



## Member Handbook 2024-2025

### *Welcome to the League!*

Congratulations on your decision to join the League of Women Voters of North Pinellas County! We are excited to welcome you as a member of our local League, the League of Women Voters of Florida, and the League of Women Voters of the United States. You now belong to one of the nation's most widely recognized, respected, and effective citizen organizations.

League members are diverse, with folks from all work backgrounds: business, corporate, nonprofit, education, and community organizations. There is also variability in socioeconomic status and background, cultural experience, geographic origin, race, religion, etc. We don't all think alike or support the same political party. While Leaguers may appear to be bundles of energy and have loads of spare time, the League gets things done through the help of many people doing many things, big and small. And that's people like you.

We have different talents to offer at different times in our lives. Combining our brains, energy, skills, and time creates a powerful force supporting our grassroots organization's mission.

As a member of the League, you have the opportunity to become a more informed and effective citizen. Your investment of time and talent benefits you personally and strengthens our organization. The more you contribute, the more you'll gain from your membership.

As a new member, you have a world of opportunities at your fingertips. We encourage you to be active and get involved in the areas that interest you. Your unique perspective and contributions are what make our organization thrive.

This guide contains the essential information needed to be an active, vital member.

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## League principles

**Mission:** Empowering voters. Defending democracy.

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

**Value:** We believe in the power of women (and men) to create a more perfect democracy.

The League of Women Voters of Florida (LWVFL) is a nonpartisan political organization encouraging informed and active participation in government, working to increase understanding of major policy issues, and advocating for legislative changes and policies for the public good.



The League believes:

- That representative government and individual liberties established in the Constitution of the United States are upheld.
- That a democratic government depends upon the informed and active participation of its citizens 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.
- That the right to vote for every citizen 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.
- 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.
- That cooperation with other nations is essential in the search for solutions to world problems and that the development of international organization and international law is imperative in the promotion of world peace.

## Nonpartisan policy

While members are urged to be as active as possible in the political process, the League does not

support or oppose any political party or candidate for office.

## Who can join?

Voting membership is open to any citizen at least 18 years old living in the United States. Men are welcome as members. A person joining a local League automatically becomes a member of the state and national levels of the organization, as well.

## How the League is organized

The League's structure, as a grassroots organization, mirrors the representative system of government under which we live. Just as local, state, and national governments are interdependent, with the individual citizen as the base, our members play a crucial role in shaping the policies and our Program at all League levels. The president of each level is the voice of our organization. At each level of the League, the elected Board of Directors is entrusted with managing activities.

The local agenda-adopting meeting is called the Annual Meeting. At this meeting, we elect officers, set dues and budgets, change bylaws (if necessary), and select issues to be studied or acted on.

At the state and national levels, the process of making decisions on officers and programs is inclusive and democratic. It begins with members at local meetings, who put forward their recommendations. The final decisions are then made at the state or national biennial Convention, a gathering composed of delegates elected by the local Leagues, ensuring that every voice is heard and considered.

As a grassroots organization, the League encourages members to express themselves to their leaders on any League concern. Members are always welcome at any Board meeting or state or national Convention, where they can speak up to persuade and to vote if they are Board members or delegates.

## What does the League do?

An essential part of League membership is participating in the various events, committees, and discussions throughout the year. We want to make your voice heard and hear how you want to help the community. Here is our process.

### Decide on a Program

The League adopts the recommendations from the program planning meetings at the annual meeting in April.

Once the program items are selected, action teams for each focus begin their work. We invite every member to participate, and these small groups offer excellent opportunities for personal growth, networking, and forming new friendships.

League action takes many forms. It may be appropriate to lobby, monitor meetings, write letters, make speeches, poll citizens, circulate petitions, put out publications, form coalitions, or even go to court. An

action program aims to increase public awareness of an issue and secure a resolution consistent with League goals.

When it comes to public communication, it's important to remember that only the president or their representative speaks on behalf of the League. Individual members are not authorized to present League positions in public testimony or letters to the editor. However, we encourage you to share your informed opinions as individual citizens.

## Getting involved in the League's work

Each year, the League decides on an action agenda called the **PROGRAM**. Members are encouraged to voice their priorities at our Program Planning committee meetings. Many considerations come into play during program selection.

Every year, various initiatives are planned and organized based on our "Program"—the education and advocacy platform adopted at the Annual Meeting. This Program is not just a set of actions, but a powerful tool that propels our mission forward. The League year is from April 1st to March 31st, and your participation is what makes our mission a reality.

You can stay informed about what the LWVNPC committees:

- Follow [our Facebook page](#) for event notices and links to articles relevant to our work • Check out the [online calendar](#) for current event details, including committee team meetings
- Read email correspondence from LWVNPC, especially our monthly newsletter [The Voter](#) posted on our website.
- [LWVNPC Bylaws](#)

As you contemplate your involvement, keep in mind that you can ease your way in or dive in headfirst -- the choice is yours. Are you eager to try something new, delve into an emerging issue, or hone a new skill? Or perhaps you prefer to contribute your existing knowledge and expertise? Your unique skills and perspectives are invaluable to us.

## League finance

Our League members are our primary source of income. Expected membership dues are currently \$60.00 a year. Dues will soon be collected at the national level and redistributed to national and state, with 20% returning to our local league.

