-chairing a committee or serving on one or more permanent or ad hoc committees) based on their interests and availability. In addition, the President or Co-Presidents, with the approval of the Board, may appoint additional directors, so long as the number of appointed directors does not exceed one-third of the total board membership.

Board members are elected to one-year terms and there are no term limits.

Board Officers and Directors – Roles and Responsibilities

President/Co-President

The Board president/co-president presides over Board and other membership meetings, and represents the League in the community and among other Leagues. She or he provides leadership for LWVE, helping to set direction and ensure adherence to LWV principles, bylaws, and guidelines. The president/co-president encourages and supports all Board members and serves as liaison with the Leagues of Women Voters of Illinois, Cook County, United States and other Leagues. She or he is the official spokesperson for LWVE, and as such submits Letters to the Editor, represents the LWV and LWVE in public, and signs official documents.

Vice President

The Board Vice President or Vice Presidents may choose their areas of responsibility, preferably serving as committee chairs or facilitators of initiatives. In addition to acting in their area of responsibility, the Vice President(s) assists and advises the President/Co-President as needed. If the President/Co-President is unable to attend a scheduled board meeting, the Vice President chairs the meeting.

Treasurer

The Treasurer is the Board Officer responsible for managing and monitoring the LWVE's funds (both the operating fund and the Education Fund) and expenditures within the limits of the Annual Budget. She or he regularly informs the Board of the League's financial status and activity and, when deemed necessary, alerts the Board to issues and makes recommendations for correction or improvement. Because of the nature of the work, the Treasurer will need to have or gain familiarity with *Quickbooks* or other accounting software, *Microsoft Excel*, and *Microsoft Word*. Some accounting knowledge would be helpful also. The state League provides some support and training for local treasurers.

The Treasurer –

- Deposits funds promptly; deposits tax-deductible funds into the LWVIL Education Fund.
- Collects money at League events, or makes arrangements with event chairs for secure collection and prompt transfer of funds to Treasurer.
- Writes checks for expenditures promptly.
- Keeps clear and accurate records of the League's income and expenditures, using the League's bookkeeping system.
- Prepares and presents a Treasurer's Report at the LWVE's regular Board meetings and Annual Meeting.
- Monitors bank, PayPal and other financial accounts and reconciles the LWVE checkbook.
- Interacts with LWVIL regarding the Education Fund.
- Files a federal tax form.
- Prepares per-member-payment (PMP) and/or reports, and sales tax and IRS forms if applicable.
- Assists in preparing the annual LWVE budget.
- Monitors the budget.
- Serves as ex-officio member of the Budget Committee.
- Initiates and cooperates with the annual audit and closes the books at the end of the fiscal year.
- Works with Office volunteers, Membership Chair and LWVIL to resolve payment issues.

Secretary

The Board Secretary attends regular Board meetings, any special Board meetings, and the LWVE Annual Meeting, taking notes on business conducted and developing meeting minutes, including any applicable attachments. Because meeting minutes become legal documents, the Secretary requests feedback from the Board to ensure that the first draft of each meeting's notes is accurate. The Secretary provides copies of the

applicable minutes at each Board meeting or the Annual Meeting, at which time the Board or the membership reviews them and suggests corrections, if necessary. After the Secretary incorporates any corrections to the previous meeting's minutes, she or he saves them to LWVE's electronic record system or provides them to the person designated by the board to maintain electronic records. The Secretary also assists the President/Co-Presidents with preparation of the Annual Meeting packet.

The Secretary is responsible for determining whether a quorum is present. As a member of the Board, the Secretary may participate in discussions and vote on motions. This position offers an excellent opportunity to learn about the League of Women Voters in general, and our local League in particular.

Elected Directors and Appointed Directors (including At Large Board Members)

LWVE's bylaws do not require that Elected Directors serve as committee chairs, or that committee chairs serve on the Board. However, because of committees' importance to the League's work, the chairs of the committees described below have typically also served as Elected Directors. Appointed Directors could be committee chairs as well.

By tradition, Directors who do not chair a committee, but who instead define their own portfolio of responsibilities in consultation with the President/Co-Presidents, are considered "At Large" board members.

