

League of Women Voters Knoxville-Knox County – Policy Guide

Conflict of Interest

Appointees to boards, commissions, or committees serve as individuals rather than as formal representatives of the League unless the position was offered to the organization. If the seat is for the League, the president shall appoint a representative after each Annual Meeting. Board members asked to serve as individuals shall notify the board of their appointment. League titles may be listed for identification purposes only.

No board member may participate in any decision-making process when that person or members of her or his immediate family has an interest that may be seen as competing with the interests or concerns of the League.

When there is doubt as to whether a conflict exists, the matter shall be resolved by a vote of the board of directors, excluding the person who may have the possible conflict.

The League will not pay any voting board member a stipend or fee for service on League projects while the member sits on the policy-making board that is responsible for the project. *(Adopted 8/14/2013)*

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

LWV is an organization fully committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion in principle and in practice. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are central to the organization's current and future success in engaging all individuals, households, communities, and policy makers in creating a more perfect democracy.

There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of gender, gender identity, ethnicity, race, native or indigenous origin, age, generation, sexual orientation, culture, religion, belief system, marital status, parental status, socioeconomic status, language, accent, ability status, mental health, educational level or background, geography, nationality, work style, work experience, job role function, thinking style, personality type, physical appearance, political perspective or affiliation and/or any other characteristic that can be identified as recognizing or illustrating diversity. *(Adopted 6/25/2020)*

Nonpartisanship

The purpose of the League of Women Voters is to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation of citizens in government.

The local League president, the Voters Service chair and the Observer Corps chair shall refrain from all partisan political activities. Other officers and directors may engage in discreet partisan political activities unless it is determined by the Board of Directors that such political activity would compromise the nonpartisan status of the League.

Presumptively allowable activities for other officers and directors include making campaign contributions, putting up yard signs & bumper stickers, co-hosting candidate events, phone banking, and assisting with candidate mailings in their personal capacity. All officers and directors shall refrain from public endorsement, in their League capacity, of any political party or candidate for public office. Political activity not specifically addressed herein should be brought before the Board of Directors for their consideration.

Board members who desire to run for partisan or nonpartisan elective office must immediately resign from the Board of Directors. A news release shall be prepared announcing the resignation that is carefully

worded to avoid the appearance of League endorsement of the candidacy. Board members who seek election to a special nonpartisan body, such as a delegate to a constitutional Convention, may continue to serve with the concurrence of the Board of Directors. No officer or director of the League shall publicly endorse the candidacy, however.

League members are encouraged to work for and within the political party of their choice but should do so as individuals, not in their capacity as League members.

The Board of Directors may recommend Board and other League members to serve on appointed public commissions and committees. By so doing, the Board of Directors is under no obligation to support the reports or conclusions of the public commission or committee.

Differences between LWV and commission/committee opinion should be announced publicly.

The League may work in coalition with other organizations and groups on issues and measures that have League support. If the coalition is one that chooses to support candidates for public office, the League shall immediately issue a statement which disassociates itself from that aspect of the coalition's work.

The League and its officers and directors may not accept gifts from office holders or candidates for public office if such acceptance can be construed by the public as League endorsement of those office holders or candidates.

The Nominating Committee shall call the attention of prospective board members to this nonpartisanship Policy prior to accepting them as nominees for office.

The Nonpartisanship Policy shall be reviewed annually by the incoming Board of Directors with a view to promoting Board understanding. Review shall consider an overall assessment of the League's credibility as an effective political organization in the community, the sensitivity of specific board portfolios, the extent to which the public identifies a board member's activities with those of the League, the political climate and traditions within the community, and the visibility associated with specific political activity. Amendments as deemed desirable may be proposed and accepted. (*Adopted 8/14/2013; readopted 9/21/2016*)

Meetings

All meetings of the League of Women Voters, including Board, resource, unit (discussion group) and general meetings, are open to the membership of the League. Nonmembers are welcome to attend unit and general meetings and may attend Board meetings by invitation. The annual meeting is open to members and the public, but only members may vote.

State and National Convention and Meetings

The President shall be the official delegate to the National and State Conventions and to the State Council Meeting. If the President is unable to attend, the President and/or the Board of Directors shall designate another Board member to attend.

Delegates to other state and national meetings shall be chosen by the Board of Directors. Selection shall consider the need to expand the member's experience, the workshops that are offered, and in the case of a Board member, the portfolio for which the Board member is responsible.

Membership Dues

Effective June 1989, membership dues will be due on the first day of the anniversary month that the person joined the League. All members who joined prior to June 1989 will have an April 1st due date. Members whose dues are in arrears in excess of six weeks shall be dropped from the rolls.

