



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF TALLAHASSEE

New Member Handbook 2021-2022

**LWV Tallahassee
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Introduction to the League of Women Voters

Congratulations on your decision to join the League of Women Voters, **100 Years Strong**. You now belong to one of the nation's most widely recognized, respected and effective citizen organizations.

We are delighted to welcome you as a **member** of the Tallahassee League (LWVT), the League of Women Voters of Florida (LWVF) and the League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS).

In the League, we are not all organizers or speakers. We do not all think alike or support the same political party. Some of us have the time and energy to be active members, while others have little spare time. At different times in our lives we have different assets to offer. But together we have the intelligence, skills, energy, and enough time that, when put together, make up an important, effective, and purposeful grassroots organization.

In short, the League can help you be an interested, informed, and effective citizen and you can help the League. This is your League. The more time and talent you invest, the more you will gain from being a **member**. Be actively engaged and involved regardless your level of physical involvement; there is no shortage of opportunities for planners, thinkers, and doers.

Purposes and Principles

- **League of Women Voters Mission, Vision & Values Statement**

Mission: Empowering Voters; Defending Democracy

Vision: We envision a democracy where every person has the desire, the right, the knowledge, and the confidence to participate.

Values: We believe in the power of women to create a more perfect democracy.

- The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

- **League of Women Voters Education Fund Mission Statement**

The League of Women Voters Education Fund works to encourage the active and informed participation of citizens in government and to increase understanding of major public policy issues. Donations to the Education Fund are tax deductible.

In addition to these stated purposes the League adheres to principles or concepts of government. The League Principles serve two functions: 1) authorization for adoption of national, state, and local program; and 2) as a basis for acting at the national, state, and local level. The Principles are in **Appendix One** of this handbook.

Nonpartisan Policy

In 1920, The League of Women Voters made a choice: The League would neither support nor oppose any political party or candidate for public office. This decision continues today to ensure that the League's voice is heard above the tumult of party politics. This nonpartisan policy has added strength to the League's positions on issues and has made wide acceptance of League voter service and other educational activities possible.

At the same time, the League is a political organization and encourages **members** to participate fully in the political party of their choice, to run for office, to contribute their time, finances, energy in support of candidates as well as to be active generally in the governmental process. It is an advantage to the

League to have politically active **members**. For its active **members**, it can be a personally satisfying experience.

Our nonpartisan policy is the cornerstone of our Voter Service program: candidates appear at our events because they trust our forums will be fair and impartial and they know they will be treated with respect. Candidates give information to the League because they know it will not be used for partisan purposes. This reputation for fairness and independence accounts for the confidence placed in our positions by interested citizens, other organizations, and the media.

While the League urges its **members** to be politically active, certain constraints are necessary in order to maintain our nonpartisan policy, which has always been a major source of strength for the League. For example, **all members** should refrain from displaying League membership (buttons, banners, clothing, etc.) and simultaneously indicating her/his/their political affiliation or candidate preferences or endorsements.

Nonpartisan Policy Applicable to the Board of Directors, and Certain Committee Chairs

The Officers and Directors comprising the Board of Directors (the Board) recognizes that because of close identification with the League, each Board Member has a special responsibility to see that his/her/their activities do not create a partisan impression.

- **Elected Office.** Board Members may not run for nor hold any elective office.
- **Political Party Office.** Board Members shall not serve in any elected position in a political party.
- **Campaign Contributions.** The **President, Vice President**, and the **Voter Services, Lobby Corps**, and **Local Government Chairs** may not attend fundraising events or make campaign contributions for candidates. Other Board Members may attend fundraising events and make campaign contributions for candidates at any level.
- **Political Campaigns.** The **President, Vice President**, and the **Voter Services, Lobby Corps**, and **Local Government Chairs** shall not chair or administer fundraising or political campaigns, chair a campaign event or work in a significant way in the campaign of a candidate for office at any level. Other Board Members may not undertake such activities for candidates for local office, but may do so for candidates for federal or state office.
- **Social and Other Media.** Board Member shall not indicate her/his/their political affiliation or candidate preferences or endorsements at any level of government in the media, including on social networking sites or other public venues that also prominently identify her/him/they as a member of the League or LWVT Board.
- The **President, Vice President** and the **Voter Services, Lobby Corps**, and **Local Government Chairs** may attend free political party events for information only.
- The political activity of a spouse or relative of a Board Member is considered separate and distinct from the activities of the Board Member.

