



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF OREGON**

STARTING POINT:

**A PRIMER FOR
NEW MAL UNITS**

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INTRODUCTION

The goal of the League of Women Voters is to empower individuals to shape better communities worldwide. By joining the League, members can gain the information and skills they need to become effective participants in government. Belonging to an active local League offers additional opportunities to take part in the democratic process. For the organization as a whole, new members and new Leagues mean fresh ideas, innovative approaches to resolving public policy concerns, and ongoing sources of leadership.

The League of Women Voters is organized on three levels--national, state and local—with inter-League regional organizations (ILOs) in some metropolitan areas. Recognized local Leagues function in some 1,000 communities throughout the United States. In areas where there is not a local League, interested persons can join as Members-at Large (MALs). MALs automatically become members of the state and national League. A group of MALs may become a local League by first becoming a MAL Unit under the direction of a nearby local League or the state League office. A MAL Unit is sometimes referred to as a Unit-at-Large (UAL), but for the purposes of this document the term MAL Unit will be used.

The following list gives the initial steps for becoming a MAL Unit:

1. The idea for forming a new League arises, either through citizen inquiry or board initiative.
2. A nucleus of interested citizens is recruited.
3. State mentors are appointed and confer (in person, by phone) with the interested group. In some cases mentors can also be designated from a nearby local League.
4. An informational planning meeting is held, and the decision to proceed is made.
5. Preparations for an organizational meeting are made.
6. The organizational meeting is held, and requirements for recognition as a MAL Unit are met (nonpartisanship policy; required number of paid members; leadership team selected; geographic area to be served is identified and incorporated into the name of the MAL Unit).
7. The state League recognizes the MAL Unit.

MAL Units offer members an opportunity to participate in selected League activities, serve the community and help train new leaders for the organization while operating under the direction of the state League. They can undertake community service projects that encourage participation in government, such as candidate forums and informational meetings on public policy issues. They also are encouraged to participate in LWV state and national program studies and to respond to LWV action alerts.

INITIAL MEETINGS

The **first meeting** is an important step in learning more about formal League involvement. Representatives of the League (typically from the state level) will be available to work with the group as mentors. The purpose is threefold: to introduce the League, to discuss the MAL Unit process, and to plan an organizational meeting, if there is sufficient interest in becoming a MAL Unit. Everyone present during this planning session should contribute an extensive list of friends, neighbors, business associates and community leaders to receive personal invitations to the organizational meeting, and a plan to publicize the meeting should be developed.

If there is sufficient interest, an **organizational meeting** may be held to generate wider community interest in the League, recruit additional members, select a leadership team, adopt a nonpartisanship policy and outline a calendar of activities. The date and time selected for the organizational meeting should be convenient for the widest audience possible. Choosing a site that is open to the public can help attract potential members from outside the group's immediate circle of friends and colleagues.

The mentors from the League, will play a key role at this point by helping the members identify and reach out to all segments of the community as they prepare to launch their new group. The organizational meeting sends an important signal about the League's commitment to reflecting the concerns of all citizens. It gives the group an opportunity to share leadership and chart the League's future with diverse community members, enhancing the organization's ability to bring about positive change within that community.

Before adjourning this organizational meeting, everyone attending should be invited to join the League on the spot, if they have not already done so. At this point the MALs should strive to meet the minimum requirements for recognition by the League of Women Voters of Oregon (LWVOR) as a MAL Unit.

LWVOR's Minimum Requirements for MAL Unit Recognition

- Five enrolled members
- Designation of state League mentors.
- A name for the MAL Unit designating the geographic area it will serve
- A nonpartisanship policy (See Appendix II, pages 13 and 14.)
- The following leadership positions filled: Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer, and Secretary
- Planned meetings or activities for the first few months
- Adoption of a budget

Once the minimum requirements have been met, the MAL Unit can be officially recognized by the LWVOR Board of Directors.

ROLE OF MENTORS

- Consult with and advise Unit Leadership on all aspects of League activities.
- Provide training on how LWVOR and LWVUS positions are developed and used.
- Coordinate learning opportunities with surrounding local Leagues.
- Facilitate program calendar development and implementation.
- Work with Unit to develop budget. (See “Financial Stability” section on page 8.)
- Provide monthly progress report to the state office and membership chair.
- Attend as many Unit activities as time permits.
- Ensure records are kept properly and reports are submitted on time.
- Attend first Annual Meeting.
- Receive copies of all mailings and materials sent to new League.

