



*A Guide to the
League of Women Voters*

Presented by
League of Women Voters of Greater Tucson
2424 East Broadway, Tucson, AZ 85719
520 327-7652
lwvgt@aol.com
www.lwvgt.org

October 2013

**Adapted from The League of Women Voters publications:
South Carolina, Minnesota and Central Vermont**



A Guide to the League of Women Voters: League-L-Ease

ACTION

Whatever the League does, at every level of government, to implement its programs. This usually means advocacy on our positions, but can also include encouraging citizen participation.

BOARD

The group of members who serve as officers and directors, who are either elected or appointed. Each level of League has a board with members who are usually assigned specific tasks, but who share the overall responsibility for setting policy and organizing activities.

CALL TO ACTION (ACTION ALERT)

A request to all members to participate in a concerted effort to implement a League position. Members are asked to write or call their elected officials requesting a specific vote on legislation.

CITIZEN INFORMATION/VOTERS SERVICE

The League's continuing activity to help all citizens become informed voters and participate in the democratic process.

COMMITTEE

Members who volunteer their time and energy to form the structure which enables the League to fulfill the organization's objectives: Charter Schools, Communications, Email (notifications and listserve), Forums, Government, Hospitality, Mail Crew, Media, Member Records, Membership, Nominating Chair, Office Volunteers, Programs, Running and Winning, Speakers' Bureau and, Voter Services. Contact information for each is listed in the Member Directory and on the League website.

CONSENSUS

Agreement among a substantial number of members (not just a majority). Expressed in terms of broad objectives, consensus is not tied to specific legislation, but is general enough to serve as a standard for evaluating and monitoring legislation.

EDUCATION FUND

The tax-exempt, tax-deductible arm of the League, established to accept contributions to fund educational and citizen-information projects. Regular contributions to the League are not tax-deductible because we are a political organization and lobby to influence legislation.

ENDOWMENT FUND

The fund was established to support its educational and informational programs and projects. It provides the League the opportunity to grow the corpus of the fund and thereby increase the annual income that will be distributed. Donations are tax deductible.

FUNDRAISING

The way League finances most of its budget. This can be done through direct solicitation of contributions or through other fundraising events as needed.

GRASSROOTS

At member meetings, all League members have an opportunity to decide what position the League will take on an issue and can suggest program topics and bylaw changes for all levels of League. All members are also encouraged to attend the Annual Meeting to participate in the adoption of local program, budget, and bylaw changes as well as the election of the local board. This board selects delegates who make these decisions at the state and national conventions.

LOBBYIST (OR ADVOCACY DIRECTOR)

A League member who promotes League positions in local, state, or national legislative or executive departments. Because spokespersons for the League must reflect the consensus position, they are under continuing supervision of the appropriate board.

NONPARTISAN POLICY

The League as an organization does not support individual candidates or political parties. Members are encouraged to be active in the party of their choice, but board members' personal political behavior must not endanger the League's nonpartisan image.

OBSERVER

A League member who regularly attends meetings of governmental bodies and reports on how they function and their actions on League issues.

POSITION

A statement of what League supports or opposes on the basis of a particular consensus. The appropriate League board formulates the position statement after careful member study and compilation of results from member consensus meeting. Continued support of each position is reaffirmed at the biennial state and national conventions, or at the local annual meeting.

PROGRAM

Issues chosen by members for study and action. At each level of League—local, state and national—program includes items adopted for current study or action.

PROJECTS

The League of Women Voter of Greater Tucson has several Special Projects to which they devote time and energy. Citizen's Directory, County Book, Running and Winning, Library Project, Voter Guide, and Natural Resources. The details of each are listed on the League website.

STUDY COMMITTEE

A group of interested League members who study or update a program topic.

PUBLICATIONS

An array of written materials from every level of League. They are the basic tools to help members study, discuss, and take action and they help all citizens to be better informed voters through as wide a community distribution as possible. Written or film publications which present factual material and do not indicate a League position may be financed through tax-deductible contributions to cover cost of printing and distribution.

UNIT

There are five active League units within the Tucson League that meet regularly at logistically convenient locations: Eastside, Green Valley, Midtown, Northwest and Saddlebrooke. Each unit's meeting location, date and time are posted in the current **Voter** and on the League website, and listed in the Member Directory along with contact information.



A Guide to the League of Women Voters: What about YOU?

Who is Eligible?

Everyone is eligible to attend meetings, contribute financially, use League publications and become informed. *Voting members must be US citizens of voting age, who have paid their membership dues.* Members belong to all three levels of League -- local, state and national.

What Happens to My Dues?

Dues are collected annually. The amount is recommended by the board of directors and voted by Annual Meeting when the budget is adopted. Dues and other fundraising efforts support the other levels of League through per-member payments (PMP) and finance publications and other League activities.

What if I Can't be Active?

Some members can't be very active. The League provides plenty of opportunities for short-term commitments. Volunteer for a job that fits your time and capabilities. If you can't do that, just be a member. This is a political organization, and numbers count. Regardless of your level of participation, you'll grow and learn.



A Guide to the League of Women Voters: WIIFM?*

***What's In It For Me** – Depends on you! The League has been a training ground for many members who have run for political office or gone into other volunteer work or public service jobs. The League offers you dozens of ways to express your ideas, interests and talents. Opportunities to learn and serve include research and writing, monitoring or lobbying governmental bodies, interviewing candidates and leaders, and leading discussions. The League is a tool to be used by members to further their opportunities and causes. Make the League work for you.

How Do I Participate?

Participation in the League – Ranges from those who only pay their dues to those who live and breathe the League. Each member has to decide how much time to give.

Communicate with your elected officials as an individual – Using the facts you learned through the League to reinforce your views.

Attend our Hot Topic Luncheons – This initiative is a new effort to offer our membership another opportunity to hear about the latest local issues – straight from the source! You will be notified via e-mail and on our Website about specifics for these events. Please come and evaluate important issues.

Join a Monthly Membership Unit – Membership Unit meetings are where you can learn about local issues and connect with other members. Read the background materials; join in the discussion; express your views. Your opinion counts! Our Units are held most third weeks of the month in several geographic areas near membership clusters. You are welcome to attend any or all Unit meetings.

Join our Voters Services Team – The team meets approximately on a monthly basis to lead membership in various efforts to register and educate voters to enable their participation in the electoral process. This very dedicated group prepares the LWVTC Voters' Guide for each election cycle, candidate videos, and Website voter education material.

Join our Membership Team – The team meets on line through email at least twice a month, ensuring that the League fulfills its 2013-14 Membership goals of increasing visibility, retaining current members, and a 10 % increase in new members. Send an email to Membership lwvgtwebmem@cox.net with your ideas and of course, are invited to join a group who brainstorms and acts “outside of the box”.

What if I Don't Agree with a League Position?

If you disagree with a League position you are perfectly free to act in opposition, provided you do so as an individual and do not identify yourself as a League member. The League is a multi-issue organization and it's perfectly reasonable to anticipate that you may not agree with all positions. However, you may agree with many of them.