Members shall present questions about specific situations to the Board if this policy does not resolve the question.

Updated November 18, 2020 Board of Directors

Membership

- Open to any person regardless of gender identity.
- Minimum age for **membership** is sixteen (membership for students is free through **April 30, 2022**).
- Joining automatically makes you a **member** at the local, state, and national levels and a large portion of your dues goes to support the state and national levels through per **member** payment (PMP) made by your local League.

LWV of Tallahassee Board of Directors

At all levels of the League, Boards of Directors are elected to manage activities. The Tallahassee Board of Directors (the Board) includes four officers: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary; six Directors elected by the members; and up to six Directors appointed by the elected Officers and Directors. A Nominating Committee secures and vets candidates and presents a slate to the Membership at the Annual Meeting. The Annual Meeting is held in late April or early May to elect the Board, set the budget, and approve the program for the coming year. The current Board of Directors along with terms of office is found in **Appendix Two** of this Handbook.

What the League Does

Program

While the League is an action group it may take action only on issues that have been studied and on which the **members** are agreed. This approach to action is responsible for the League's reputation for thorough study, a reputation that is pivotal to our political effectiveness. Every local League decides each year on an action agenda which is called the program and is developed by an *ad hoc* Committee which presents it to the Board for review. The last step in developing the year's program is to present it to **members** at the Annual Meeting for **member** approval. It can be found on our web page.

National and state Leagues also develop programs, but these span several years. You can find the national and state programs online at:

- *National Issues and Positions:* <https://www.lwv.org/Program>
- *Florida Study and Action Issues:* [Study-and-Action-2019.2021.pdf \(lwvfl.org\)](#)

Study and Action Groups

The Tallahassee League has multiple Study and Action Groups, and Committees. Any **member** may participate in one or more simply by attending meetings, which are announced in the League monthly publication, *The Voter*. These groups participate in program development and then, along with the Board are responsible for carrying out the studies and actions described in the program. The groups also consider the program of state and national League in determining the issues they will address. A list of the Tallahassee League Study and Action Groups, and Committees is in **Appendix Three** of this Handbook.

Study, Consensus and Concurrence

Local Leagues often participate in national and state studies or conduct studies of their own to determine a League position on issues. Any **member** may participate in a study; these small groups provide wonderful opportunities for learning, networking, and friendships.

Unlike many other public-interest organizations, the League does not rely on majority votes for decision-making related to study results. Rather, it seeks consensus through **member** discussion of specific key questions. Once consensus is ratified by the Board the decision becomes a League position and can be used to direct action.

A League may also act by concurrence. A League's **membership** or its Board may concur with the recommendations of a task force, a League Committee, decision statements formulated by League Boards, or positions reached by other Leagues.

Speaking for the League

Only the President or his/her/their representative speaks on policy matters in the name of the League. Individual **members** may not put forth League positions in public testimony or publications but may suggest the President do so. However, **members** are encouraged to speak or write as informed individual citizens.

League Action on Issues

League action takes many forms – lobbying, monitoring meetings, sending digital communications, social networking, polling citizens, circulating petitions, developing, and publishing documents, forming coalitions and other activities. Actions are based on the League program and are intended to:

- increase public awareness of an issue and
- achieve a resolution of it consistent with League goals.

Lobby Corps

Because they live in the capital city of Florida, Tallahassee League **members** are in a unique position to support the LWVF Legislative Priorities at the Capitol during legislative sessions. Lobby Corps **members** are trained and then able to respond to requests from the Chair for assistance at the Capitol, including attending and representing the League's position at committee hearings, attending press conferences, rallies, and marches. The Lobby Corps Chair works under the direction of the State League President and Board with guidance from the State Issue & Action Chairs and the League's Lobbying Firm.

