

# VOTER SERVICE

## SOME BASICS: ANSWERS TO VOTERS' MOST FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### Do I Have to Register If I Want to Vote?

You must be registered in order to vote in all elections and primaries. Former state residents who moved to another state after its registration deadline and are otherwise eligible may vote for President and Vice President using a “Presidential Ballot” available from the town clerk in their former Connecticut town.

### Who May Register To Vote?

In Connecticut, you must complete a voter registration form to become eligible to vote in federal, state, and local elections.

Any U.S. citizen who is a Connecticut resident and will be 18 years old by Election Day may register to vote.

Any 17-year-old who will be 18 years old by Election Day and who otherwise meets the qualifications of an elector may register and vote in a primary.

If you have been convicted of a felony but have been released from confinement and parole, you can consult the registrar of voters in the town where you live for more information about registering to vote or restoring your voting rights.

### Where and When Do I Register?

You may register to vote as soon as you become a resident of any Connecticut town or city. There is no waiting period, but there are deadlines. Special exceptions exist for people who move, become citizens, or turn 18 after these deadlines.

You may get a voter registration form at any town or city hall, public libraries, the Department of Motor Vehicles, other state agency offices, or on the Internet: go to [www.lwvct.org](http://www.lwvct.org), then to the “For Voters” tab. Or call your registrars or municipal clerk to have a voter registration form sent to your home. Return it to their office.

If you have a disability, your registrar of voters will be able to answer any questions you may have.

#### Primary

- Your mailed-in application must be postmarked or received by a voter registration agency – that is, your registrar of voters, the Connecticut DMV, state library, or public assistance agency – by the 5<sup>th</sup> day before a primary.
- You may apply in person to your registrar until 12:00 noon on the last business day before a primary.

## General Election

- If you mail in your application, it must be postmarked or received by your registrar or a state voter registration agency by the 14<sup>th</sup> day before an election. (If you mail your registration, be sure to allow enough time for the Post Office to deliver it!)
- You may register in person at the registrar of voters' office in your town/city hall up to 7 days before an election, or at your town's/city's central registration site on Election Day.
- Any unregistered Connecticut resident who has turned 18, become a citizen, or missed the deadlines but is otherwise eligible to vote, or any registered voter who has moved to a new town, may register and vote in person on Election Day at the town's Election Day Registration location. Check your town's website or phone your Registrars' office or Town Clerk's office to find out where that is.

### **Where should I go to register on Election Day?**

You can verify your town's Election Day Registration location by visiting the Secretary of the State's website, your town's website, or by contacting your town's registrars of voters.

### **How does Election Day Registration work?**

You will be asked to fill out a voter registration application and provide proof of your identity and residence. You must affirm — in writing — that you have not already voted in this election. If you have been registered to vote in another Connecticut town, the election officials must contact your former town to verify your voting status. When that is completed, you will be able to cast your ballot at the registration location. (You will also be given the name and location of the polling place where you will vote in future elections.)

Be prepared to allow extra time for voting if you cannot register before Election Day. Each town has only one designated Election Day Registration location where you will register and vote. Please note: if you are waiting in line to register and vote, and the polls close, you will not be eligible to vote, because Election Day registration locations must close promptly at 8:00 p.m. Therefore we strongly recommend that you register to vote well in advance of Election Day.

### **Do I Have to Show Identification to Register?**

Connecticut's voter registration application requests either a DMV ID number or the last four digits of your Social Security number. If you go in person to fill out a registration form at your town or city hall, you should bring your identification with you to facilitate the registration process. However, you are not required to show any identification when you apply to register by mail or at a registration drive conducted by any non-governmental organization, such as the League of Women Voters, as long as you register before the deadlines.

