

Decisions a committee has made (e.g., letters of inquiry have been sent to elected officials. This keeps other Board members from looking stupid if an official mentions the letter and asks why he got it.);

Problems encountered in getting a job done, or reactions of members to a project (negative, enthused, etc.);

Information on resources that are significant to the League (e.g., there is another organization taking an active role in this area which may be a resource or partner.);

Important information from state or national Leagues relating to your job (e.g., LWVUS has entered litigation in Pennsylvania as a friend of the court. Or LWVUS is participating in a state-wide coalition in this issue.);

• WHEN SHOULD YOU ASK FOR A BOARD DECISION?

When you are going to spend a lot of money;

When you want to hold a public or membership meeting (not committee meetings);

When you want to publish something or distribute materials to members or the public;

When you want to make a statement in the League's name;

When you want to make any demand on the League's time, money or reputation;

When you want to establish a policy or solve a problem (which sometimes is best done by passing the buck to the Board);

When you are not sure whether you should ask for a Board decision.

• HOW DO YOU REPORT?

If lots of information is necessary for an informed Board decision, consider sending out a summary with the agenda. Or bring it to the meeting.

Be aware of time! The president has to get through the agenda on time and she hates to cut you off, but other Board members have reports to make, too.

At the beginning of your report, state what you are going to do (e.g., "I'm going to ask the Board's approval of a letter to the City Council" or "I'm reporting on the committee's progress and some problems we have encountered.").

If you want a Board decision, state clearly and briefly what led up to your request. (The Citizens Master Plan Committee has issued a report and asked other organizations to comment on it at the School Board meeting next Tuesday. The report recommends that... etc., etc.). Tell why the League should act. Do we have a position? What is it? Do we need a policy? Have we got one already?

MAKE A RECOMMENDATION !

You know more about the possible courses of action than anyone except possibly the president and she cannot give your report for you and cannot make any motions. **MAKE A MOTION** that your recommendation be adopted so the Board will have something to discuss. More time is lost at Board meetings doing committee work for chairmen who are unprepared than for any other reason.

Offer pertinent information if needed by the Board and be prepared to answer questions. Participate in the discussion.

Accept the Board's decision gracefully. Usually they will follow your recommendations pretty closely but sometimes Total Board Responsibility dictates another course, which you must accept.



FOR THE NEW

And Not So New

BOARD MEMBERS



Although it is an honor to be on a League Board, there are no honorary positions! Each Board member has a dual assignment. One is a Director first and holds a portfolio or specific assignment second. This division of responsibilities means that the burden of running an effective League is lightened since everyone is expected to share equally in fundraising, new member recruitment, attending units and special meetings, etc.

If you are a new Board member, you may be uncertain about your responsibilities and wondering if you will ever know as much as others seem to know. Hang on - it will all clear up shortly. But to hasten the prospect, here are some suggestions to help you.....

BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES

- * Attend all Board meetings, coming on time and staying to the end. All Board members take part in decision-making - you are needed!
- * Participate in all policy decisions, developing understanding of all parts of League program, service, policy and purpose. In other words - Total Board Responsibility. Come prepared to Board meetings. Read your agenda material and any other reports forwarded to you during the interim between Board meetings. This will allow for more intelligent decision-making.
- * Carry out your own portfolio assignment.
- * Represent and interpret the League in your own community.
- * Safeguard the League's reputation for non-partisanship.

PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITIES

- * Get the files and advice on procedure from the preceding chairman. Training on a one-to-one basis, between outgoing and incoming chairmen is vital. While a new chairman will want to try new methods and will have fresh ideas, it helps to know how things were done in the past, to have some tips on getting the job done most effectively, and to get the rationale behind past Board decisions that affect the portfolio.
- * Study the relevant sections of "In League Guidelines for Local Leagues".
- * Attend a Board training session and any area state and national meetings of League that you are able.

- * Secure the name of the state level director for your portfolio. (See the current Yearbook published by the League of Women Voters of California each summer). Use her as needed.
- * Develop a committee, both to assist you and to nurture participation and leadership. Stay in touch with your committee - **USE ITS MEMBERS.** That's why most people join the League.
- * Report to the Board any plans made by your committee. Request Board authorization to carry them out. (See How to Report to the Board below).
- * Know your lines of communication with your own Board and the state Board and what reports or deadlines pertain to you. Plan ahead and meet deadlines without panic.
- * Keep a record and file for your successor.
- * Prepare bulletin, program, or annual report materials as needed.
- * Get copies of state and national publication catalogues and use them.
- * Know what funds your portfolio has been budgeted; find out how you are reimbursed for expenses, voucher system, etc.
- * Attend all general membership and unit meetings. Not only will you be a more informed, effective Board member, but your contributions at these meetings are needed.
- * Receive directly or through your president, state and national materials which apply to your portfolio and use these, too.
- * Get help, if needed, from your president, fellow Board members and committees, and even the national Board and staff. Remember, individual Leaguers all over the country are facing the same problems you are, enjoying the process of trying to solve problems, and doing so "to promote informed and active participation in government".
- * Do enjoy serving on your local League Board!

LEAGUE TOOLS YOU NEED

Basic League tools should be placed in a binder which you can refer to easily and which you can also carry to Board meetings.

- * Portfolio job description
- * Local League by-laws
- * Local League budget
- * Membership list
- * List of your committee members
- * List of local Board members
- * Non-partisanship policy and Board policies of your local League.
- * Local League calendar for the year
- * A copy of "In League - Guidelines for Local Leagues"
- * Local, state and national program lists
- * State and national publication catalogues

HOW TO REPORT TO THE BOARD

- * If you have a report, call the president and let her know. Making out the agenda for Board meetings is very difficult when you're working in the dark.

• WHAT SHOULD BE REPORTED?

Progress in organization of a job, or in getting it accomplished;

All reports of consensus meetings and proposed position statements;