**VOTER GUIDE PROCEDURES for GENERAL ELECTIONS**

(AdoptedMay 2008**;** Revised 11/12, 01/13, 09/17, 07/20**)**

For each general election, the Board of Directors of the League of Women Voters of New Mexico develops and poses questions to candidates for certain statewide and district offices. The LWVNM Voter Services Chair writes descriptions of statewide and regional offices as listed below, and the content of statewide ballot questions.

Local Leagues are responsible for gathering information on all other candidates and ballot questions including the local projects included in statewide general obligation bonds. Local Leagues with overlapping districts coordinate their efforts so that candidates are not asked to respond to more than one League questionnaire.

Information gathered by the Chair is distributed to the local Leagues for publication in their print and online voter guides and to the LWVNM webmaster for posting on [www.lwvnm.org](http://www.lwvnm.org). The Chair also makes sure that the local League voter guides for general elections are sent to the LWVNM webmaster for posting and to LWVUS for linking in Vote411.

The League observes the following procedures in producing Voter Guides for general elections:

1. After the primary election, the LWVNM Voter Services Chair sends to the Voter Services Committee a Voter Guide production schedule along with a list of the positions to be addressed by the Committee, which includes members from each of the local Leagues.

The positions list includes candidates for U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives and candidates for the following statewide offices: Supreme Court and Court of Appeals Judges (first time and retention), Governor, Lt. Governor, Attorney General, Secretary of State, Treasurer, Auditor, Land Commissioner, and the Public Regulation and Public Education Commissions.

1. Possible questions for these offices are generated by the Committee and the local Leagues. Questions are selected by the Committee and consolidated by the Chair for submission to the LWVNM Board for approval, revision, or replacement at its July meeting. LWVNM has final authority over the questions for the above offices.
2. The Chair disseminates the Board-approved questions to the presidents of the local Leagues and the Voter Services Committee. The Chair sends customized letters, questions, and guidelines to all of the opposed, certified federal and state candidates on the list.
3. Responsibilities of the Chair:

* Compile the election calendar information and update the state-wide position descriptions and salary and per diem information for the Committee;
* Request from the NM Department of Finance and Administration the tax implications of the proposed General Obligation Bonds for the current election
* Get the final list of proposed projects by county covered in each bond question;
* Ask Legislative Council Service to send the ballot language, explanations, and the pros and cons of each proposed Constitutional amendment in MS WORD. It is essential to summarize the explanation and the best three pros and the best three cons for each amendment proposal into non-technical, everyday language so that the public can readily understand what they are voting for or against. It is advisable to share the League’s summaries of the Constitutional amendments with LCS, though staff will not suggest changes unless there are inaccuracies.
* Send the final components of the Voter Guide to the Committee and deposit them into the Dropbox account that the Committee shares. There are inevitably changes to some documents, so Dropbox makes it clear which versions are most recent. The webmaster is sent the final versions as soon as they are available to post on [www.lwvnm.org](http://www.lwvnm.org).
* Post candidate responses and photos in Dropbox as they come in and alert the Committee each time Dropbox is updated.

1. As soon as the text for the General Obligation Bonds and Constitutional amendments is prepared, it should be sent in WORD to the Secretary of State, who uses some of what we prepare for the official voter guide of that office. It is crucial to keep in close touch with the Bureau of Elections staff on their timeline for publication and to verify whether the SOS will use our summaries to explain the Constitutional amendments as well as the text about the General Obligation Bonds that DFA has approved. The SOS links to our Voter Guides on their website.
2. The Voter Services Committees of the local Leagues develop and send their own sets of questions to candidates for all offices that are not specifically listed above. Unopposed candidates often just have their names and offices listed, or they may be sent questionnaires depending on decisions made by the local Leagues. For clarity, the term “unopposed” may be written beneath the candidate’s name. When candidates facing opposition serve districts with more than one local League, the local Leagues coordinate the questions so that no candidate receives more than one set of League questions. Ultimately, the choice of questions rests with the local League that has the largest population in the district.
3. Write-in candidates who have been certified by the Secretary of State by August 10 are offered the opportunity to respond to Voter Guide questions. For statewide offices, the Chair will follow up with the write-in candidate. For local area candidates, the local League will follow up. At a minimum, all write-in candidates should have their names, photos, and office listed in League Voter Guides.
4. The deadline for receipt of responses is generally two weeks after the bulk of the questionnaires are mailed or emailed. If no reply is received by the deadline, the words, “No reply received” will be printed by the candidate’s name. The Chair will email reminders to the official campaign address of the candidates on the list above a week before the deadline. Reminders to all other candidates are the responsibility of the local Leagues. Follow-up phone calls are optional. Exceptions to deadlines are granted only when there are good justifications for delays.
5. In fairness to all candidates, word limits are strictly enforced. Responses of candidates are published as submitted unless there is potentially defamatory content, in which case the League will defer to the opinion of counsel.
6. All responses are printed in paragraph form. Lists are converted by inserting punctuation after each item. Responses in caps, bold, and italics are converted to standard format. Otherwise, the League will in no way edit for meaning, grammar, punctuation, or spelling.
7. The Chair collects and distributes the responses and photos of statewide candidates and information on statewide ballot measures, such as constitutional amendments and bond questions, as soon as they are ready. The LWVNM webmaster posts this information along with links to the Voter Guides of the local Leagues. The LWVNM website may also post the responses of candidates whose districts include areas served by more than one local League.
8. The text of the local League Voter Guides is restricted to League use until the local president determines it is ready for publication.

1. Exclusive rights to publicize the Voter Guide will not be granted to any media or public relations organization.
2. The text below or a similar text is required for all League Voter Guides:

The League of Women Voters is a non-partisan organization that provides information about candidates and ballot questions so that citizens can make informed election decisions. The League does not support or oppose any political party or any candidate. The candidate information in this Voter Guide was obtained by means of a questionnaire sent to all candidates certified by the Secretary of State. The responses of the candidates to our questionnaire are printed as received by the League without editing for meaning, grammar, punctuation, or spelling. However, lists will be converted to paragraph form by inserting punctuation after each item. Responses in caps, bold, and italics will be converted to standard format. Because of space restrictions, candidates are limited to a specific number of words.

Disclaimer:

The information in this Voter Guide has been carefully compiled to assure maximum accuracy. However, the League assumes no responsibility for the content of any candidate’s reply or for errors or omissions.

Prepared by the League of Women Voters of New Mexico and the League of Women Voters of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and financed by contributions from League members, friends, and New Mexico businesses. No elected officials, candidates for office, or political party representatives are listed as donors of League Voter Guides.