If you choose to register to vote on Election Day, you must appear in person and provide proof of your identity and your residence. If your ID does not contain your current address, you must also submit another form of identification that shows your residential address in the municipality. The options are:

- Proof of Identity and Residence:
  - A current and valid Connecticut driver's license or non-driver DMV photo ID
- Proof of Identity:
  - Birth certificate

- Social Security card
- Current student photo ID from higher education institution
- Testimony of another elector
- Other proof of identity satisfactory to registrar of voters
- Proof of Residence
  - Connecticut DMV learner's permit
  - Residential lease
  - Utility bill (including a cell phone bill) due not later than 30 days after Election Day
  - Current college/university student registration or fee statement
  - Bank statement
  - Naturalization documents
  - Government check or other government document

### **Do I Have to Show Identification at the Polls?**

You will be asked to provide identification each time you go to the polls. For most voters, acceptable polling place identification includes:

- a driver's license or non-driver DMV photo ID
- a Social Security card
- any other "preprinted form of identification" with your name and address, name and signature, or name and photo. Examples include a student ID, credit card, paycheck, or a US Passport.
- an affidavit of identity, signed under penalty of false statement and counter-signed by election officials.

If you did not provide verifiable identification when registering to vote, signing an affidavit of identity is not allowed. In this case, the only acceptable forms of polling-place identification are

- a current and valid photo ID that shows your name and address
- a copy of a current utility bill, bank statement, paycheck, or government document or check that shows your name and current address.

If you appear at the Election Day Registration location you have to show identification to register and vote.

### **When Should I Re-Register to Vote?**

You must re-register when you move to a new town within Connecticut. You should also fill out a new voter registration form if you change your name, change your party affiliation, or move within your town. A change of address may affect your voting location.

### **Who May Vote in a Primary?**

A primary is an election within a political party for the nomination to represent it in the next general election. The parties set their own rules and presently allow only their own members to vote in a primary.

If you are a registered voter with a party affiliation and will be at least 18 by the next general

election, you can vote in your party's primary before that election. You can check with your registrars of voters to confirm your party affiliation.

### **Where and When Do I Vote?**

You are assigned to a specific polling place according to your home address. You can contact your local registrars for the location of your polling place, or you can look up your polling place online through our website: [www.lwvct.org](http://www.lwvct.org), click on the "For Voters" tab.

State and national elections are held on the first Tuesday following the first Monday in November in even-numbered years. Municipal elections, held in odd-numbered years, are scheduled in November in most Connecticut towns. Some towns hold elections in May.

If you are a non-resident property owner in a Connecticut city or town and a U.S. citizen at least 18 years old, you may still be able to vote on certain local tax or budget questions in that town if you are on its last completed grand list, even if you are registered elsewhere. Call your registrars for information.

Polls are open on Election Day from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Any registered voter in line at a polling place by 8:00 p.m. may vote. (This does NOT apply to those seeking to register and vote on the same day. See above). For voting on town referenda, such as local budget votes, polling locations and hours may vary. Call your registrars for details.

If you arrive at your polling place to vote in a federal election and find that you are not on the voting list, you may be able to complete a Provisional Ballot to vote. Also, you should be able to register and vote at the Election Day Registration location. The election officials at the polls or in your town hall will have details.

### **Should I Join a Political Party?**

Joining a party enables you to:

- vote in primaries and caucuses.
- volunteer for campaign work and serve on your party's town committee. Town committees nominate and endorse candidates for municipal offices, boards, and commissions, and choose delegates to party conventions.
- participate, as an elected delegate, at your party's state and national conventions.

To join a political party, you must choose a party affiliation either when you register or any time afterwards. You can drop or change your party affiliation by using a mail-in registration card to notify your registrars of voters.

If you switch parties, your new party privileges become effective after three months. However, if you've been unaffiliated for at least three months, and switch from unaffiliated to any party, your new party privileges become effective immediately. Otherwise, the 3-month waiting period applies.

## For More Information

Check your town website, your local library, or your local phone book to contact your local officials. Your town clerk can provide the names of political party chairs of local town committees.

Also check:

League of Women Voters of CT ([www.lwvct.org](http://www.lwvct.org))

- Directory of State and Federal Elected Officials
- Resources for voters
- Links to local Leagues

Secretary of the State ([www.sots.ct.gov](http://www.sots.ct.gov))

Office of the Secretary of the State

Legislation and Elections Administration Division (LEAD)

30 Trinity Street

Hartford, CT 06106

Phone: (860) 509-6100; 1-800-540-3764

TDD: (860) 509-6191; 1-800-303-3161

Fax: (860) 509-6127

A list of major and minor parties in Connecticut is available from the Office of the Secretary of the State.