ROLE OF LWVOR STATE OFFICE

- Provide Leadership Packet (materials from LWVUS and LWVOR) to Unit leaders which includes the following:
 - Mission/Vision/Values
 - Voter Service Guides
 - Sample Non-Partisan Policies
 - Sample LWV bylaws
 - Annual meeting script
 - LWVOR and LWVUS study information, position papers
 - Latest version of *Presidents’ Packet*; *League Basics*
- Work with Unit Coordinator/Chair to set up membership roster.
- Enroll new members in LWVOR and LWVUS.
- Register mentors and Unit Coordinator/Chair for Presidents’ Mailings.
- Send all relevant information to mentors and Unit Coordinator/Chair: state program; newsletters; voter service documents; etc.
- Provide copies, postage and other miscellaneous supplies, as required for start-up.
- Pay the LWVUS per member payment (PMP) for the MAL Unit members. (See “Financial Stability” section on page 8.)
- Maintain copies of Unit activities and mentors’ reports.
- Report Unit status to Board.

ROLE OF UNIT COORDINATOR/CHAIR

- Represent Unit at local, state and national events.
- Make sure members are registered for mailings, publications, etc.
- Preside over meetings.
- Set meeting agendas.
- Develop Unit policies and procedures.
- Develop and maintain Unit budget (delegate to treasurer).

- Submit expense forms with receipts to state League office
- Provide copies of activities and minutes to mentors and LWVOR state office (can be delegated to Unit secretary).
- Maintain up-to-date membership roster and update as needed with LWVOR and LWVUS (can be delegated to Unit treasurer).
- Make sure LWVUS roster is accurate for January 31 membership count.

IMPORTANT FACTORS FOR UNIT DEVELOPMENT

All League groups, whether they are on a "fast track" toward becoming a local League or they expect to continue as a MAL Unit, should be encouraged to give attention to:

- Membership growth
- Diversity
- Program work
- Voter service
- Financial stability
- Communications

Membership Growth

Increasing the size of their membership should be a major first-year goal for the leaders of any newly recognized MAL Unit. Their state League mentors should encourage them to:

- Set a specific numerical goal for membership growth.
- Identify community groups and individuals to target for recruitment.
- Design a program of activities that will generate community interest and attract new members.
- Schedule activities at times and in places that are convenient and inviting to the widest audience possible.
- Build a membership recruitment component into every activity, including a brief presentation about the League and an invitation to everyone present to join the League.
- Develop a system for following up with those who express an interest in the League.
- Develop a system for following up with all new members to help them find a level of involvement that suits each one.

Diversity

An integral component of the MAL Unit's plan for membership growth should be strategies to recruit a membership that reflects the diversity of the community. League members at every level recognize that diverse perspectives are necessary for responsive and responsible decision making and that inclusiveness enhances the organization's

ability to be an effective voice for all citizens. Adopting a diversity policy and developing diversity strategies are important first steps towards achieving this fundamental goal.

The multi-year plan of action to achieve diversity in the League adopted by the LWVUS/EF will concentrate **first** on achieving racial and ethnic diversity but will also include technical assistance to Leagues to ensure that all programs and meetings are barrier-free for members with disabilities.

Key steps for MAL Unit leaders in meeting the challenge of achieving diversity:

- Make a personal commitment to diversity.
- Develop a written policy that affirms the MAL Unit's commitment to diversity.
- Identify and learn about groups with diverse perspectives in the community.
- Set goals for increased diversity and develop an action plan to achieve these goals.
- Identify opportunities to network and collaborate with diverse groups in the community.
- Weave diversity goals and strategies into all League programs and activities.
- Hold meetings in locations that are inviting to all people in the community.
- Establish an environment that is welcoming and supportive of all members.

Program Work

League program consists of member and community education, study, action, and other activities. A meaningful and compelling program is essential to the success of any League group. Our program is what we offer our members; it's what attracts others to join us; and it's what we do for our communities. Through its education and advocacy work, the new Unit will be helping fulfill the League's goal: to empower citizens to shape better communities worldwide.