Voter Service

This particularly important area of League activity is often what the community thinks of first when the League is mentioned. Voter service activities take many forms: sponsoring candidate meetings, debates and interviews; publishing candidate responses to questionnaires; registering citizens to vote; making voting information available; sponsoring and participating in get-out-the-vote campaigns; and publishing background materials on current public issues and lists of sources of information on these issues.

The Tallahassee League is continuously active in voter services. Our website, **Vote411.org**, is an important candidate information resource for local voters. We partner with other groups to present candidate forums, sometimes taking the lead and sometimes handling one component of an event. Election years are exciting and extremely busy for League **members**.

Citizen Information

League citizen information activities raise issues and provide information on all sides of an issue. These activities also help citizens understand public issues and reach their own decisions. They are distinct from the League's action agenda, which may call for work towards a particular resolution of an issue.

Meetings and Regularly Scheduled Events

Board Meetings

The Tallahassee Board meets monthly, August through May. **Members** are welcome and invited to attend meetings. Notice of each meeting is published in *The Voter*.

Annual Membership Meeting

An annual meeting is held in April to elect Board Officers and Directors, set the budget, and approve the League Program for the coming year. Notice of the meeting is published in *The Voter*.

Holiday Luncheon

League **members** look forward to the December Holiday Luncheon when we have a fundraising activity and hear from a speaker.

Hot Topic Events

These events offer important news, developments, and trends with insightful analysis and commentary and may be conducted electronically or in person; many include guest speakers. The venue for in person events may include a luncheon or dinner. Look for announcements on Face Book and in *The Voter*. This is an opportunity to become actively engaged with the League through networking with other **members**, engaging in League business, and hearing important information and announcements. Hot Topic events are an excellent way to introduce your friends to the League. Details are provided in pre-event announcements, including topic, speaker, location, time, and any fee to attend.

Outreach

LWVT participates in the Saturday Downtown Marketplace, the Frenchtown Market, and occasionally at other locations with a League of Women Voters table at which **member** volunteers offer information about the League and issues supported by the League. We also register people to vote. League **members** must be certified to register people to vote through the Florida League's certification process which can be found on the State League's web site (<http://www.lwvfl.org/>).

Voting Matters is a radio broadcast that brings listeners information on public policy issues and elections. Currently the broadcast is carried by 88.9 WFSU-FM each Wednesday at 3:04pm. Archived segments are available at <https://wfsu.org/votingmatters>.

Communications and Publications

- *The Voter*, a newsletter published weekly except in June and July in print and digital format, is edited by Stuart Baker. Current and back issues are available on the League website: <https://www.lwvtallahassee.org/the-vote>
- Constant Contact, an online emailing service, is the means by which both the Tallahassee League and our State League sends information to **members** who have email addresses. New **members** are automatically added to the address list.
- Website - www.lwvtallahassee.org is an excellent source of information about the Tallahassee League. The League of Women Voters of Florida's website is at <http://www.lwvfl.org/> and the LWVUS website is at <http://lwv.org/>. Erin Edwards is our web master.
- Action alerts are emails sent by the national or State League asking **members** to contact elected officials about current issues and Florida Legislative and national Congressional votes.
- **Know Your Public Officials**, a list of national, state, and local elected officials, is published in both online and print format. Print copies are made available at the Leon County Supervisor of Elections Office and local libraries.
- Our phone number is 850-309-3005. Leave a message. Our mailing address is LWVT, 1400 Village Square Blvd., Suite 3, Box 115 Tallahassee, FL 32312-1231
- Our email address is LWVTallahassee@gmail.com.
- Our Facebook page is found at www.facebook.com/LWVTallahassee. Please "like" us and feel free to "share" posts.
- Our Twitter account is found at LWV Tallahassee @LWVTallahassee
- Our Instagram account is found at <https://www.instagram.com/lwvtlh>
- Our YouTube channel is <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCeL5HUh1ZycBpltiVzvOQCw>

Appendix One: League Principles

The League of Women Voters believes in representative government and in the individual liberties established in the Constitution of the United States. The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that all powers of the U.S. government should be exercised within the constitutional framework of a balance among the three branches of government: legislative, executive, and judicial.