## REGISTERING VOTERS: SOME TIPS

### PICK YOUR LEAGUE'S TARGETS

Your goals for any voter registration drive depend on the nature of the community and your resources — time, people and money. What are the areas of greatest need in your community: retirement and nursing homes? Shelters for abused women? Schools and colleges? Set an achievable goal.

### WORK WITH YOUR REGISTRARS

Strive to maintain a good working relationship with your Registrars of Voters. Alert them to your registration efforts.

### IF YOU'RE WORKING IN A COALITION

Many groups plan registration drives before major elections. Seek ways to coordinate and share information. Successful drives need many contacts, skills and volunteers, so take advantage of each group's special strengths. One group, such as the League, may have good relations with election officials, while another may have access to under-registered groups such as youth or minorities. Some Leagues have found registration drives on college campuses are very effective if they work with student government groups who help publicize and carry out these registration drives on their campuses.

Make sure that your coalition partners are clear about and willing to abide by the rules for nonpartisanship. This means, alas, that if one of the local party organizations asks for your League's help with a drive, you'll have to decline unless they promise to keep their campaign materials away from the drive — and they usually won't.

### VOLUNTEERS: LEARN THE RULES

Volunteers will need to be knowledgeable about how to fill out forms and get them to the Registrars of Voters promptly. If you are not sure of proper procedures contact your Registrars of Voters for a quick review.

Registrars encourage including a DMV number or the last four digits of a Social Security number when registering to vote. If no ID is available, you may accept the voter registration card without it.

Your volunteers do not have to be League members.

### SUPPLIES

Remember to plan for supplies that you will need: mail-in registration forms (including some in Spanish), pens, voting district maps, tables and chairs, nonpartisan League publications, etc.

You can get mail-in registration forms from either your local Registrars of Voters or (in bulk) from the Secretary of the State's office. The Federal Voter Registration Form, intended for use in

assisting persons who wish to register outside of Connecticut, is also available from the Secretary of the State's office (1-800-540-3764).

## KEEP IT NONPARTISAN

**Know the requirements for keeping your drive nonpartisan** and be sure that all groups and volunteers involved understand and observe the rules: do not advocate for positions on issues, political parties or candidates while registering voters.

A person who provides voter registration services at designated agencies cannot display a political or party affiliation, and may not try to influence an applicant's choice of party affiliation or discourage an applicant from registering. Volunteers **can** speak to the importance of registering in a party as a means to participating in the primary process.

League members are bound by law and by League policy not to promote any candidate, ballot issue or public policy question when registering voters. This includes promoting membership in the LWV. An information brochure about registering and voting (such as the LWVCT's *Registering and Voting in Connecticut*) is appropriate and may list the Registrars of Voters and/or League's name and phone numbers for additional information.

Failure of League members to adhere to the law could jeopardize the League's status as a tax-exempt organization.

## STUDENT REGISTRATION DRIVES

In Connecticut a person is eligible to register to vote if he/she is a United States citizen, a bona fide resident of a Connecticut city or town, and will be at least 18 years old by Election Day. Seventeen-year-olds may pre-register at any time but cannot vote in a general election until they reach age 18. However, 17-year old who will be 18 on or before the next election may vote in a party primary preceding the general election.

## HIGH SCHOOL REGISTRATION DRIVES

Registrars are required to hold a voter registration session between January 1<sup>st</sup> and the last day of the school year. Contact your local Registrars and your high schools to make sure that plans are in place for student voter registration before the close of the school year. Some schools prefer to do a registration drive themselves, in which case the local League can supply registration forms and League voter service publications such as *Registering and Voting in Connecticut* and *Connecticut: A Guide to State Government*. If asked, you may supply the *Directory of Connecticut's Federal and State Elected Officials*, but do not volunteer it: the League does not want to be seen as promoting incumbents over challengers.