Members wishing to increase their contributions should contribute or write a check directly to our local league—this way we keep 100% for our local work. We recently incorporated as a 501(c)3 so all contributions are now tax deductible. The quality and intensity of our work relies on sufficient funding to reach the majority of voters.

Our League requires a wide diversity of membership to be able to fulfill our mission. Money should not be a barrier to full participation. For individuals unable to afford the expected rate, payment can be made for a lesser amount, with a minimum of \$20 annually or payment of any amount

between \$20 and \$60.

## League member gatherings

We offer New Member Orientations quarterly at minimum. Prospective members and all members who have joined in the last six months are invited.

All-member LWVNPC General Membership Meetings occur throughout the fiscal year. They cover various topics and allow members, committee members, and board members to discuss news, concerns, and issues. Your League holds Committee meetings and other events throughout the year.

The platform developed by the Committees is adopted in April when all members gather for our Annual Meeting. In December, we hold an all-member holiday party and invite all members to join to celebrate the holidays.

## History of the League

Carrie Chapman Catt organized the League of Women Voters of the United States in 1920, shortly before the Women's Suffrage Amendment was ratified. The League aimed to help newly enfranchised women become politically educated, responsible voting citizens.

In 1939, three city Leagues, St. Petersburg, Winter Haven, and Winter Park Orlando, formed the Florida League. Now, the League has 29 local Leagues, with almost 7,000 members in Florida (as of June 2020).

The League operates at national, state, and local levels through more than 800 state and local Leagues in all 50 states and Washington, D.C. Sister Leagues in our region include LWV SPA (St. Pete Area), LWV Hillsborough, LWV Polk, and LWV Sarasota-Manatee.

Over the years, the League has opened the door to intellectual activity and involvement in political life. League members have studied many issues and actively called for public policy changes and reforms. The League has served as a training ground for many community leaders and is determined to remain a pertinent and meaningful collective voice in local governance.

The League aims to promote political responsibility through informed and active citizen participation in government, action on selected governmental issues, and influence of public policy through education and advocacy.

## Leadership

### 2024-2025 Board of Directors

President [Tanya Landry](#)

2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President (Membership) [Jacqueline Farrell](#)

1<sup>st</sup> Vice President (Administration) [Beth Hovind](#)

Treasurer [Dennis McDermott](#)



Secretary [Gayla Larson](#)  
Director [Jeanne Reynolds](#)  
Director [Vivian Posey](#)  
Director [Linda Metzkwow](#)  
Director [Marti Folwell](#)

The Board meets on the first Wednesday of each month. On a quarterly basis, and Board meets with Committee chairs for a “Team Leads” meeting. A strategic planning session is held early in the summer, attended by Board members and Committee chairs.

## Standing Committees

### Membership

Jacqueline Farrell, chair

Purpose: Recruits new members, works to retain current members, provides orientation for new members and maintains membership records, all with the aim of promoting opportunities for members to deepen their understanding of governmental policy and legislation at the local, state and national levels.

### Nominating

Marti Folwell, chair

Purpose: The charge of the committee is to meaningfully identify and engage potential leaders for board roles, and present recommendations for nominations to ensure a full slate and functioning board at the annual meeting. This committee reports directly to the membership.

### Audit

Appointed by the Board, this committee examines the books of the Treasurer prior to each Annual Meeting for its report to the members at that meeting.

### Bylaws

Appointed by the Board, this committee reviews the bylaws annually and makes recommended changes for consideration of the membership at the Annual Meeting.

### Finance

Dennis McDermott, chair  
Fundraising  
Publicity

### Education

Vivian Posey and Jeanne Reynolds, co-chairs

Coordinates development of an online nonpartisan Voter Guide to educate the community on basic registration and voting information, providing key election dates and deadlines, informing the public about changes in election law. The team also surveys local and state candidates for their responses to issue-based questions and researches all sides of local ballot issues and creating “yes vote” and “no vote” analysis statements for publication in the Voter Guide.

### Voter Service Committee

Linda Metzkwow, chair

This committee organizes and trains Voter Service team members to register citizens to vote. In so doing, this committee ensures that members have completed the LWVFL exam at 100%. They select voter registration venues with contacts to ensure success; ensure voter registration materials are available to team members; track registration sites for effectiveness of how many are registered; sponsors "Get Out The Vote" campaigns; assists with candidate forums; monitors the SOE website; and provides observers for voter counts.

## Education

Vivian Posey and Jeanne Reynolds, co-chairs

This committee works with the LWVSPA to support Florida's constitutional requirement to make adequate provision for the education of all children that is uniform, efficient, safe, secure, and high quality.

## League contact information

Mailing Address: League of Women Voters of North Pinellas County  
PO Box 7867  
Clearwater, FL 33758  
Office phone: 727-386-8525

- On the web:** • [League of Women Voters of North Pinellas County](#)
- [League of Women Voters of the St. Petersburg Area](#)
  - [League of Women Voters of Florida](#)
  - [League of Women Voters of the United States](#)
  - [LWV Florida Study and Action Guide](#)

- On Facebook:** • [League of Women Voters of the St. Petersburg Area](#)
- [League of Women Voters of Florida](#)
  - [League of Women Voters of the United States](#)

- On X (Twitter):** • [League of Women Voters of the North Pinellas County](#) •  
[League of Women Voters of Florida](#)
- [League of Women Voters of the United States](#)

- On Instagram:** • [League of Women Voters of North Pinellas County](#)
- [League of Women Voters of Florida](#)