



STATE PROGRAM PLANNING INSTRUCTIONS LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF ILLINOIS 2011 – 2013

Only with input from our members will we have a viable and exciting action-oriented program to move us forward in influencing public policy in Illinois.

Purpose of State Program Planning:

State Program planning is the main tool of local League involvement in shaping the state League's public policy program, culminating with the adoption of a 2011–2013 LWVIL program at State Convention. The planning process reflects the partnership between the state and local Leagues

Program changes can be initiated before Convention, as explained in steps numbered 1–3 on the following pages or during the State Convention, as outlined in step number 4. Through the program planning process, local Leagues begin working on or planning for potential program changes that could ultimately be enacted at Convention. It is to a League's advantage to promote an idea early in the process to generate enthusiasm and support. If there is enough interest and commitment demonstrated by the local Leagues, the LWVIL Board may recommend amending the program as suggested in the local Leagues' Program Planning Response Forms.

The program planning process is outlined in **these instructions**. Additionally, this packet includes:

- **Letter from LWVIL President Nancy Marcus**
- **Program Planning Response Form**
- ***Status of Issues and Advocacy***, which reviews activities on issues, both educational and legislative, throughout 2009-2010 and forecasts anticipated activities for the next biennium.
- **Two already-submitted Program Recommendations** (one from local Leagues and one from the LWVIL Issues Committee)

PLEASE NOTE: program planning response forms are **due in the LWVIL office by March 7, 2010.**

Other Useful Resources

- ✓ LWVIL Issues Committee and Issues & Action VP
- ✓ *Where We Stand*, 2009-2011; LWVIL Position book (available online at www.lwvil.org)
- ✓ *Impact on Issues*, 2008-2010; LWVUS position book (available online at www.lwv.org)
- ✓ *Planning Program: From Choice Through Action* (included in the LWVIL President's Notebook)
- ✓ *Dimensions of a Local League Study*, LWVIL (available online at www.lwvil.org under "Resources for League Leaders" in the President's Handbook)

Local Leagues are encouraged to consult with Issues & Action VP Kim Reed, (630-545-0662 or issues@lwvil.org) to discuss a program initiative at any time before or during convention.

THE PROGRAM PLANNING PROCESS

1: REVIEW CURRENT LWVIL POSITIONS

Existing positions outlined in *Where We Stand* provide the basis for League action, including lobbying. The first step in program planning is to review current LWVIL positions (as listed on the response form that is enclosed and explained in *Where We Stand*), making sure to consider whether:

- ⇒ the goals addressed by the position have been met
- ⇒ there is still member interest, understanding, and agreement on the item
- ⇒ the position is still relevant

2: MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS ON CURRENT LWVIL POSITIONS

As listed on page 1 of the program planning response form, the possible recommendations for current positions are as follows.

- 1) **RETAIN**, meaning continue to act upon the current position as is;
- 2) **RE STUDY/UPDATE**, meaning modify or change all or part of a current position; or
- 3) **DROP**, meaning eliminate a position from the League's agenda.

REGARDING THE RESTUDY OPTION, PLEASE NOTE: If a local League or Leagues wish to pursue the restudy process (No. 2 option) on any position, they must plan to inform other local leagues and to generate statewide support for a proposed change at State Convention. While the state League can help, the responsibility for restudy or updates primarily lies with the local League or Leagues. When a position is being restudied, the position cannot be used for action.

REGARDING DROPPING A POSITION, PLEASE NOTE; if a position is dropped (No. 3 option), no action or lobbying can be undertaken in that area without a new study (as discussed below).

3: MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A NEW STUDY AND/OR A NEW ACTION FOCUS ITEM

Page 2 of the program planning response form is where local Leagues record recommendations for new studies or new action focus items.

1) **NEW STUDY:** Local Leagues study an issue to educate members on a public policy issue as a prelude to action. A **new study** is **ONLY** necessary if there is no League position on an issue at any level, local, state or national.

2) **ACTION FOCUS:** An **action focus** is a high-priority program item adopted by delegates at

Convention (for example, increasing school funding). **After adoption, state and local Leagues act as partners over a two-year period to promote the goals of the "action focus."** LWVIL provides informational material and training to help local Leagues engage in effective action in their communities, while LWVIL engages in complementary activities at the state level. An action focus recommendation is appropriate if there is an existing state or national position on an issue. It can combine citizen education and advocacy.

PLEASE NOTE: *When deciding to recommend a new study or action focus a local League should be guided by the careful consideration of the resources at both the local and state levels needed to accomplish any item(s), relative to the interest and commitment of its members. A state study or action focus means on-going local League involvement and activity on the item. It is therefore particularly important for a local League to consider new items in the context of its local program and activities and its own willingness or ability to participate.*

So when evaluating a new study idea or proposed action focus, consider the following key questions:

- ⇒ Does **your League** have a strong and broad member interest in the issue?
- ⇒ Is **your League** willing and able to work on the issue?
- ⇒ Is the issue of statewide interest?
- ⇒ Will timing and political realities permit effective League action?
- ⇒ Is League involvement likely to make an impact?
- ⇒ Is there an existing state or national position that can be used as a basis for action? If yes, an action focus is needed; if no, a new study is needed

4: TAKE NOTE OF OTHER ROUTES TO ACTION

Concurrence

In addition to the program planning process, a local League or Leagues can propose the adoption or amendment of a state League position at convention via "concurrence." Concurrence is the "act of agreeing with" a position developed by (1) recommendations of a resource committee, (2) decision statements formulated by League boards, or positions reached by another League or Leagues. Concurrence is an appropriate process when the item recommendation in question is straightforward and non-controversial. Leagues that are considering promoting the adoption or amendment of a state position by concurrence should note the adoption process outlined in the LWVIL by-laws.

PLEASE NOTE local Leagues pursuing this form of member agreement must send background material, including pros and cons and a rationale, to all Leagues six weeks before convention.

Will Of Convention

At Convention, a local League may present a motion directing the state League to take legislative action on an issue related to state government or to state League program. The issue must be covered by an existing position at the state or national level. A motion may also direct the state League to

request action on the national level. Generally these motions ask the state League to contact state constitutional officers or state legislators concerning a specific advocacy position. A delegate wishing to present a Will of Convention Motion must consult the LWVIL VP of Issues and Action prior to the opening of convention.

Legislative Priority

While an "**action focus**" is a program item adopted by delegates at convention, "**legislative priorities**" reflect both the interests of the League and the prevailing political climate.

Legislative priorities are approved yearly by the LWVIL Board based on recommendations forwarded by the Issues Committee. The priorities are set in November or December prior to the succeeding year's spring legislative session. Local Leagues are notified of the priorities after the state board approves them.

THE STATE PROGRAM PLANNING CALENDAR FOR 2010-2011

December - February: Local Leagues develop their program planning recommendations and develop and distribute "lobby" materials for locally proposed program items or concurrence proposals (including the restudy/update and new studies and action focus options discussed above). Again, concurrence materials must be distributed to all local Leagues six weeks prior to convention.

March 7th: **Local League Program recommendations due in the state office.** This deadline allows the Board to review the recommendations of local Leagues and potentially propose program changes based on those recommendations in April.

April 16th: The state board considers local League input and makes program recommendations, (budget and bylaws are considered at this board meeting, too).

April 20th: State board program recommendations (budget and bylaws, too) sent to local Leagues.

June 10-12: LWVIL Convention - local Leagues may wish to host a caucus to promote a program item or lobby their fellow delegates to support their favorite item!