

## Best Practices for Conducting a League Study

### Guidelines for Conducting a Study

To ensure high-quality, objective, and credible studies, local League study committees should follow these guidelines:

#### Preparation and Planning

1. **Define the Study Scope:** Clearly outline the focus of the study, including key questions to explore. This will help the committee stay focused and efficient.
2. **Assemble a Diverse Team:** Include members with various perspectives and expertise to ensure a balanced approach and comprehensive analysis.
3. **Establish a Timeline:** Set clear deadlines for research, drafting, and review to keep the study on track and aligned with LWVMN's broader timelines for studies.

#### Research Best Practices

1. **Source Credibility:**
  - Prioritize neutral, academic, and policy-based sources.
  - Avoid using materials or resources from advocacy organizations that may introduce bias.
2. **Citation:**
  - Use footnote-style citations to attribute all sources. Avoid plagiarism by quoting and paraphrasing responsibly.
  - Maintain transparency in referencing sources for all factual statements and analyses.
3. **Broad and Balanced Perspectives:**
  - Explore diverse and conflicting viewpoints on the issue to provide a well-rounded analysis.

#### Report Writing

1. **Objective Analysis:**
  - Ensure reports are written without aiming for a predetermined conclusion.
  - Frame consensus questions independently, avoiding collaboration with advocacy groups that could influence the outcome.
2. **Clarity and Accessibility:**
  - Use clear, concise language accessible to a general audience.
  - Organize the report logically, with distinct sections for background, analysis, findings, and recommendations.
3. **Peer Review:**

- Seek feedback from individuals outside the study committee to identify potential gaps, biases, or areas needing clarification.
- 4. **Documentation:**
  - Maintain clear records of the study process, including research methods, sources, and committee decisions, for future reference.

## **Consensus and Member Engagement**

1. **Consensus Questions:**
    - Craft questions that are clear, focused, and allow for thoughtful member discussion.
    - Avoid questions that assume a specific outcome or position.
  2. **Member Discussions:**
    - Facilitate structured discussions to gather input from members. Provide discussion guides to ensure consistency across groups.
  3. **Education:**
    - Offer informational sessions or materials to members to build a foundational understanding of the issue before consensus discussions.
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## **Role of LWVMN Staff in Policy Positions Review**

LWVMN staff play a limited supporting role in the Policy Positions Review process and must maintain a clear distinction between support and leadership. Their roles include:

1. **Support for Communication:**
    - Assist with distributing study reports, consensus questions, and concurrence proposals through established communication channels.
  2. **Resource Sharing:**
    - As capacity allows, staff may share relevant resources or guidance on research methods with study committees.
    - As capacity allows, show committee members how to conduct research independently but refrain from conducting research or drafting reports unless directed by the LWVMN Board of Directors.
  3. **Maintaining Neutrality:**
    - LWVMN staff should not write, edit, or influence the content of study reports unless explicitly instructed by the Board. Their role is to empower committees to conduct their work independently and objectively as a key part of our grassroots action and advocacy efforts.
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By adhering to these practices, local League study committees can ensure their studies meet the high standards of integrity, objectivity, and professionalism required to support LWVMN's *Program for Action*.