LWVE Committees

Note: The Chairs of the Communications, Membership, Development, Local Government/Observer Corps, Monthly Events, and Voter Services Committees typically serve as Elected Directors. This helps to ensure information sharing and coordination across the organization. If a member wanted to chair a committee but not serve on the Board of Directors, the chair and the Board would need to reach agreement on a system for reporting committee activities to the Board, communicating direction from the Board, and ensuring adequate coordination across committees.

Communications Committee

The charge of the Communications Committee is to facilitate the electronic communications for LWVE, using print when needed for those without electronic connections, and for clerical task such as creating labels, needed for LWVE projects and mailings. (Note that the Intercom, LWVE's newsletter, is not within the charge of this committee.) Committee responsibilities include:

- Receive materials to send out electronically to all members such as meeting announcements on Mail Chimp or other mailing program.
- Post events, pictures, Calls to Action etc to LWVE Facebook page.
- Maintain the Google Calendar of events, entering event information and sharing it with the LWVIL calendar.
- Work collaboratively with the website manager to keep information current and timely.
- Partner with the Voter Services board members to update the elected officials document; ensure it is current after every election.
- Create paper copies of electronic messages and send them to the members who are not on the internet.
- Create labels from the database as needed for various mailings.
- Maintain current registration for the domain name www.lwve.org on GoDaddy.
- Work with the Membership Committee's roster manager to maintain the membership roster and database on the LWV website and ensure coverage of the roster at all times.
- Maintain the Google Drive folders of LWVE correspondence and other documents. Share as appropriate with new board members.

Development Committee

The Development Committee promotes efforts that seek financial contributions from members of the community and local League to support the mission of the League. This includes raising funds for the operating fund of LWVE and for LWVE's funds in the LWVIL Education Fund. Typically, the committee coordinates one major fundraiser per year, benefiting the operating fund or the Education Fund in alternating years. The Development Chair convenes the committee, which typically meets as needed in the months leading up to each event.

Local Government Committee/Observer Corps (Evanston)

The goal of the Observer Corps is to inform our League regarding the purpose, work, and decisions of every major board, commission, and committee within City of Evanston government. The Observer Corps chair or facilitator schedules and presides over a monthly Local Government meeting, to informally discuss current Illinois, Cook County, and Evanston issues and to determine if League action is warranted. The Observer Corps Facilitator:

- Maintains a monthly calendar of Evanston board, commission, and committee meetings that Observers regularly attend. (Currently, they are Administrative Services and Public Works; Planning and Development; City Council; Human Services; Mental Health Board; Economic Development; and Equity

and Empowerment Commission. If/when there is a sufficient number of Observers, we would expand our scope to include District 65 (elementary) and District 202 (high school) Board meetings.)

- Schedules Observers each month; occasionally serves as backup Observer when needed.
- Maintains a list of active Observers and former members who still wish to receive Observer reports.
- Reviews Observer reports, edits them as needed, and submits them to the webmaster for posting on the LWVE Website.
- Participates in the annual Local Program Planning meeting, reporting on important current government issues.
- Holds Observer meetings at least once a month to facilitate discussion of their experiences, suggestions, and issues.
- Provides a form on which Observers can record the board, commission, or committee observed, the date of the meeting, and other pertinent information.

Observers

Observers regularly attend the meetings of their chosen board, commission, or committee (B/C/C), silently watching and listening, taking notes, and creating reports of their observations, which they send to the Observer Corps Chair/Facilitator. If the Corps decides that action should be taken regarding a B/C/C, they bring a recommendation to the Board.

Through Observers' focused, regular attendance at B/C/C meetings, the LWVE learns about current local issues, what government bodies are doing to address them, *how* they address them, what decisions are being made, and why. A side benefit is that the B/C/C members are aware of being monitored by a respected community organization, which, we hope, is an incentive to act and communicate effectively and transparently.

Membership Committee

The Membership Committee is responsible for directing the League's efforts to recruit and retain members. The Membership Committee also bears responsibility for welcoming new members and initiating the process of determining their interest in becoming actively involved. While the Membership Committee is responsible for coordinating membership activities, the entire Board of Directors should play an active role in encouraging people to join the League, welcoming new members and helping them become involved, identifying and cultivating new leaders, and supporting the renewal process.