The League of Women Voters believes that democratic government depends upon informed and active participation in government and requires that governmental bodies protect the citizen's right to know by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding open meetings, and making public records accessible.

The League of Women Voters believes that every citizen's right to vote should be protected; that every person should have access to free public education that provides equal opportunity for all; and that no person or group should suffer legal, economic, or administrative discrimination.

The League of Women Voters 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.

The League of Women Voters believes that efficient and economical government requires competent personnel, the clear assignment of responsibility, adequate financing, and coordination among the different agencies and levels of government.

The League of Women Voters believes that responsible government should be responsive to the will of the people; that government should maintain an equitable and flexible system of taxation, promote the conservation and development of natural resources in the public interest, share in the solution of economic and social problems that affect the general welfare, promote a sound economy and adopt domestic policies that facilitate the solution of international problems.

The League of Women Voters believes that cooperation with other nations is essential in the search for solutions to world problems and that development of international organization and international law is imperative in the promotion of world peace.

Updated: October 21, 2020 Board of Directors

Appendix Two: LWVT Officers and Board of Directors

The Tallahassee Board of Directors (the Board) includes four officers: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary; six Directors elected by the members; and up to six Directors appointed by the elected Officers and Directors.

Board Officers are elected by the membership to serve one-year terms; Directors may be elected by the membership to staggered two-year terms, or may be appointed by the Elected Board to serve one-year terms. Staggering Director terms assures a level of continuity on the Board between election cycles.

I.	Officers – 1 Year Term of Office May 1, 2021- April 30, 2022
	Sally Butzin, President Phelicia Stiell, Vice President Kathy Winn, Secretary Anne Newman, Treasurer
II.	Elected Directors – 2 Year Term of Office May 1, 2021 – April 30, 2023
	Trish Neely Katie Bohnett Danielle Irwin
III.	Elected Directors – 2 Year Term of Office May 1, 2020 – April 30, 2022
	Margaret Boeth Liz Holifield Barry Munroe
IV.	Appointed Directors – 1 Year Term of Office May 1, 2021 – April 30, 2022
	Christine Coble Sabrina Hartley Donna Austin Paula DeBoles-Johnson Wendy Grey Peggy Ball

To reach a Board Member, email LWVTallahassee@gmail.com, or call and leave a voicemail message 850-309-3005. Be specific regarding who you are trying to reach.

Appendix Three: LWVT Study & Action Groups, and Committees

Study & Action Groups	
Clean Energy & Natural Resources Meta Calder, Chair	Local Government Danielle Irwin, Chair
Public Education Sally Butzin, Chair	Local Government: Ethics Coalition Marilyn Wills, Liaison
Public Health Care Kathy Winn, Chair	Lobby Corps Trish Neely, Chair
Committees & Working Groups	
Communications Committee Linda Davis, Chair	Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Committee Sabrina Hartley, Chair
Finance Committee Peggy Ball, Chair	Membership Committee Trish Neely, Chair Peggy Ramsey, Roster Manager
New Citizen Initiative Sandra Kendall	Restoration of Felons' Rights Barry Munroe, Chair
Voter Services Margaret Boeth, Chair	Speakers' Bureau Stuart Baker, Chair
Ad Hoc Committee: Social Media, the Arts, & Technology	The Voter Newsletter Stuart Baker, Editor
Coalition Issues	
Gun Safety <i>Handled by the State League Issue Chair</i>	National Popular Vote Compact (NPV) <i>Handled by the State League Issue Chair</i>
Juvenile Justice <i>Handled by the State League Issue Chair</i>	

For additional information or to reach any of the Groups, Committees, or Coalitions, email LWVTallahassee@gmail.com, or call and leave a voicemail message 850-309-3005. Be specific regarding the group or individual you are trying to reach.