

Total Board Responsibility

The authority for the whole League operation rests with the board, whose members together make the decisions. Board members often assume specific duties, but each also shares in the responsibility of the entire board for the local League's operation. Each board member, for example, has a fiduciary responsibility for the organization, although the finance chair or committee may have the day-to-day job of raising money. Because of this group's responsibility, board members are expected to attend board meetings regularly, give thoughtful consideration to all aspects of League work, join in board deliberations and decisions and take part in making the general plans for League activities.

Of course, the president plays the key role in providing leadership for the board and the entire League and in serving as spokesperson to the community. The president is a leader first, empowering the other members of the board to achieve League goals, then a manager.

Organization of the Board

All Leagues have limited time, money and people resources and need to evaluate these resources in relation to their projected plans when organizing for the year. The bylaws of each local and state League and ILO provide for the officers of the League and the maximum number of elected and appointed members, depending on the size of the League.

The bylaws outline the duties of the president, secretary and treasurer but do not spell out specific tasks of the vice president(s) or other members of the board. This gives each board the flexibility to make assignments in whatever way makes the best use of time and talents of the board members for that year. Keep in mind that it's more important for a board to organize around what it hopes to accomplish for the year than to try to fill slots just because a pattern has been established by predecessors.

Today, Leagues are experimenting with a variety of board structures as they search for appropriate ways to achieve their goals. While many League boards continue to assign their members specific responsibilities (e.g., membership, finance, public relations, program issues, voters service, etc.), an increasing number have done away with specific assignments and established three or four committees organized around the priorities they've identified for the year. Others are using a combination of committees and individual assignments. Executive committees, consisting of the president and several board members, can assume specific assignments and take action **on board matters between** regular board meetings.

Local League Board Member at a Glance

Role: Makes the League's decisions and organizes its activities with the entire board.

General

- Attends board meetings (gives notification if unable to attend).
- Is a board member first; a specific chair second.
- Assists in overall planning and decision making.
- Supports and attends League activities.
- Explains and promotes the League in the community.
- Understands and maintains the League's nonpartisan political activity policy.
- Attends state and regional League meetings.
- Assists in fundraising activities.
- Promotes membership.

Specific

- Carries out specific assignments.
- Keeps a board notebook.
- Keeps a portfolio file with reports, publications, memos, clippings, etc.
- Meets deadlines: bulletin, publicity, reports to state and national offices.
- Brings plans to board for discussion and for reaching decisions.
- Obtains board approval prior to taking action.
- Trains successor and passes on files.

Techniques

- Review assignment/portfolio and discuss past and ongoing projects with predecessor.
- Form a committee if appropriate for the portfolio/assignment.
- Prepare brief reports for board meetings.
- Provide information for the bulletin when appropriate.
- Involve other members; spread the workload.