## COLLEGE REGISTRATION DRIVES

College students may use their home address or their college address when they register. Students must vote — whether in person or by absentee ballot — in the town in which they've registered.

Connecticut residents who wish to register either at their college address in Connecticut or at home in Connecticut can use a Connecticut voter registration form. (Connecticut students who are registered at home and unable to travel back there to vote may obtain an application for an absentee ballot on the Secretary of the State's website, but cannot vote in their college town.)

Students from out of state attending a Connecticut college who wish to register at their out-of-state home addresses must complete a federal postcard registration form (available through the US Elections Assistance Commission at [www.eac.gov](http://www.eac.gov)). Students registering at an out-of-state address must also comply with their home state's registration requirements and can vote only by traveling back to their home polling place or by using that state's absentee ballot.

**Volunteers who are registering college students at a Connecticut college address should always obtain the address of any previous voter registration to avoid double-registration.**

#### A NOTE ON RESOURCES

The Secretary of the State's office is willing and happy to clarify any issues for League members before they embark on a registration drive (800-509-6200). However, the closer you get to Election Day, the busier that office will be. Please plan your calls accordingly.

**SAMPLE HANDOUT FOR NEWLY-REGISTERED VOTERS**  
(based on a flyer designed and used by the LWV of Southeastern Connecticut)



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for registering to vote today. Your voter registration form will be delivered or mailed to your Registrars of Voters within the next few days.

Please note: you are not a voter until your application is approved by the Registrars of Voters in your city or town.

**Important: You should receive a confirmation within 3 weeks. If you do not, contact the Registrars in your town hall. You can also verify whether you are registered by going to the League of Women Voters of CT website at <http://www.lwvct.org/for-voters.html> and click on Verify.**

When you vote, remember to bring your driver's license, Social Security card, or any preprinted form of ID that shows name and photo, name and address, or name and signature. If your registrars have informed you that you need additional ID at the polls, bring a current and valid photo ID showing your address — like a CT Driver's License — or a copy of a current lease, utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck, or other government document that shows your name and current address.

**ELECTION DAY 2014 IS TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 4.**  
**Polls will be open from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.**

**FIND OUT WHAT THE CANDIDATES ARE SAYING:**

There will be a debate between [Town's] [two] candidates for [seat] on [date and place] [That debate will also be on TV. Check your newspaper or TV listing for details.]

## GET-OUT-THE-VOTE DRIVES

Most Get-Out-The-Vote (GOTV) activities are undertaken by political party organizations. The League does not usually get involved. However, in 1997, the LWVUS rolled out a GOTV initiative. The goals of the GOTV efforts conducted by the LWVEF and state and local Leagues were to:

- Establish national and local GOTV initiatives working in collaboration with diverse partner organizations;
- Provide GOTV training and resources for League members as well as the broader GOTV community;
- Expand the scope of traditional League election activities;
- Provide underrepresented populations with voter education services and eliminate obstacles to voting by providing rides to the polls, child care and phone banking; and
- Assess and evaluate GOTV initiatives.

If your League wants to take part in a GOTV drive, the following tips may help.

### Steps for a Successful Targeted GOTV Campaign

#### Establish Broad Partnerships with Diverse Organizations

Form a broad coalition with local affiliates of organizations such as the NAACP, Chinese-American Organizations or Rock the Vote. These organizations are often highly trained in mobilization efforts and can help craft the message and strategy of your campaign. (Begin your partnership with other organizations by joining theirs. When you join diverse organizations, you send a strong message that you are committed to creating long-term, ongoing relationships.)

#### Set Realistic Goals

Don't think you have to increase voter turnout dramatically the first time out. A realistic first goal is to lay the groundwork for increasing future voter turnout among underrepresented populations. It may take many months of networking and building trust to gain entree into a new community – that in itself is a real achievement!

#### Narrow Your Target Area

Narrow the scope of your campaign to one district or precinct. You'll be much more successful working in a smaller target area, effectively increasing your ratio of volunteers to potential voters.