The Unit members' first step in planning their program activities for the year is to select the issue(s) they want to address. Choosing issues that are timely, that need public discussion, and that are of vital concern to the community will help attract an audience and establish the group as an organization that can make a real difference.

Among the program topics the group should consider are those issues targeted for emphasis at the state and national levels, particularly if one or more of them is generating a lot of community interest. Another option is to focus on a purely local issue that can then serve as a means for the new members to learn about the structure and operations of their local government. A thorough understanding of the governmental decision-making process is key to effective citizen education and advocacy.

The range of topics from which to choose is considerable, and the Unit may be tempted to adopt an overly ambitious agenda. The state League mentors can play an important role in helping a Unit focus its energies and develop a program of activities that matches its resources and sends a coherent message about the League's purpose. It is essential that MAL Unit leaders notify the mentors of all programs, forums and action priorities

that the MAL Unit intends to undertake, in order to ensure that the non-partisanship policy and other applicable League procedures are followed. Specific limitations for studies and action activities for MAL Units are provided on the following page.

After identifying the issues they wish to explore, the members can plan the activities they will undertake in working on those issues. Possibilities include:

Member and Community Education

- Meetings with a guest speaker. This could be a local government official discussing an issue of community concern or a state League leader talking about one or more state or national League program priorities.
- Discussion group. Members may want to meet to explore one or more public policy issues in depth, perhaps as a follow-up to a presentation by a guest speaker.
- Tours and visits. Attending a city council meeting (preceded perhaps by a discussion with two or three city officials about the issues on that evening's agenda) can help League members learn about how their local government works. A visit to a landfill, a public works project, or a social service agency can make public policy issues come alive.
- Community forums. A panel of speakers with a range of perspectives can help citizens learn about possible solutions to a critical governmental issue and how they can make their own opinions heard.
- "Know your community" project. It is strongly suggested that one of the first projects for new League groups is an in-depth study of their community, gathering information on the structure and procedures of the various governmental bodies within their jurisdiction.

Study

- State/national studies. MAL Units are encouraged to take part in state or national League studies under way and in the related member agreement process.
- Local study. If the group's goal is to eventually become a full-fledged local League, **a study of local government, or some aspect of local government, must be completed before undertaking any other local study and before full local League status is granted.** Members may also use local study material developed by another League in the state as the basis for an examination of an issue from the perspective of their own community. This study will enhance members' ability to represent the League in the community. The mentors should work with the group in the development of the scope of this study. When the study of local government is completed, then the program for the year should incorporate a presentation of the study as well as member consensus.

As a rule, the group may not take on any other study until the group establishes full Local League status. Exceptions to this may arise, especially in small communities, although state board approval would be required.

Action

- State/national action alerts. Units are encouraged to respond to action alerts from the state and national levels.
- Local action on state/national positions. With permission and guidance from the state League mentors, the group may apply a state or national League position to a local issue and take appropriate action.
- Local action on local positions generally does not occur during the MAL Unit stage. Only full local Leagues may take action based on positions derived from study and member agreement.

Other Activities

- Observers. The MAL Unit may form an observer corps to attend and report on local government meetings.
- State/national program planning. MAL Units may help set the state and national League agendas by taking part in the program planning process.

Voter Service

Providing election-related services was one of the original purposes of the League's founders and continues to be a key activity of League groups everywhere. The state League mentors will work closely with the Unit to ensure that it maintains strict nonpartisanship in conducting any and all voter service projects.

Among the voter service activities the group may want to consider are:

- Registering voters and disseminating registration and voting information.
- Conducting a get-out-the-vote campaign.
- Sponsoring candidate meetings or debates.
- Sponsoring pro/con forums on ballot issues.
- Compiling local voters' guides/candidate questionnaires; distributing those and state guides/questionnaires.
- Publishing a local directory of elected officials.

Financial Stability

The MAL Unit must be adequately financed in order to operate and carry out its goals. As the members make their plans for the year, the state League mentors can help them develop a budget showing the expenses they expect to incur and the sources of anticipated income. Since members-at-large join by paying dues to the state League (except for those members who have joined as nationally recruited members), the new MAL Unit will need to decide whether it wishes to assess additional local dues to help support its activities. The budget should be adopted subject to the approval of the LWVOR Board, since it is up to the Board to oversee the financial plans for the MAL Unit. If the budget is amended, the LWVOR Board needs to approve the amendment(s).

