

League of Women Voters of Collin County  
*Member Handbook*

## ***How We Are Organized***

The League is comprised of two separate entities with distinct objectives, structures, and tax status:

- **The League of Women Voters**
  - A nonpartisan political advocacy organization
  - A nonprofit membership organization (501[c][4])
  - Supported by dues and contributions that are *not* tax-deductible
- **The League of Women Voters Education Fund**
  - A citizen education organization
  - A charitable organization (501[c][3])
  - Contributions *are* tax-deductible

**Multilevel membership.** Joining the League includes membership at the local, state, and national levels. Unified membership enables local Leagues to address state and national issues locally.

**Leadership.** In Collin County, League members elect officers and a board of directors at an annual meeting; delegates elect state and national officers and board members at state and national biennial conventions. Boards provide leadership in carrying out the work of the organization and are ultimately responsible for its finances and operations. Board meetings are held on a regular basis and are open to all members.

**Membership meetings.** Members discuss issues being studied or local topics of interest to members of the League. If the size of the League warrants it, members may meet in small groups called units.

**General meetings.** Nonpartisan informational meetings are open to public as well as members of the League. Topics range from background information related to the League's study of an issue relevant to public policy and interest, citizen education on voter registration and the voting process, the impact of legislation, etc. Informational meetings may either (a) educate citizens by providing balanced information so that they can use the information to make their own decisions or (b) advocate for a position supported by the League. The Education Fund may finance citizen education meetings but not advocacy meetings that are intended to influence policy or legislation.

**Candidate forums.** The LWV-Texas defines a candidate forum "as a live public meeting in which all the candidates for one or more offices present their views in short individual speeches, and then answer questions from the audience." The forums must be nonpartisan and ensure that all candidates are treated equally and fairly.

**Annual meetings, conventions, and councils.** At each level of the League, members have a voice in the decisions. Any member may attend and vote at the local League annual meeting. Any member may attend state and national biennial conventions and may serve as a voting delegate if given that responsibility by their local League. The number of state and national delegates from a local League is proportional to its size. At annual meetings and conventions, voting members or delegates:

- Elect officers and the board of directors
- Approve a budget
- Amend the bylaws
- Decide to undertake study of issues relevant to public policy and interest
- Adopt positions on issues relevant to public policy and interest based on member agreement following completion of study of the issue
- Provide general direction to plans for the coming year(s)

In non-convention years, state and national Leagues hold councils to adopt a budget and assess program developments.