

LWVCEF Study Process: Study Committee Responsibilities

[Note: Throughout this document, the word "study" may be taken to indicate either a full study to create a new position or an update of an existing position.]

1. Normally, only one state study should be adopted at any convention.
2. Ideally, a state study will be a three-year process to avoid education and consensus activity interference with local Leagues' work during the federal election cycle. Any request for a shorter or longer timeline must be reviewed and approved by the LWVCEF board. The time frame may not be changed once the study is in process.
3. An exploratory study committee that wishes to have its topic considered for recommendation by the LWVCEF board at convention must submit the following items as part of the program planning process:
 - Rationale for the study
 - A proposed budget for the study
 - Expected source of funding for the project must be presented to the executive director and the LWVCEF board and approved in advance. All applications for funding must be presented to the board and approved in advance. *[The LWVCEF can provide historical cost information.]*
 - Proposed study committee members and chair
 - Outline of the study's proposed scope
 - Names of local Leagues that back the study and pledge to participate in the consensus.
4. When a study is adopted at a convention (for either a recommended or non-recommended item), the following items must be completed within six months (by the November board meeting following adoption). If these items are not completed on time, it will be up to the discretion of the LWVCEF board whether to allow the study to proceed.
 - Submission of sufficient qualified names for the official study committee and its chair
 - Attendance by the official study committee at a training session conducted by the LWVCEF board and/or staff detailing the fiscal and organizational responsibilities of all parties involved in the study. Consensus question framing would also be covered.
 - Development by the study committee of a more detailed scope of the study
 - Development by the study committee of the proposed schedule for the study, including deliverables
 - Development by the study committee of the proposed budget and funding sources for the study. *[Again, the LWVCEF can help by providing historical data.]*
 - Acquisition of funds for a non-recommended study *[The LWVCEF staff are not responsible for fundraising for a non-recommended study, except to provide the customary material attached to a grant proposal. A nominal amount of "seed money" will be provided in the LWVCEF budget to allow for startup costs for a non-recommended item. Study fundraising strategies must be presented to the executive director and LWVCEF board, with potential funders approved in advance. All applications for funding must be presented to the board and approved in advance.]*
5. The study committee is encouraged to send a reading list to the point person in each local League very early—even while the study kit is still under development.
6. The study kit must go out to local Leagues a minimum of nine months prior to the consensus due date to allow for local League scheduling.

LWVCEF Study Process, Revised November 2010

Sample Timeline for a Three Year State Study Adopted May 2011

[This schedule is intended to be very rough and allows a lot of leeway. It tries to take into account the “down” time that most local Leagues experience over the summer and around the holidays. Most importantly, it avoids the ongoing conflict between the study's education and consensus process and local League responsibilities relating to the Federal election cycle.]

May 2011: Study is adopted at convention

May 2011—October 2011: Study committee is selected and trained; study scope, schedule, and budget are developed, board approves funding source and application, and funding is obtained

November 2011: The LWVCEF board gives go-ahead for study to begin

November 2011—June 2012: Study committee conducts research and develops consensus questions and study kit; sends out a reading list to local Leagues, along with suggested resources and/or activities; local Leagues form their own study committees

July 2012: The LWVCEF board approves study kit and consensus questions

August 2012—February 2013: Study committee distributes study kit to local Leagues and begins the process of educating local Leagues through other means—e.g., LWVC Web site articles; local Leagues form their own study committees

March—May and October—November 2013: Local Leagues educate their members and conduct consensus meetings

January 2014—February 2014: Study committee crafts draft position based on local League Consensus Reports

March 2014: Study committee presents draft position to the LWVC board for review/editing

March 2014—April 2014: Study committee revises position based on the LWVC board input

May 2014: Position is adopted at LWVC board meeting so that action may begin

May 2015: Position is formally ratified by members at convention along with the rest of the LWVC program

LWVCEF Study Process: Board/Staff Responsibilities

1. Create a budget that includes the necessary board-approved funding sources for a board-recommended study or, alternatively, seed money for a possible non-recommended study, for the fiscal year following each convention. The board must approve potential funders in advance. The board must approve all applications for funding in advance.
2. Create and moderate a program planning list-serve for use by local League members.
3. Create an application form and "vetting" process for the members of any study committee—especially the chair. Qualifications would include:
 - League experience
 - Expertise in the area of the study
 - Project management experience, including writing skills
 - Time availability over the life of the study
 - Lack of bias toward a desired outcome.
4. Exercise final approval over the creation of the study committee, which ideally would consist of at least nine qualified members plus its chair.
5. Provide historical data to the study committee to allow for realistic budgetary and scheduling activity.
6. Present recommendations for hiring of part-time, temporary staff to support the study committee so that ongoing LWVC operations will not be jeopardized. *[These recommendations would assist the study committee in budgeting and in planning their fundraising strategy, which must be board-approved before contacting potential funding sources.]*
7. Develop and conduct a training session for study committee members that covers, in great detail, the roles and responsibilities of all participants in the study process. Also, ensure that the study committee has copies of and has reviewed relevant League publications such as *Writing for League*.
8. Commit the necessary LWVC Program Committee time and effort to provide ongoing supervision of, documentation of, and punctual reporting on the study committee and its work, especially:
 - Completion of “deliverables” by the scheduled dates
 - Adherence to budget and to financial reporting procedures
 - Issues of attrition or non-participation by study committee members.

Emphasis should be on early detection and resolution of problems.

9. Resolve to be willing to “pull the plug” on a study if ongoing problems are not addressed—e.g., schedules are not met, quality of research and analysis are not acceptable, study committee is non-functional, or too much staff time is being used to the detriment of the LWVC ongoing work.
10. Provide continual, repeated education of local Leagues about these procedures.

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