MAL Units also are encouraged to seek financial support from the community at large. This will become easier to do as the group begins to gain visibility and recognition

through its voter service and citizen education projects. The state League mentors can help by sharing successful fundraising experiences of other League groups and by explaining how tax-deductible contributions may be made.

Communications

As they grow in strength and numbers, Units are encouraged to publish a regular newsletter to keep members informed about meetings and other organizational issues. Funding will have to be provided for in the Unit's budget. A simple two-page newsletter, produced quarterly, would make a good beginning. The mentors can help by sharing examples of attractive and interesting newsletters published by other League groups. The Unit leader can be added to the mailing lists of local Leagues.

Visibility for each activity on the MAL Unit's agenda should be built into every project. External communications are essential to the success of each individual activity and to the long-term growth of the new League group. Consider:

- Regular announcements of League meetings in the local newspaper's calendar of events, on local radio and on TV, as well as on a variety of community bulletin boards.
- Letters to the editor.
- News releases, particularly when new leaders are selected.
- Creating and maintaining a web site for the MAL Unit.

SUGGESTED JOB DESCRIPTIONS FOR A MAL UNIT LEADERSHIP TEAM

Outlined below is a set of suggested responsibilities for each member of a MAL Unit leadership team--a chair, a vice-chair, and both a secretary and a treasurer. These may be tailored to fit the interests and special circumstances of each Unit. One person, for example, may take on the responsibilities of both secretary and treasurer. The team could be expanded to include a program chair or a voter service chair who would then handle those responsibilities. Or various tasks may be delegated to other members.

The chair:

- Schedules periodic meetings of leadership team to plan activities and evaluate the well-being of the Unit. Chairs meetings of the leadership and the Unit.
- Reads the mail and shares League news with the membership.
- Speaks for the League. Only the chair, or a member designated by the chair, may speak for the League, and all public statements, news releases, and other forms of communication with the public require prior approval of the MAL Unit mentors.
- Sends a copy of action communications to and from state legislators to the state League, and action communications to and from members of Congress to the state League and to the LWVUS.

- Directs fundraising efforts. Checks first with the state League mentors to ensure that the activity complies with state and IRS regulations.
- Maintains the Unit's files.

The vice-chair:

- Assists the Unit chair and fills in for her/him when necessary.
- Arranges for meeting places and refreshments, if desired.
- Fosters membership participation and growth.
- Prepares and distributes new member packets.
- Circulates news of the Unit through the media.

The secretary:

- Keeps minutes of business meetings and distributes them in accordance with the wishes of the group.
- Notifies the mentors and the state League of changes in leadership.
- Prepares and submits required reports.
- Notifies members of meetings and activities by phone, postcard, flier or simple newsletter.

The treasurer:

- Handles local income and expenses; keeps financial records in a manner consistent with the Unit's budget format; and, submits an annual treasurer's report to the Unit and the state board.
- Collects dues and transmits them to the state League office along with the returned membership application or renewal form.
- Keeps a membership roster, sending a copy to the state League office for the yearly January 1 membership count, and promptly notifying the state League office of any interim changes.

TRANSITIONING FROM A MAL UNIT TO A PROVISIONAL LEAGUE

It is generally expected, although not required, that the goal of a MAL Unit is to become a full-fledged local League. Throughout the process the MAL Unit/provisional League will have assistance from the LWVOR staff, and one or more representatives of the state League and/or a nearby local League.

The following eight steps summarize the process of transitioning to a provisional League and then finally to a full local League:

1. If and when the leaders of the MAL Unit are ready to move forward, they will work with the state League and propose a plan to become a provisional League to the MAL

Unit membership at a general meeting. The members approve the plan, which includes identifying the geographic area to be served by the provisional League and selecting a name in keeping with this area, as well as approving provisional League bylaws, adopting a budget and program, and election of a slate of provisional League officers and board of directors. Once approved by the membership and the state board, the provisional League board begins fulfilling the steps for recognition as a local League by creating a calendar of activities for the year and assigning tasks to meet the requirements.