#### Design Election-Related Materials for Your Target Audience

Be creative! If you are targeting youth, redesign your traditional election materials to reflect the tastes of that audience. Don't be afraid to ask people in the targeted community what messages attract them. Who are their role models? What issues are important to them? If useful, try to have materials translated into other languages as well as having materials available in Braille or on audio tape.

#### Contact, Contact, Contact

Repeat contact works best! Saturate targeted populations with reminder phone calls, door hangers, mailings and face-to-face contact such as town meetings, pro-and-con discussions of

ballot initiatives and debates.

### **Keep Good Records**

Record the name, phone number and address of every person contacted. This is the only way you can conduct phone banking, door-to-door canvassing and post-election polling.

### **Continue Involvement in New Communities**

Once the election is over, it is important to continue working in your targeted areas. You can help establish a pattern of consistent voting by giving the League a constant presence in diverse communities. Bring future League projects back to these communities.

## VOTING BY ABSENTEE BALLOT

Elections have been decided by absentee votes, so the process must be scrupulously honest. Misuse of absentee ballots can be reduced if all voters know and understand the rules of the process.

- 1) To be eligible to vote absentee the voter must be
  - an eligible voter (18, U.S. citizen, etc.) and
  - unable to appear at the polls for one of the following reasons:
    - a) active service in the armed forces
    - b) absence from town during all voting hours
    - c) illness
    - d) physical disability
    - e) religious rules forbidding secular activity on election day
    - f) duties as an election official at a poll other than his or her own
- 2) To get an absentee ballot you first sign an application for the ballot so that the Town Clerk or Registrars of Voters can check that you are registered to vote.
- 3) Any voter who is permanently physically disabled may submit a doctor's statement attesting to his or her disability and an application to automatically receive absentee ballots for all elections, primaries, and referenda held in his or her town.
- 4) In a primary election you can vote only if you are enrolled with that specific political party.
- 5) Your absentee ballot must be received by the close of polls at 8:00 p.m. in order to be counted. You can only vote once, either as an absentee voter or at the polls. If you have voted absentee, but then decide to vote at the polls, you must report to the Town Clerk's office before 10:00 a.m. on Election Day to withdraw your absentee ballot.
- 6) If your registrars have notified you, upon registration, that you are required to provide additional identification at the polls, this requirement applies to absentee voting, too. In this case, be sure to include a copy of your current and valid photo ID or other acceptable documents showing your name and address **inside the outer envelope** of your absentee ballot kit.
- 7) Voters should know that VOTING IS A PERSONAL RIGHT AND NOBODY CAN VOTE FOR YOU. Anyone can help you apply for an absentee ballot, but if you have received help in applying, the application must be signed by both you and your helper. Also, if you need help in filling out the absentee ballot because of blindness, disability, or inability to write or read the ballot, you may get assistance from anyone you choose. However, no candidate or agent of a candidate, political party or committee, shall knowingly be present when an absentee ballot applicant executes an absentee ballot, except when the candidate or agent is a member of the immediate family of the applicant. If you are unable to write, you may ask a helper of your choice to fill the ballot out in your presence. However, you must express your wishes to that person and not let that person tell you how to vote. The helper must sign his or her name, along with your name, on the ballot envelope. Your assistant must also add the word "by" next to his or her own signature.

8) If any helper tries to influence your choice, you should report it to your local Registrars of Voters.

9) There are penalties for making a false statement or signing the name of another person.

### **Permanent Absentee Ballots**

An election law passed in Connecticut in 2012 allows any eligible voter who is permanently physically disabled to automatically receive an absentee ballot for each election, primary, or referendum held in the voter's town or city.

#### **How This Works For Voters**

If you are a voter with a permanent physical disability and wish to automatically receive an absentee ballot sent to you at your home:

- Fill out an application for an absentee ballot and submit it to your town clerk.
- Ask your physician or medical care provider to send a letter certifying that you are unable to appear in person at your usual polling place to vote because of your disability.
- Watch for your absentee ballot to be delivered about one month before the next election.

