

## League Leadership Models and Job Descriptions

From the [LWVUS Membership and Leadership Development Handbook](#)

**Ed Note: This is a SUPER resource!!**

Until recently, the majority of local Leagues have successfully used the traditional management model (one person serving as president) to lead the League. However, to keep up with the ever-busier volunteers who make the League the great organization it is today, the League should rethink how we lead ourselves and how we most wisely use our volunteers' precious and limited time.

As Leagues are adapting to meet current volunteer needs, e.g. enough time and flexibility for volunteers to successfully be president, they have begun to experiment effectively with different management structures. A number of state and local Leagues use one of a variety of non-traditional models, which are whole-heartedly recommended by LWVUS.

Sometimes they adopt a particular model; in other cases they are more flexible, using different models to address their own changing leadership circumstances. Increasingly, local Leagues are trying one or more of the non-traditional models outlined in this section to address their leadership challenges.

*Regardless of what model your League decides to use to structure you leaders, it's always important to remember that League leadership is a team effort.*

Just as the Membership Chair is not the only individual responsible for trying to increase membership and asking new potential members to join and the Nominating Committee Chair is not the only individual responsible for finding and training new leaders, the president is NOT the only one who should lead areas of the League's work.

LWVUS recommends trying out a non-traditional model in your League to keep up with the busy lives of your members.

### **The Management Team Model** (four or more persons)

The Management Team model has four or more persons doing the work done traditionally by only the president. Leagues that use this model often have the rest of the board follow the traditional model (explained later in this chapter): one or more vice-presidents, a secretary and treasurer, or secretary/treasurer, and a pre-determined number of elected and appointed directors.



However, some Leagues use the Management Team approach to share all board duties. For instance, one large city League with an office has a five-member Management Team. To handle



administrative tasks and communications with the public and members, each Management Team member goes to the office one day a week and takes care of everything that comes in on that day. For continuity, Management Team members keep daily logs, detailing what was done each day and what needs to be done on subsequent days.

One local League has a nine-member Management Team constituting the entire board. At the beginning of the year, jobs are defined and divided among team members according to individual interests and talents. Responsibilities are broken down into small, manageable increments and most team members do two or three of these smaller jobs over the year.

Other Leagues assign positions to Management Team members based on the current year's goals. One team member would be responsible for election-related matters, another might be charged with coordinating a proposed study process, and a third would focus on fundraising and development. These responsibilities would change from year to year, depending on the League's priorities.

A few Leagues use a combination of the shared presidency (three persons acting as president) in combination with management teams made up of the remaining board members.

There has also been a movement in the League to think of new, creative, and effective ways to structure League leadership, especially for smaller Leagues where it may be hard to find enough people to fill up an entire slate of board members. By working as a team, a smaller board can be just as valuable, powerful and successful as a larger board.

Below is a new, streamlined way to consider structuring your League's leadership. Leagues should feel free to adapt this structure to meet their needs and resources.

The **Leadership Team** includes a Spokesperson/Convener, Money Person/Treasurer, Webmaster, and Member Coordinator. This team works as a committee of the whole to plan and coordinate mission-critical, community-oriented activities and to create an annual calendar with public meetings to educate members and community and to raise money, create media relationship, and develop ties with allied organizations.

The team meets quarterly to review League principles, policies and annual goals; develop leadership skills of team members; identify visibility activities between public meetings to maintain a year-round community presence; and propose annual local program.

**The Leadership Team consists of:**

- **Spokesperson/Convener**
  - Presides at team meetings (including developing the agenda and identifying issues of policy or governance for discussion)





- Speaks for the League (orally and in writing)
- Represents the League at state and national League meetings
- **Money Person/Treasurer**
  - Develops budget
  - Maintains League funds
  - Oversees dues payment and renewals
  - Keeps minutes for team meetings and League records
- **Webmaster**
  - Creates and maintains an up-to-date website
  - Coordinates website content to include features usually published in a VOTER/newsletter
- **Member Coordinator**
  - Cheerleader for the League – encourages management team and members to build the League by asking others to join
  - Develops methods to recruit welcome and involve new members in discreet tasks
  - Makes membership recruitment a part of every event
  - Devises system for regular communications with members and prospects (telephone tree and/or an e-mail list)
- **Voter Service Leader**
  - Coordinates and manages community events and activities
  - Recruits volunteers for League programs and/or conducts outreach to collaborate with other organizations' activities
- **Advocacy Person (Optional)**
  - Keeper of local League positions
  - Ensures member understanding of local, state, national positions
  - Undertakes targeted advocacy campaigns including LWVUS and state Action Alerts

**The Shared Presidency Model** (two or three persons)

Because the single presidency can be very time consuming, Leagues are finding it increasingly difficult to find a candidate willing or able to devote so much time to a volunteer position. In the shared presidency model, the presidency is shared by two or three persons. The rest of the board follows the traditional model: one or more vice-presidents, a secretary and treasurer (or secretary/treasurer) and a pre-determined number of elected and appointed directors.

