



League of Women Voters of New Mexico Job Description – State Voter Guide Editor

Role:

Collect and distribute non-partisan information on statewide candidate and other ballot measures to local League Voter Guide Editors.
The Voter Guide Editor may be off board.

Responsibilities:

Identify elections for which local Voters Guides will be published with information about statewide candidates and ballot issues.

- Identify statewide offices to be on ballot, noting candidate requirements and salaries
- Identify district offices that will be included in multiple local guides
- Identify statewide ballot issues, coordinating with various state legislative entities

Develop budget and provide input to corresponding state budget cycle

Develop schedule for current election to have Voters' Guides available in time for absentee voting

Work with state board to identify a committee

- All local Leagues should be represented, usually by their own Voter Guide editors
- Local and state presidents shall be *ex officio* members.

Solicit answers to League questions from candidates

- Involve board and local members in creating non-partisan questions to ask candidates
- Work with committee to finalize questions to be asked of statewide candidates
- Send final questions to State Board for approval
- Assist local Leagues in developing questions for district candidates whose districts include more than one local League area
- Send questionnaires to all statewide candidates and compile their responses

Compile information on statewide issues

- constitutional amendments
- state bond issues

Distribute information electronically (preferred) to local League Voter Guide editors and LWVNM Webmaster

Maintain Voter Guide Procedure and suggested style guidelines

Resources

Secretary of State

<http://www.sos.state.nm.us/>

Legislative Council Service

<http://legis.state.nm.us/lcs/>

In League

Guide to Voters Guides, League of Women Voters of Texas

LWVNM Voters Guides, www.lwvnm.org/BDocs/VotersGuide.doc

Suggested Style Guidelines

ACTIVITY SCHEDULE FOR GENERAL ELECTION

VOTER GUIDE EDITOR

February-June:

Ensure that appropriate funding is including in the budget.
Identify local League Voter Guide editors and others willing to serve on committee.
Identify statewide offices and constitutional amendments for November election.
Identify districted offices with jurisdictions overlapping more than one League.

June-July:

Obtain list of candidates for the identified offices, including independent and minor party candidates, from Secretary of State's office. Note filing deadlines for post-primary candidates.

Obtain list of constitutional amendments and bond issues from Legislative Council Service. The LCS also publishes excellent pro/con material on constitutional amendments (usually about August.)

Develop candidates' questionnaires:

Identify issues to be addressed in questions for candidates in each office; consider questions that are not likely to be addressed in other information sources. Recruit LWV members who are knowledgeable for issues for each election to contribute questions. Consult lists of questions from prior elections. Remember that questions should

- pertain to key issues in the entire community the candidate will serve
- be objectively stated, i.e., not bias responses
- be stated clearly and succinctly
- in general, not permit a simple yes/no answer (else indicate that further explanation is required)

Note that judicial candidates may be prohibited by the state Code of Judicial Conduct from answering certain types of questions.

Determine word limits for each question.

Obtain review and approval of questions from state and local League presidents.

July:

Write letter to candidates; cover letter should contain:

Description of League: Voter Guide is a public service; LWV is a non-partisan organization; purpose of LWV.

Guide description: compilation of candidates' responses to questions; to be distributed via local League Guides and state web site.

Editing procedure: answers appear as written, except that "if word limits are exceeded, our policy is to cut the reply at the word limit followed by an ellipsis (...)".

Deadline: indicate date responses must be received (approximately ten days after mailing); note that self-addressed return envelope is enclosed

E-mail responses are encouraged but signed hard-copy is also required for our records.

Consequences of non-response, e.g., if response is not received by deadline, we will print "did not respond in time for publication" next to candidate's name.

Attach questionnaires, which should include:

- word limits for each question
- sufficient space for written answers
- space for candidates signature and date

August:

Phone candidates who have not responded to ensure they received mailing. Make additional questionnaires available if needed, but emphasize the importance of speedy written reply. If phone contact is not possible, send a registered (return receipt requested) letter to candidate.

Check with Secretary of State to determine whether additional candidates have filed as write-ins.

Prepare an electronic document with the questions and the answers of each candidate.

Prepare other statewide information

- For constitutional amendments, condense material provided by the Legislative Council Service.
- For bond issues, provide one- or two-sentence summaries based on text passed by Legislature. (Local Leagues may add notes on local projects included.)

Proofread typed copy by comparing candidate's original response with the final proof. Remember that mistakes in this process could result in a lawsuit! One person should read aloud to the other, spell names, indicate punctuation and read every detail.

August or early September

Send electronic document to local Voters Guide editors.

Work with webmaster to get the material on the LWVNM web site.

Document costs and request reimbursement from state Treasurer.

Thank all volunteers through newsletter and/or personal note.

RECORDS CHECKLIST

DOCUMENT	COMMENTS
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List of Voters Guide Committee members	
Voters Guides	<i>Copies of printed local guides</i> <i>State Voters Guide on line (CD)</i>
Suggested style guidelines	