#### **Your Medical Information is Confidential**

Your request for an absentee ballot and certification letter is kept on file and entitles you to receive a ballot for each primary, election, or referendum automatically. Anyone's absentee ballot application is subject to Freedom of Information inquiries, but state law requires that your doctor's certification letter — which contains your medical information — remain private and confidential.

#### **If You Move**

The registrars of voters will send a written notice to you each year to ask whether you still live at the same address. Please be sure to reply to this notice if you wish to continue receiving your absentee ballot. If you've moved to a new address in your town, please reply and note your correct address to receive your ballot. If you have moved out of town, please reply so that the registrars of voters can send you an application for voter registration in your new town. You will have to re-apply for an absentee ballot in your new town.

**You may request not to receive an automatic absentee ballot at any time.**

## ABSENTEE BALLOT APPLICATIONS: LWVCT POLICY

### LWVCT POLICY AGAINST DISTRIBUTING ABSENTEE BALLOT APPLICATIONS

Adopted by the LWVCT Board 9/13/2005

Because of restrictions in the state's absentee ballot application process, the Board has decided that Leagues will not distribute applications for absentee ballots during their registration drives, and will provide information only as to where absentee ballot applications can be obtained, such as Town Clerks' offices and on line via the Secretary of the State's website.

### LEGAL CHANGES THAT CAUSED THE POLICY CHANGE

Public Act 05-235, which was signed into law on July 8, 2005, imposed a number of new requirements on people who distribute absentee ballots.

Among other things, the Act:

- Prohibits misrepresentation of the requirements for absentee voting;
- Requires anyone who distributes ballot applications to register with the Town Clerk before distributing 5 or more applications (other than to immediate family members or as the designee of an absentee ballot applicant);
- Requires ballot application distributors (1) to file a list of the names and addresses of all the people who received absentee ballot applications with the Town Clerk prior to the applicable election, primary or referendum, and (2) to turn over any executed applications he/she receives to the Town Clerk right away;
- Prohibits candidates, parties and political committees from mailing unsolicited absentee ballot applications unless accompanied by certain notices regarding absentee balloting;
- Requires the SOTS to post on her website (1) a notice that states that a person may download an absentee ballot application from the website only for his/her own use or use by immediate family members or a designee, and (2) an advisory statement that distributors of 5 or more applications to others must register with their Town Clerk; and
- Makes absentee voting law violators ineligible for accelerated rehabilitation. The law also increases the criminal penalties for registration and voting fraud.

Please note that the requirements for ballot application distributors apply to "any person," not just to candidates, party or campaign workers.

## VOTERS' GUIDES

### PURPOSE and CONTENT

Voters' guides are published to help voters make informed choices between candidates. Responses should reflect the views of the candidates.

The published version of your guide should contain a disclaimer that states that the League publishes responses as submitted, and that the League is not responsible for the accuracy of any statements made.

### CANDIDATE ACCESS

While Local Leagues have three basic options to use in deciding which candidates to invite to participate in their debates/forums (all the candidates, including write-ins; all the candidates who have achieved ballot access; or only those candidates who meet your League's candidate eligibility criteria) the LWVCT recommends that for voters' guides your League not use special eligibility criteria unless the guide is being published in a newspaper or other print medium that has severe space limitations. In that case, please pre-clear your criteria with your publisher.

It is up to your League's board to decide whether to include or exclude write-in candidates, but if you have a standing policy in either direction you should stick to it and be ready to explain it to the candidates and the public; you may prefer to make such decisions year by year. Bear in mind that the filing deadlines for third-party candidates and registered write-in candidates are fairly late in the election cycle, which may impact your being able to include them if you have an early publication deadline.

### WORD LIMITS

Most newspapers and many Leagues put word or character limits on candidates' responses for voters' guides. If you must do so, you have two choices:

- cut off after the word or character that reaches the limit; or
- cut off after the last word in the sentence preceding the sentence in which the word limit is reached.

In either case, you must notify the candidates which option you are choosing.

### “NEGATIVE ACCUSATIONS”

Some Leagues have taken the position that if a candidate makes negative accusations about his or her opponent, the League will not to publish these, as the opponent will have no comparable opportunity to refute the accusation. If your League has such a policy, it should be communicated to the candidates when they receive their letter or e-mail requesting responses to your questions, and you should set an early response deadline, so that any response judged not to be within the policy can be returned to the candidate on receipt, with a reasonable second deadline for revision and return.