2. The provisional League carries out a program of activities that furthers the League's mission, that is of interest to members and the community, and that demonstrates members' understanding of League policies and procedures. If not already accomplished by the MAL Unit, this should include a local study of the responsible governmental entity for the area to be served by the League. The provisional League is encouraged to include member discussion leading to member agreement for the development of a position.
3. Provisional League leaders develop and implement a plan for membership growth and diversity.
4. The provisional League meets its financial obligations to the organization as a whole and demonstrates its ability to secure needed member and community support for its operations.
5. The provisional League publishes a regular newsletter that keeps members and community informed about its activities, critical issues, and organizational achievement.
6. The provisional League prepares for its annual meeting (budget, bylaws, program and nomination of a slate of officers and board of directors).
7. The annual meeting is held and final requirements for recognition are fulfilled (bylaws approved, budget and program adopted, officers and board elected).
8. When the provisional League has sufficiently demonstrated its ability and desire to operate independently, the state League may recommend to LWVUS that the provisional League be recognized as a local League. Once recognition is achieved, the new local League may develop positions based upon local studies and use these positions for appropriate action.

Appendix I: LWVUS REQUIREMENTS FOR LOCAL LEAGUES

*(This is an excerpt from the LWVUS publication **League Basics**, which contains essential policy and organizational information applicable to every local and state League. The complete document plus additional information can be found on the League website www.lwv.org.)*

In order to maintain its status as a part of the League of Women Voters, each local League is required to:

- **Have bylaws, the first three articles of which should be consistent with those of the LWVUS. The remaining articles must provide for democratic procedures.**
- **Establish and maintain a nonpartisan policy.**
- **Hold an annual business meeting of the membership.**
- **Hold regular board meetings.**
- **Meet its financial obligations (per member payment) to the state and national levels of the League and adopt a financial plan for sustainability and for carrying out the League’s mission to its community.**
- **Have a plan for membership growth and retention that encourages a membership as diverse as the community.**
- **Act in ways that are consistent with League principles, positions and policies.**

Women—and men (since 1974)—who are citizens and at least 18 years old may join the League as voting members. Associate (non-voting) membership is available for younger people and non-citizens. Joining at any level of the organization automatically confers membership at every level, and with that membership comes the opportunity to make an impact on local, state, regional and national public policy issues.

(Best practices corresponding to each of the above requirements are listed in the [Tools for Leaders](#) section of the League Web site.)

Appendix II: DEVELOPING A NONPARTISANSHIP POLICY

It is the responsibility of every League group to formulate and adopt a nonpartisanship policy to guide the political activities of its leadership team. The purpose of the policy is to assure the credibility of the League as a nonpartisan organization which does not support or oppose any political party or candidate. Establishing and maintaining a nonpartisanship policy is one of the seven LWVUS requirements for League recognition. (See Appendix I, page 12.)

A nonpartisanship political policy should include the following basic elements:

- A statement of the nonpartisan nature of the organization.
- Guidelines on permissible activities for members in leadership positions.
- Restrictions on certain leadership positions.
- A policy on how to handle resignations when a member of the leadership team resigns to engage in political activity.
- A procedure for an annual review of the policy by the leadership team.
- The date the policy was last reviewed/revised.

Suggested Discussion Guide

As the leadership team develops a policy that will protect the League's credibility as an effective nonpartisan organization in the community, members should consider the following factors:

- The political climate and traditions in the community.
- The sensitivity of specific portfolios (e.g., president or chair, voters service).
- The extent to which the public identifies (or may identify) a member's activities with those of the League.
- The visibility associated with specific political activities.

See also *League Basics* and the current *President's Packet* for additional information and guidance on developing a nonpartisanship policy.

Sample Nonpartisanship Policy Statement for a MAL Unit

The organizational structure of a MAL unit is simpler than that of a local League so its policy may be brief and form part of its policy guidelines.

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan organization. It does not support or oppose candidates for public office, but it does encourage its members, as individuals, to participate actively in the political process.

Members of the leadership team for [NAME] MAL Unit recognize that, as a result of their close identification with the LWV, they have a special responsibility to see that their activities do not create an impression of partisanship. They will use discretion in any political activity, ascertaining in advance from the state board that such activity will not compromise the nonpartisanship of the League.

Sample Nonpartisanship Policy Statement for a Local League

The League takes action on governmental measures and policies in the public interest. However, it shall not support or oppose any political party or any candidate.

