



**Job Description**  
**State Study Chair and Committee**

Adopted July 20, 2013

**The Study Committee Chair's responsibility is to**

1. Form and lead a committee with a statewide representation.
2. Assign tasks to study committee members.
3. Present all plans to the LWVNM Board (Board) for approval and keep Board and committee members informed of progress on the study and problems that may arise.
4. If appropriate, develop a budget for the study and keep an account of all expenditures to be sure that the study expenses stay within the budget allowance.
5. Keep a complete and accurate cost list of goods and services that are donated to the League for use in the committee's work and the source.
6. Recruit someone with good writing skills to assist in writing the study guide and other materials intended for distribution beyond the committee.
7. Make sure to include documentation for all materials in the Study Kit.

**After local Leagues have submitted their consensus reports, the study committee will**

1. Compile and evaluate consensus reports; send tally and notes to committee members.
2. Write a draft position based on points where consensus was reached and present it to the full Board for approval.
3. Prepare report with consensus questions and responses and the Board-approved position; write summaries of the consensus report and adopted position for the LWVNM Positions document.
4. Draft final report to be published in *La Palabra*.
5. Draft article or op-ed for publication and include information of interest to the general public. Submit the article to the Board for approval.

**Study's Organizational Files**

Keep pertinent files well organized, including LWVNM Board reports, minutes of study committee meetings, summaries of study interviews and research material, and relevant correspondence

**Calendar**

Develop a calendar with Board meeting dates for presentation of scope, Study Kit, consensus questions, consensus items, and position approval.

Add all committee meeting dates and other dates important to the committee, including interviews with experts, discussion leader briefings, consensus meetings, etc.).

Remember local Leagues need time to schedule their unit meetings. Get materials such as the Study Guide to them as much in advance as possible of their units. Do not underestimate the importance of this step - timing is all. If you give the local Leagues too little time to allow preparation for their unit meetings, they are less likely to participate fully. Build in time to get

the consensus reports back from the local Leagues to the committee for review, tabulation, and analysis and for drafting the position for submission to the LWVNM Board.

### **Communications**

Keep the Board informed of your committee plans, activities, successes, and problems. If the study chair is not on the Board, the Program Chair serves as the liaison to the study committee. The Program Chair will answer the questions of the committee, report back to the Board about the progress of the committee, and assist the committee in keeping on task.

Make sure all articles related to the study are informational only and based on actual research and data gathered.

### **Committee Meetings**

The first study committee meeting is critical for setting the tone, the pace, and expectations. It will be partly orientation, partly organizational, and partly specific discussion of the study.

\*Have each person identify what about the study is of particular interest or importance.

\*Explain studies in general - what is involved, what is expected.

\*Discuss the specific guidelines of the study at hand.

\*Establish standards for gathering information, reporting, work product, timeline

\*Hand out preliminary outline, which includes the problem, the proposed scope, and the focus.

\*Discuss limits for email correspondence and possibility for having conference call meetings.

\*Fix the criteria for a balanced, objective study.

\*Map the tentative timeline and calendar for the entire study that has been developed ahead of time in consultation with the Board liaison.

\*Assign committee member tasks

\*Summarize the meeting, answer questions

\*Set next meeting's date, location, and agenda as well as best times and location for future meetings. Strive for a regular pattern for study committee meetings, taking into account when Board meetings are held since the chair will have to attend those meetings when the study is on the agenda.

\*Remind committee members that there can be no advocacy on the issue under study. If there is a pre-existing position, it remains in effect during the study. Knowing that the League is studying an issue often brings interest to that issue by the public and by the policy agency. Do not be surprised if government representatives begin to reassess their approach to an issue currently under study by the League.

## **RESEARCH- FINDING THE INFORMATION**

The two general types of sources of information are printed or electronic material and a variety of methods known collectively as field research.

### **Printed Material**

Relevant existing laws, regulations, codes, ordinances. Depending on the topic, these may be federal, state, regional local, or all four. In any case, you will be looking at their application. Examine LWVNM and LWVUS League publications on the subject. Look for publications of related agencies and associations as well as articles in newspapers and periodicals. Remember to review materials representing a range of philosophies. Read studies done on the same subject by other state Leagues. You can try to get information from Leagues in other states by contacting them through the LWV Clearinghouse or separately. Ask them to share copies of their consensus questions, positions, and reports.

## **Field Research**

Meetings/hearings. Attend regular meetings and special hearings of governmental bodies dealing with study issue.

Interviews. Wait until some background research has been done before interviewing, so that the interviewers will be more knowledgeable and can maximize time spent interviewing. Interview staff of appropriate legislative committees, elected and appointed leaders and their staff.

Interview both advocates and critics, as well as users of the system in study.

Expert testimony. A variation of the interview is to invite experts to meet with the whole committee or the general membership.

## **Questionnaires or Polls**

Use written questionnaires or polls with caution. There is a technique to designing an objective questionnaire, and the results of a biased survey will prejudice the credibility of the study.

## **TIMELINE**

The following is a study cycle using two League years. It is wise to split the tasks of a multiyear study so there will be a report at Council of what was covered during the first year and what is expected to be covered the following year.

### **After the State Convention/ Summer/Fall/Winter (Year 1):**

- \*Form small steering committee to do preliminary planning
- \*Seek funding for study if necessary.
- \*Start recruiting rest of study committee members and submit names to LWVNM Board
- \*Be prepared to attend Board meetings if the state study is on the agenda (approval of scope, consensus questions, report of final consensus, etc.) The Board meets in July, September, November, January, March, and May for Council and Convention in alternate years.
- \*Establish communications protocol
- \*Obtain Board approval of the scope of study in July or September. The scope of the study is a detailed explanation of the extent and limits of the study, intended areas of exploration, and sometimes, the emphasis on a particular aspect. The scope is developed by the study committee and approved by the LWVNMEF Board. The scope may be modified at the Board's discretion. Final wording of the scope should be clearly within the meaning of the wording of the program item adopted by the delegates of the Convention.
- \*Determine dates for committee meetings
- \*Establish a tentative committee schedule working backwards from mandatory dates
- \*Guide the research done by individual committee members

### **Spring/Summer (entering Year 2):**

- \*Begin meeting on a regular schedule
- \*Report committee plans to the Board / Committee members report on research done
- \*Begin preparation of Study Kit
- \*Submit material for publication in *La Palabra* to keep the membership aware of the study
- \*Present Study Kit and other materials to Board for approval
- \*Present proposed consensus questions to the Board for approval no later than July of the second year.
- \* Work with local League presidents to set dates to hold unit (discussion and consensus) meetings in October/November/December

**Fall/Winter (Year 2):**

- \*Distribute Study Guide to local Leagues in September for their preparation for local unit meetings
- \*Lead the consensus meetings around the state.
- \*Reconvene committee to review consensus reports from local Leagues and prepare consensus report in late January and the draft of the position. The Board liaison will assist.
- \*Email the consensus report and the position draft to the president at least two weeks before the March Board meeting when you will seek approval of the Board.
- \*Prepare to present study and final position at Convention.
- \*Draft press release publicizing the newly adopted position if appropriate and desirable.