

CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

The proper governance of League of Women Voters of Oakland depends upon the active participation of its Directors, Committee Chairs or Co-Chairs, Task Forces, and designated spokespersons. It is important for League of Women Voters of Oakland Directors and Committee Chairs and other volunteers, to be aware that the appearance of conflict can create ramifications to the organization in the same manner as an actual conflict. Therefore, the Board must be fully informed at all times as to events or circumstances that might create the appearance of a conflict of interest.

In this policy, the word "Leaders" will include the Board of Directors, Committee Chairs or Co-Chairs, Task Force Chairs or Co-Chairs, designated spokespersons, and other leadership volunteers engaged with the Oakland League.

The Leaders of the League of Women Voters of Oakland are guided by this Conflict of Interest Policy whenever they are representing the League. In this role, each has a duty of loyalty to the League over the Leader's interest or the interests of others. In addition, Leaders shall avoid acts of self-dealing which may adversely affect the tax-exempt status of League or cause any sanction or penalty by a governmental authority.

Finally, Leaders may have personal opinions or positions which are contrary to the established position of the Oakland League. Leaders may also belong to other organizations which may hold positions contrary to those of the League. When speaking in a public setting on behalf of the League, Leaders must express positions and comments consistent with League policy. Leaders may speak publicly to present personal opinions or positions, and in this case must identify themselves as speaking only for themselves, and not representing the League of Women Voters of Oakland. Public speaking should be done in a way that is sensitive to the setting of the meeting and in such cases may not publicly represent the League. If questions exist about this representation of the Oakland League in public settings, this should be cleared in advance with the President of the League.

Because Leaders may be involved with other organizations that make grants to, or have business dealings or affiliations with League of Women Voters of Oakland, the following general principles have been established:

1. Each Leader shall maintain the highest level of ethical conduct and shall exercise the highest standards of care, diligence and prudence when conducting any activity on behalf of League of Women Voters of Oakland.
2. Without full and complete disclosure to and approval by the Board, no Leader shall have any position of influence with, or a material financial interest in, any other entity, the existence of which does or could reasonably be expected to conflict with the proper performance of his duties or responsibilities to the Board, or which could reasonably be expected to affect his independent judgment and action with respect to transactions between League of Women Voters of Oakland Board and such other entity. If such a position exists, it must be disclosed to the Board.
3. Material financial interest shall be defined as when a person has a financial interest directly or indirectly, through, business, investment, or family; an ownership or investment interest in any entity with which the organization has a transaction or arrangement; a compensation arrangement with the organization or with any entity of individual with which the

organization has a transaction or arrangement; a potential ownership or investment in, or compensation arrangement with, any entity or individual with which the organization is negotiating a transaction or arrangement; compensation includes direct or indirect remuneration as well as gifts, contributions, or favors that are not insubstantial. A financial interest is not necessarily a conflict of interest; a person who has a financial interest may have a conflict of interest only if the appropriate governing board decides that a conflict of interest exists.

4. In the event any Leader or a member of her or his immediate family has a personal or business interest, or is involved in any way with, an organization with which the Board is considering a business contract, such interest or involvement shall be disclosed to the Board. Each Leader shall provide the Board with a full and complete written disclosure of all facts of any transaction or situation that may be subject to any reasonable doubt concerning the possible existence of a conflict of interest by the Leader. The minutes of the meeting shall indicate that the interested Leader disclosed the interest of involvement in the matter being considered by the board and excused himself or herself from voting on the matter.
5. For situations which arise in which League of Women Voters of Oakland Board may wish to contract or enter into an arrangement for goods or services under circumstances that may present a conflict of interest affecting one or more of its members, the affected member(s) of the Board agree(s) to provide full information to the Board to allow the Board to approve by resolution (with the affected member abstaining) such contract or arrangement provided it is advantageous to do so.
6. If the Board has reasonable cause to believe that a Leader has failed to disclose actual or possible conflicts of interest, the Board shall inform the member of the basis for the belief and afford the member and opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose. If after hearing the Leader's explanation and making further investigation as needed, the Board determined that the member has failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest, it shall take appropriate disciplinary and corrective action.
7. Each Leader is responsible for understanding and adhering to Board policy and positions, and any public speaking related to specific issues or policies shall be governed by the League's public speaking policy. Any material interest which a Leader has by way of employment, a family member's employment, or investment interest in another organization whose purpose and goals may conflict with those of the Oakland League, must disclose such as possible conflict of interest to the Board, to determine if the Leader may appropriately represent the League in public sessions on a particular topic. If the Leader is permitted to represent the League at a public meeting, she or he is required to disclose the stated possible conflict of interest at the beginning of her or his comments.
8. Each Leader or member of a committee with governing-board-delegated powers shall annually sign a statement which affirms that the person has received a copy of the policy, has read and understands the policy, has agreed to comply with the policy, and understands that the organization is charitable in nature and in order to maintain its federal tax exemption, must engage primarily in activities which accomplish one or more of its tax-exempt purposes.
9. In cases of questions about possible violations of this policy, the Executive Committee of the League will review the circumstances, available evidence, talk with involved persons, and make a recommendation to the full Board of Directors regarding possible action.