If this is your League's policy, the published version of your guide should also contain, as part of its disclaimer, a statement that candidate responses that contained negative accusations were not included.

The LWVCT has not adopted this policy for its state-level voters' guides, as it would require judging what constitutes an impermissible negative accusation. We do not recommend it for our local Leagues either, for the same reason.

## WORK SCHEDULE and TIMELINE

To be most effective, your voters' guide should be published as early as possible in the campaign. If possible, write your contact letters/e-mails to primary candidates immediately after the filing deadline; write to the general election candidates immediately after the primary (or primary deadline).

Process:

1. Board or VP/Director of Voter Services generates and approves the questions.
2. Board, VP/VS, or Voters' Guide Coordinator develops a candidate list with addresses, phone numbers, e-mail addresses and any other useful campaign contact information.
3. VP/VS or Voters' Guide Coordinator drafts letters to candidates.
4. Voters' Guide Coordinator prints and mails letters with questionnaires. You should do this even if also e-mailing. Use your League letterhead.
5. Voters' guide coordinator sends initial and follow-up e-mails to
  - candidates
  - campaign chairs
  - party chairs
6. Voters' Guide Coordinator receives responses and does word counts.
7. If you are producing a printed voters' guide, the Guide Coordinator assembles the responses into camera-ready format.
8. If you are doing an on-line voters' guide, the guide coordinator forwards the responses to your Webmaster. If print, she forwards the camera-ready copy to the printer or newspaper.
9. The Webmaster creates the on-line voters' guide; the paper creates the print guide.
10. If possible, VP/VS and Voters' Guide Coordinator do an initial review of the galley proofs and/or web page.
11. If possible, the VP/VS and President do a final review and signoff.
12. Your PR Chair and/or voters' guide coordinator announce and promote the guide.

## LATE RESPONSES

Some candidates will get their responses to you after the deadline you have set. If you are doing a printed guide, the late candidates may be out of luck, but if you are posting your voters' guide on line, you have the option of including late responses in an amended posting. If the LWVCT hosts your League's website, we will post amended voters' guides once a week, but not more often than that.

## DISTRIBUTION

If newspaper publication is not possible for your guide, and you want to reach people who may not have internet access, consider distribution via

- area businesses to their employees or customers,
- chambers of commerce and other business groups,

- libraries,
- higher education and job training centers,
- public service agencies, and/or
- other nonprofit organizations (PTAs/PTOs, Jr. League, Newcomers Club, etc.).

If the LWVCT hosts your League's website, we will post your voters' guide on line if and when you request it.

When the LWVCT does a Voters' Guide (usually only in even-numbered years, and usually for federal and state-wide races only) it will be posted on the LWVUS's Vote411 website and made available to local Leagues to download into their printed and web-based voters' guides.

#### ON-LINE VOTERS' GUIDES CO-PRODUCED WITH NON-LWV ORGANIZATIONS

revised by the LWVCT Board 7/19/12

E-Voters'-Guides are designed to provide information about the candidates to the public in a nonpartisan and balanced way to assist them in casting an informed vote on Election Day.

**Leagues can only participate if the VG is totally nonpartisan.**

Leagues may continue their present relationships with the print media, thus publishing two VGs: one on line and one in print. Leagues that contemplate co-producing an online VG need to make their present VG partners aware that your League is contemplating a new venture.

All candidates have to be given the same opportunity to submit material at the same time and under the same conditions.

The VG cannot include interactive features (including blogging) that allow input from the public.

All entries will be the responsibility of candidates only – neither the League nor the co-producer should edit for content, spelling, etc.

Word limits, if any, will be enforced by the editors, i.e., the League.

No money may be paid to either party in production of the VG.

The best practice is to avoid advertisements in your Voters Guide. Some media partners may insist on paying for space through advertising. In such cases, your board should use its own judgment and discretion in deciding whether to accept advertisements including candidate advertisements. However, a financial sponsor may be acknowledged.