Decision-Making

Member agreement within the League may be reached by a variety of methods. Consensus refers to the sense of the meeting and is usually the member agreement tool used in the unit/general meeting format to arrive at positions that the League will support/oppose. The LWV consensus method shall be explained at the beginning of each discussion meeting called for that purpose. The Board of Directors shall designate at least one of its members to attend each consensus meeting. A recorder shall be appointed to provide a written record of the agreement reached as well as any strong minority opinion. The resource and unit organization chairs and the President shall confer and prepare a consensus report, and if a local study, a proposed statement of position, for presentation to the Board of Directors for approval.

The Board of Directors shall determine which membership agreement mechanism is appropriate to the issue under consideration. The resource chair/committee shall provide background information to facilitate decision-making.

Public Relations

The local League President is the official spokesperson for the League of Women Voters regarding action on adopted positions or issues of League interest. No officer, director, or member may speak publicly on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Knoxville/Knox County unless authorized to do so by the President and/or Board of Directors.

The Communications Chair, upon approval of the President and/or Board of Directors, shall be responsible for official League statements or other news items to be transmitted to the public through the media.

Resource or other chairs, as appropriate, shall provide draft copies of proposed news releases to the Communications Chair for release.

The email and mailing lists of the League shall not be made available to any other person or group unless approved by the Board of Directors. A statement shall precede the membership list in the yearbook. News items and news releases of other organizations may be included in the local listserv or social media channels if the subject matter is within the scope of League program and interest.

Publications

A Review Committee appointed by the Board shall read and approve all material before printing, public distribution, or submission to the media. This includes updates and revisions of current publications.

Travel

Registration fees shall be paid for members representing the local League at all National and State League functions. Hotel charges will be paid for official local League representatives. A per diem of \$10, toward the cost of meals, will be paid for official League delegates and representatives. Transportation costs will be paid for official local League representatives attending National and State Conventions/meetings and the out-of-town meetings of affiliate organizations subject to board approval. When travel is by automobile, reimbursement will be paid at the rate of twenty cents (\$.20) per mile.

Use of LWV Name or Logo

Requests from other groups to use the League name/logo at an event must come to the Board for a decision. Permission will generally be granted if the League is co-sponsoring the event or is an active member of the coalition sponsoring the event. In all instances, the League must be actively involved enough in the planning/presentation of the event to ensure that it meets our standard of nonpartisanship and does not actively oppose a League position.

Listserv

The League's Listserv is for information related to the League's positions and for notices of meetings hosted by the League. It is not intended as a discussion group and is not an appropriate place for personal opinions.

Financial

The budget provides the spending authority. Expenses not in the budget need prior approval by the board. Budgeted project expenses that are less than \$250 do not require board approval, but do require the approval of the president or treasurer via email.

The best practice is for the treasurer to directly pay the league's bills. Reimbursing members for expenses should be limited to situations where it is more convenient for the member. Bills may be paid by the treasurer using checks or a debit or credit card. Both the treasurer and the president retain any debit or credit cards. All invoices or receipts sent to the treasurer must be accompanied by the request form attached to this document.

Contracts and agreements with agencies, organizations or businesses for services rendered shall be in the name of LWVKKC, not an individual. As stated in the bylaws, the president and the secretary are to sign all contracts. *(Adopted 2/6/2024)*

Debit and Credit Cards

Debit/credit cards will be issued only to officers designated by the LWVKKC Board of Directors. The LWVKKC Board reserves the right to revoke/cancel a card at any time.

Card usage is limited to purposes directly related to the League's mission and activities. Personal expenses are strictly prohibited. Cash advances are strictly prohibited. All purchases must be supported by original receipts and a detailed explanation of the purpose of the purchase.

The LWVKKC Board will determine the per transaction spending limit for each debit and credit card issued. Anticipated purchases which would exceed the limit must be pre-approved by the Board. The LWVKKC Board will determine and set the credit card limit for each card issued.

Cardholders are responsible for maintaining accurate and timely records of all transactions.

Receipts, invoices and supporting documents must be submitted promptly to the treasurer or a designated finance committee for review. The treasurer will ensure the league credit card(s) are paid in full and on time and will include the league credit card statements in their monthly treasurer's report.

The Board has the right to review the spending record of any cards issued under this policy at any time, to question the purchases, and to revoke the card if necessary. The LWVKKC shall seek reimbursement from the cardholder for any misuse or fraudulent activity discovered and may report misuse or fraudulent activity to the appropriate authority. *(Adopted 2/6/2024)*