The Membership Committee is tasked with –

- Maintaining accurate and up-to-date LWVE membership records. The Committee Chair either serves as database administrator or delegates this responsibility to a committee member. [Send current database data to the LWVUS in January: www.lwv.org; login = 1468086; password = IL1091lwv.]
- Ensuring that the Membership Form is up-to-date in paper and online.
- Sharing contact information for new members and changes for renewing members with the *Intercom* list coordinator.
- Working with the Treasurer to ensure accuracy of payment records (including electronic payments) and membership records.
- Developing and distributing new-member packets.
- Creating and distributing the current year's printed Membership Directory.
- Organizing events for new and prospective members, typically two League 101 sessions annually.

- Making LWVE materials available at non-membership events, as requested.
- Sending welcome letters to new members; acknowledging membership renewals.
- Facilitating and encouraging renewal of annual memberships at the appropriate time.

Monthly Events Committee

The Monthly Events Committee develops a schedule of events intended to educate and engage current members, to attract new members, and to maintain and increase the LWVE’s visibility in the community. The Committee typically plans 6-8 luncheons or evening programs each year. These include a legislative luncheon with elected officials, and other sessions with speakers on topics pertinent to LWVE’s local program, Cook County or State League priorities, or current local, state, or regional policy issues. The Committee also works with the President or Co-Presidents to coordinate the speaker and arrangements for the annual meeting.

The Monthly Events Committee is responsible for identifying topics (with input and consent from the Board); inviting speakers and making arrangements for space and catering; providing publicity materials to the e-blast coordinator, social media coordinators, and *Intercom* editor on a timely basis; coordinating with the office staff to collect reservations; ensuring that at least two League members are present at each event to assist with receiving money and recording attendance; and arranging with the Treasurer to pay a stipend to speakers (or their organizations, as the speaker prefers), except for League representatives or public officials/employees.

Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee is responsible for developing a slate of candidates for Board seats and committee chairs for the coming League year (July through June). The committee is comprised of a Chair, one or two members, and a Board member liaison. The outgoing Nominating Committee nominates a chair and member(s) for the coming year; the Board selects a member to serve as liaison. The Committee works in consultation with the Board of Directors to determine positions to be filled and to identify prospective candidates. The Committee ensures that current job descriptions are available for each position to be filled. The Committee coordinates outreach to prospective candidates and develops a slate in time for inclusion in the annual meeting packet. The Chair presents the slate at the Annual Meeting.

Voter Service Committee

The League works all year, every year, to empower all eligible voters to participate in our political system. VOTER SERVICES includes registering voters, educating voters about election procedures, providing opportunities for voters to become informed about issues and candidates, and working to increase voter turn-out – the number of ballots cast in both primary and general elections. The LWVE may divide the responsibilities for these activities into two positions: Voter Registration and Candidate Forums, with voter turn-out falling to both, depending upon the election activity in any given year.

A. The primary responsibility of the **Voter Services / Registration** Chairperson is to oversee voter registration and mobilize voters, consistent with LWV requirements and best practices and with federal, state and local laws. She strategically plans and carries out voter registration drives and get-out-the-vote efforts, especially working to aid those from traditionally underrepresented or underserved communities, including first-time voters, non-college youth, new citizens, minorities and low-income Americans. Duties and responsibilities including the following:

- Set goals and objectives
- Work with election officials to train and deputize volunteer registrars

- Develop and work with partners - Coordinate efforts with other organizations planning voter registration drives, and share information about scheduled activities to avoid duplication
- Recruit, train and assign volunteers
- Participate in [National Voter Registration Day](#) (NVRD).
- Market voter registration event(s) through local print and social media
- Ensure that supplies are available
- Keep good records
- Reward volunteers
- Follow-up and evaluate
- Coordinate with Voter Services for Candidate Forums

B. The primary responsibility of **Voter Services – Candidate Forums** is to organize and oversee candidate forums for local, county and district primary and general elections. Duties and responsibilities include the following:

- Ensure that the LWVE Board reviews and adopts a Candidate Participation Policy.
- Ensure that the policy is followed when planning and implementing forums
- Ensure that political activity is restricted during the term of office by the LWVE President, Voter Service Chairs and any other board members identified as “high visibility.”
- Obtain LWVE Board approval for the format and other procedures for forum.
- Ensure that the checklist of items and tasks (venue, volunteer recruitment, recordings, signage, etc.) required is followed and accomplished.

Following a forum, responsibilities include evaluating what worked well and what may need adjustment in the next forum, reporting to the Board of Director, and letters of appreciation to the candidates who participated.