Recognizing that the League experience uniquely equips members for public life and wishing to encourage them to utilize their special knowledge and abilities, non-board members are encouraged to participate fully (as individuals) in party politics. The activities of certain board members, however, must be limited to preserve the League's nonpartisan reputation.

The president, the voters service director, and any other board member whose position is deemed sensitive shall not run for, or hold, elective office. When a board member declares for an elective office, the member shall resign from the board.

Public notices released by the League announcing the resignation of a board member to run for elective office should be carefully worded to avoid the appearance of endorsing the resigning board member's candidacy.

Board members shall not undertake any action that will cause them to be identified publicly as supporting any candidate for office or any political party.

The president, voters service director and holders of other board positions deemed sensitive shall not participate in any political campaign in any way. No board member shall chair or administer political campaigns or campaign events, or work in a significant way in a candidate's campaign.

A board member may serve on any public board, commission, committee, or coalition; however, that board member does not represent the League unless officially designated a League representative by the board.

A board member may not speak in an official capacity, or work in any way, against a League position.

The political activities of a spouse or relative of a board member are to be considered as separate and distinct from the activities of the board member.

This policy shall be reviewed each year at the board's organizational meeting following the annual meeting. [DATE]

Appendix III: SAMPLE UNIT POLICY SHEET

Since the MAL Unit is an entity of the state League and therefore covered by state League bylaws, no formal Unit bylaws are necessary. MAL Units will, however, want to develop policies to cover certain aspects of their operations. The state League mentors can assist Unit leaders in drafting policies to help them respond to difficult situations that could compromise the group's nonpartisan reputation. The following list of topics and sample policy statements is provided to assist MAL Unit leaders in developing a set of policies appropriate to their group.

- Specification, terms of office and method of selection of the MAL Unit's leaders. The leadership of the [NAME] MAL Unit shall consist of a chair, a vice-chair, and a secretary-treasurer. They shall be elected for one-year terms at the spring general business meeting of the membership.

- Diversity policy statement.

The [NAME] MAL Unit affirms its belief in and commitment to diversity, inclusiveness and collective decision making. There shall be no barriers to participation in any League activity. Further, the [NAME] MAL Unit affirms its commitment to reflecting the diversity of the community in its membership, its leadership and its programs.

- Guidelines for joining coalitions. Membership of the [NAME] MAL Unit in any coalition shall be undertaken only when the coalition's major goals are in accord with the League's mission and when membership would bring added effectiveness to the League's efforts to achieve its advocacy or education goals. Coalition membership must be approved by the leadership team.
- Restrictions on the use of the membership list outside the League. The membership list of the [NAME] MAL Unit may be shared or exchanged with other nonprofit organizations for one-time mailings, with the permission of the board. The list may not be shared with candidates for elective office.
- Restrictions on the circulating of petitions at MAL Unit meetings. Candidate petitions may be circulated only after the meeting has adjourned, in an area separate from the meeting room, and in a manner that does not create the impression that the League endorses that candidate. Other petitions may be circulated with the permission of the leadership team and with an explanation of the League's position in regard thereto.
- Restrictions on announcements on behalf of other groups at MAL Unit meetings or in the Unit newsletter. Announcements on behalf of other organizations may be made at Unit meetings or in the Unit newsletter only with the permission of the leadership team.
- Restrictions on announcements on behalf of candidates at MAL Unit meetings. No announcement on behalf of any candidate for elective office shall be made at any League meeting.
- Designation of the spokesperson for the Unit. The Unit chair is the official spokesperson for the Unit unless she/he designates another member to speak. Unless authorized otherwise, members lobby in their own names, not in the name of the League.

