

League of Women Voters of Needham

Policy for Collaborations with Other Organizations

Approved by LWVN Board of Directors 2 November 2017

The League of Women Voters of Needham (LWVN) believes that collaborating with other organizations locally, regionally, or statewide increases our impact in the areas of civic education and advocacy. This policy does not cover collaborations on voter service events and activities.

Types of Collaborations

Member Organization of a Coalition

As a coalition member, LWVN is one of several organizations within an umbrella organization. Membership in a coalition is a more permanent arrangement that implies that LWVN supports the mission of the coalition, and the coalition can effectively contribute toward LWVN's educational and advocacy goals.

Collaborating on Events

Collaborating on events is generally a temporary collaboration only for the event or series of related events. LWVN lends its name, reputation, experience and organization to an event. LWVN may contribute financial or in-kind support.

Lead organization

The lead organization generally conceives of and carries out the event. The lead organization is generally listed first on promotional materials. If LWVN is the lead organization it may invite other organizations to co-sponsor or partner with LWVN with the event. If LWVN is not the lead organization, it may be invited by an other organization to co-sponsor or partner.

Co-sponsor

Co-sponsorship implies equal "credit" for the event. Because other Leagues share the same mission and organizational structure, co-sponsoring with other Leagues has fewer conditions and requirements.

Co-sponsor (with another LWV). Other Leagues in the region or state may co-sponsor. The lead and co-sponsoring Leagues should determine to what extent they will be involved with promotional materials, planning, and implementation.

Co-sponsor (with non-LWV) Co-sponsorship with a non-LWV organization implies equal responsibility for the event. The co-sponsoring organization should be listed in promotional materials, review and approve promotional material, and take part in the planning and implementation of the event. In general, the co-sponsors should have a speaking role at the event (e.g. welcome, moderating, closing). In some cases when LWVN

is the lead organization, a co-sponsor may delegate some of the responsibilities listed above to the League. [example NPS and Civics Bee]

Partner Organization

A partner organization is a temporary, informal collaboration that implies that LWVN agrees that the event is appropriate within the mission and positions of LWVN. Generally partner organizations are listed with event information on the lead organization's website, program, and perhaps promotional materials.

Action Campaigns

LWVN may collaborate with other organizations on an action campaign for a local issue, Town Meeting article (support or opposition), or local ballot question. LWVN may be part of the campaign committee, may support a campaign, or may take action on its own.

Before lending its name in support of a campaign, the LWVN board must vote in support or opposition to the issue, and it must be based on a local, state, or national position.

LWVN may use its website, social media, newsletters, and newspaper columns/letters for the campaign's position. All such branded materials must be approved by the LWVN president and, if a signature is appropriate, signed by the president or her/his designee.

LWVN may participate in a statewide campaign through the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts, but may not join a statewide action campaign as a local League. (If there is any question about statewide campaigns contact the LWVMA.)

Guidelines for collaborating

Considerations

The following considerations will guide the LWVN board in determining whether to collaborate. The criteria also apply to decisions on whether to have a representative attend the meetings of an informal group on a regular basis.

- There must be clear and compelling reasons for collaborating.
- The goals and actions of the collaboration should be in accord with League mission and positions.
- The collaboration must not compromise the League's nonpartisanship. The collaborative activity must not be in support of a candidate or party. However, the collaborating organization may support parties or candidates.

For example, LWVN may decide to collect signatures for a ballot question at a table from a group that endorses candidates. It is OK to do that as long as there is no campaign literature, signage or other campaign activity at the table.

LWVN may co-sponsor an event with a group that endorses candidates. It is OK as long as there is no written or spoken support for the candidate (or party). During the campaign season, as collaborators may begin endorsing and campaigning for

candidates, the League should be particularly careful to make clear to the collaborating group these conditions.

LWVN should not do anything under the umbrella of the political parties, unless both parties are represented equally.

- LWVN should ensure that collaborating organizations work effectively and are responsible and reliable.
- If there is a cost to participating, the board should consider the financial standing of the collaborating group. The board should approve expenditures not already budgeted.

Additional Guidelines

Role of Board and President

- The president should ensure that LWVN has a representative involved in the collaboration.
- The board will vote on all collaborative activities.
- LWVN will encourage its members to participate in the collaborative activity.
- LWVN will not be responsible for any collaboration expenses beyond amounts specifically budgeted or approved by the board.

Role of Representative

- The LWVN representative must keep the board informed of the activities and actions resulting from the collaboration.
- The representative is responsible for ensuring that the use of the League's name on statements, letters, press releases, publications or any other materials is reviewed and approved by a League president or designee.
- The representative and the president are responsible for ensuring that coalition actions, events, or action campaigns are in accordance with LWVN's policies, mission and positions.
- The LWVN representative can publically speak for the League only if authorized to do so by the president.
- The representative may serve in a leadership capacity.