The Guide will not be posted until both the League and the co-producer have approved final draft.

Leagues and co-producers should choose the way in which the League will participate, such as:

1. The League will gather the requested information from the candidates and forward it to the co-producer. Candidates who have not responded by the deadline will be listed as "No Response Received." or
2. Leagues may be given editorial privileges to upload the data/info directly into the VG data base.

(Note: If the League is the sole recipient of candidates' initial responses, make sure that

complete text and photographs are transmitted to the co-producer. If candidates can submit material directly to the co-producer, determine in advance who will be responsible for follow up, if any is needed.)

The League, the co-producer and other interested parties should schedule a working meeting to establish the exact responsibilities of each party, including:

- which races will be included
- what additional materials shall be included, such as photos
- deadlines
- word limits, if any
- spelling and capitalization
- cut off copy
- order of text
- appropriate questions
- formats, both for photos and for text
- timelines
- the name of the League and co-producer point person for working on the VG
- final edit responsibilities

The League and the co-producer must ensure that all text is within word limits, if any, and printed in the same size fonts, and that to the extent possible photographs are all printed in the same size, for all candidates running for the same office.

The League should have a byline on the online VG.

If possible, the League or the co-producer should create and post an opening section explaining:

- The purpose of the Guide (see opening paragraph, above).
- That the League neither endorses nor opposes any candidate whose information appears.
- Text on how to vote (provided by LWVCT).
- Designation of Polling Places and District Voting Map (as provided by local Registrars of Voters).
- Sample of ballot (when available from the Town Clerk and if available before the posting date; otherwise a note that sample ballots are available at the Town Clerk's office).
- Background info on selected races (e.g., how many people can be elected to each position) and questions posed to the candidates.

The local League should promote the VG via its website and its election season activities. The co-producer may promote the VG through options such as an elections section on its website, election articles with links to the VG, email blasts, and other digital means that are appropriate to the nonpartisan mission of the League.

If possible the League and the co-producer should agree on the “look” of the VG, and if the League is producing more than one VG, the look should be similar across all versions.

SAMPLE INVITATION LETTER TO CANDIDATES  
TO PARTICIPATE IN A VOTERS' GUIDE

[Mr.][Ms.][The Hon.] Joe Verbify  
Verbify for Mayor  
P.O. Box 000  
Cityville, CT 06000-0000

Dear Candidate Verbify:

Do you want to be able to reach hundreds of voters – free? This year, the League of Women Voters of the Greater Cityville Area is pleased to be able to offer Cityville voters [an on-line Voters' Guide] [the opportunity to use Vote411 to look up candidate information] for the [primary][general] election.

The Voters' Guide will provide voters with a means of comparing candidates based on their responses to questions that are of importance to the citizens of our state and town. Unlike other publications of this kind, the LWV Greater Cityville Area Voters' Guide does not edit or interpret candidate responses – they are published exactly as submitted.

The Voters' Guide will appear on {Vote411} {the [website][web page] of The League of Women Voters of the Greater Cityville Area} from [July xx] through the [primary][general] election on [Sept. x][Nov. x].

To participate in the LWV Greater Cityville Area Voters' Guide for the 2014 [primary] [general] election, please provide the following in electronic format (preferably MS Word, but text or RTF will also work):

- A brief biography (75 word maximum)
- Responses to our three essay-type questions (75 word maximum per question)

In addition, please provide:

- A portrait-type photo, preferably digitized
- A link to your campaign website

This invitation will be extended to all candidates [who are on the ballot as of the filing deadline].

Please note that your biography or answer(s) will be cut off after the 75<sup>th</sup> word. Please submit your materials on or before the close of business on [Friday], [date], to [lwwct@lwwct.org]. If you want a chance to review your posting, please submit by [date minus 5 days]. If you have any questions, please call [000-000-0000, or e-mail us at \_\_\_\_\_@\_\_\_\_\_]

Sincerely,

[Name]  
[President][Vice President/Director, Voter Service]

cc: campaign manager  
party chair