C. Partnerships

Initiating partnerships, establishing relationships, and managing projects with partnering organizations fall within the responsibilities of Voter Services chairpersons.

D. Training

Voter Services chairperson(s) are responsible for arranging deputy registrar training with the Cook County Clerk’s office and regularly reviewing internal training materials and up-dating them as appropriate.

Off-Board Appointments

The Intercom Editor

The Intercom Editor develops and disseminates an informational, interesting, accurate LWVE newsletter to the membership. If the Editor is willing to be a board member, that might be ideal; but it is not required. Alternatively, an At Large Board member can serve as a liaison between the board and *The Intercom* Editor.

The Editor, in coordination with the board liaison if applicable, stays abreast of the schedule of impending and recent events and solicits articles and photographs describing them. The Editor ensures that all needed information has been received and is appropriate, edits the text, and sends the finished copy to a desktop-publishing professional. The Editor and President/Co-Presidents review and approve the draft edition. The desktop-publishing professional sends the version of each *Intercom* to the printer for printing and mailing, the Communications Chair (or whoever sends e-blasts) and LWVE Webmaster.

Webmaster

The LWVE Website is an important informational and marketing vehicle. The Webmaster is responsible for the timely posting of information, photographs, and forms on the site; and for ensuring that the site is up-to-date, helpful, inviting, appropriate, easily navigable, and functioning properly. The Webmaster –

- Maintains the site on the *GoDaddy* platform.
- Posts new issues of our newsletter, *The Intercom*, as soon as they are published.
- Posts Observer Corps reports as they become available.
- May update the calendar of events.
- Regularly reviews the site to ensure that information is up-to-date.
- Works to ensure that the site is effectual on both desktop computers and smart-phones.
- Maintains office computer, e.g., applying software updates.

Office Coordinator

Currently, the Office Coordinator maintains a schedule of weekly office volunteers, and volunteers in the rotation her/himself and fills in, when necessary, for those who cannot serve. The Coordinator trains new office volunteers, records new outgoing voicemail messages, as needed; buys printer cartridges and other supplies as needed; occasionally files documents; and informs the LWVE Board of any issues, requests, or recommendations that arise.

The Office Coordinator is responsible for gathering RSVP's for LWVE events which have been telephoned, mailed, or e-mailed to the office, and forwarding the names to the Monthly Events Committee or other applicable event organizer at least a few days prior to the event.

Office Volunteers

Office volunteers are asked to go to the office during a specified week and time each month to –

- Check for voice-mail and e-mail messages. Record RSVP information on an attendance form. Respond to messages and e-mails as appropriate (including confirmations of event registrations), or forward them to the applicable person(s).
- Check the physical LWVE mailbox for new mail. Record paper checks received. Respond or forward other mail as appropriate.
- Check the PayPal application for payments received.

- At the end of each month, fill out a monthly deposit form, entering names and check and PayPal numbers. Forward the completed form to the Treasurer and Co-Presidents. File checks and forms in the designated folders.
- Write a summary of tasks completed that week; include the names of persons who sent money for various types of payments.

Other *Ad Hoc* Volunteer Positions

In addition to the ongoing volunteer roles listed above, LWVE appoints volunteers as needed to fill *ad hoc* roles, including:

- **Local program meeting chair:** Compiles materials for and facilitates annual local program planning meeting and works with Board presidents to prepare materials for annual meeting packet)
- **Budget committee chair:** A non-board member should be appointed in the winter/spring to convene a committee that includes the Treasurer and other interest board member(s) to develop a budget to present at the annual meeting.
- **Drinks and Dialogue coordinator:** This may be a role of an at-large board member, or it could be led by one or more non-board volunteers. Coordinates quarterly (or as directed by the Board) evening social gatherings for members and friends of the League.
- **Holiday reception coordinator:** Depending on the board's preference and volunteer interest/availability, the annual holiday reception can be coordinated as a standard Drinks & Dialogue event, or a separate volunteer(s) can be appointed to arrange for a more unique setting/format.
- **Gift wrap volunteer coordinator:** As member and bookstore interest indicate, coordinates dates and volunteers to provide free gift wrapping service to help raise LWVE's visibility)
- **4th of July Parade coordinator:** Depending on the board's preference and volunteer interest/availability, a coordinator (or a small committee) may be appointed to secure a parade entry, plan a theme for the League's entry, and recruit volunteers.