While members of the shared presidency have the same duties as those listed for the single presidency, in the shared presidency the duties are divided up clearly between two or three people in a variety of ways. The division of duties should be based on the experience, available time, and personalities and interests of the participants.



Responsibilities (which are clearly designated and commonly understood among the co-presidents and board) may be divided by activities, such as Administrative, Program, Advocacy, and Voter Services. Activities may be divided between internal and external League functions. Internal functions include things such as presiding at meetings, making plans, setting goals, and evaluating progress. External functions include speaking for the League and promoting and representing the League.

Alternatively, administrative duties such as presiding at meetings, representing the League, and speaking for the League can be divided or alternated. Responsibilities can also be divided by blocks of time. For instance, each member of the shared presidency can perform all of the duties of president for a portion of the League year, with support from the other president(s) during these periods.

Some Leagues utilize the shared presidency model with just two participants and provide for election of the co-presidents in alternate years. The result is a year of learning for the less experienced member of the team, followed by a year of mentoring for the newly elected co-president.

### **The Traditional Model**

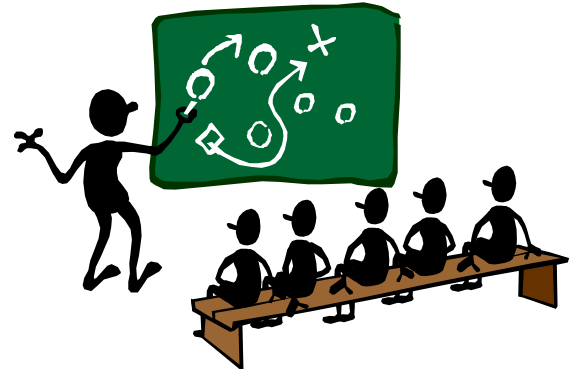
In the traditional model, one person serves as president. The rest of the board is made up of one or more vice-presidents, a secretary and treasurer (or secretary/treasurer) and a pre-determined number of elected and appointed directors as outlined in the bylaws. Presidential duties include presiding at meetings, speaking for the League (orally and in all written communications), promoting and representing the League, making plans and setting goals, coordinating work of administrative, educational, and advocacy committees, overseeing League funds and fundraising, setting and following policies, communicating with the membership, fostering leadership development and succession, supporting League activities, and supervising personnel, if pertinent. The president does not do all of these things; the president sees that they get done.

Some Leagues use the president-elect model to help develop leadership within the organization. In this model, the president-elect learns while observing and assisting the president. The president-elect assists the president for one term and then assumes the presidency for the following term. This method has proved effective regardless of term length. This model also can be used to invite other potential leaders to learn about various League activities/roles, such as “shadowing” the voter services chair. What would it look like if we had other people learning from our current leadership? How could that help to build our next generation of League leaders?

The **Traditional Board**, as a whole, sets priorities and goals for the organization, carries out overall planning and decision-making, supports membership, development and visibility activities, represents and promotes the League in the community, and safeguards the League’s reputation for nonpartisanship.

**The President:**

- Leads the League.
- Speaks for the League.
- Empowers and trains League leaders.
- Organizes and delegates League tasks.
- Convenes and presides over meetings.

**Other board members:**

- Attend and participate in all board meetings.
- Identify and mentor new leaders.
- Promote growth and diversity in membership.
- Support and attend League activities.
- Become knowledgeable about League positions and practices.
- Explain and promote the League in the community.
- Understand and abide by the League's nonpartisan policy.
- Assist in fundraising activities.
- Make personal financial contributions, in addition to dues.
- Attend state and regional League meetings.
- Carry out individual assignments.

**Division of Work**

Because division of work is very personal and dependent on interests, expertise, time, and personality, the participants of both the Shared Presidency and the Management Team models should collectively determine and be clear together about the allocation of these shared duties. Flexibility is necessary. Outlining duties of a specific structure in the bylaws or having someone outside the shared presidency, such as the Nominating Committee, make these decisions can sometimes be too inflexible.