Appendix IV: GUIDELINES FOR LEAGUE WORK ON ISSUES

The mission of the League of Women Voters is to encourage the informed and active participation of citizens in government and to influence public policy through education and advocacy. To stay true to our mission and our nonpartisanship and to acknowledge the challenges of working in a multilevel organization, we have developed a number of policies and procedures that govern our program work:

- The League must have a position before it takes action.
- League positions are derived from member study of issues selected by members and from member agreement obtained through consensus or concurrence.
- League studies examine all sides of an issue, providing balanced and fair information that members use as the basis for deciding what governmental changes are needed.
- The chair is the official spokesperson for a MAL Unit unless she/he designates another member to speak. **Unless authorized otherwise**, members lobby in their own names, not in the name of the League.
- Local studies focus on issues that can be addressed by local government.
- MAL Units may use locally adopted positions or relevant state or national positions to lobby their local elected officials.
- We **never** lobby as League members in opposition to a League position, but, as **individuals**, we are free to lobby as we choose.
- The program work at each level of the League is directed by the board at that level.
- Leagues are asked to respond to action alerts from the state League and the LWVUS. To lobby at the state or national level when lobbying has not been requested by the board at that level, Leagues seek permission from the appropriate level before acting.
- The League speaks with one voice, coordinating action with other affected Leagues, or other levels of the League, when the need arises.

The goal of League program work is to empower citizens to shape better communities worldwide. We recognize that broad-based citizen involvement is key to resolving the complex problems that confront our society today. In carrying out our program activities, therefore, we seek to engage both our members and our fellow citizens in the process of bringing about positive change.

The League is trusted to provide the public leadership needed to help citizens play a meaningful role in the governing process. Balance, fairness, a commitment to including all voices, and a belief in the power of collective decision-making for the common good are hallmarks of our approach to issues and our efforts to connect citizens to government.

Appendix V: GLOSSARY OF LEAGUE LINGO

There are certain terms that are peculiar to the League of Women Voters--"League Lingo." Some are listed here to help new members feel at home in the organization.

ACTION. Promoting the League's positions on local, state and national public policy issues to government officials, the media and the public.

ACTION ALERT. Request from the LWVUS or state League to take action in support of a League position.

ANNUAL MEETING. Local year-end business meeting to elect officers and directors, vote on bylaw changes and adopt a budget and program of work for the next year.

ASSOCIATE MEMBER. A nonvoting member of the League, such as a person under 18 years of age or a non-citizen.

CONSENSUS. Collective opinion of a substantial number of League members, representative of the membership as a whole, after objective study of an issue.

CONCURRENCE. Agreement by League members with a position on an issue reached by a small group of members or by another League.

CONVENTION. A state or national League meeting held every other year at which delegates elect officers and directors for the biennium, adopt program, make bylaw changes and adopt a budget, usually for one year. Local Leagues send delegates to state convention, local and state Leagues send delegates to national convention.

COUNCIL. An assembly of delegates held in alternate years to adopt a budget and assess program developments. Local Leagues send delegates to state council, state Leagues to national council.

EDUCATION FUND. The tax-deductible arm of national, state and large local Leagues, handling funds to be used only for educational purposes, not for action on issues.

HONORARY LIFE MEMBER. A person who has been a member for 50 years or more. Life members are excused from dues payment and their Leagues pay no per member payment (PMP) for them.

ILO. Acronym for an Inter-League Organization, formed by local Leagues within a county, metropolitan area or region to act on issues that are beyond the local League area in scope.

MAL. Acronym for member-at-large, a member who resides outside the area of, and is not enrolled in, a local League.

MAL UNIT. A state-recognized group of members-at-large, in an area where there is no local League.

PMP. Acronym for Per Member Payment, the amount of money paid to the LWVUS and the state League on behalf of each member.

POSITION. A statement of the League's point of view on an issue, arrived at through member study and agreement (consensus or concurrence), approved by the appropriate board and used as a basis for League action.

PRINCIPLES. Governmental standards and policies supported by the League as a whole. They are adopted by LWVUS as a foundational statement to which all levels of League subscribe and constitute the authorization for adoption of program at all levels.

PROGRAM. Selected governmental issues chosen by members at the local, state and national levels for study and action.

PROGRAMS. Plans for speakers, discussion or other activities for League meetings.

UNIT. Groupings of members within large local Leagues to provide more opportunity for discussion. Units may be time-oriented (day, evening, lunch hour) or geographically oriented, or both.

VOTERS' GUIDE. Nonpartisan publication providing pros and cons to ballot measures and giving candidates' qualifications and positions on selected issues.

VOTER SERVICE. Year-round activity to help citizens be politically effective and to encourage their participation in the political process. Registering voters and presenting factual, nonpartisan information on candidates and election issues are basic voter service activities.

VOTING MEMBERS. All League members who are U.S. citizens and at least 18 years old.