

League of Women Voters of the Red River Valley Candidate Forum Policy

Candidate Inclusion Policy

- **Eligibility to be on the ballot:** the candidate must have correctly submitted, circulated, and properly filed nomination papers in a timely manner.
- **Write-in candidates:** **write-in candidates** who wish to be included must have filed the appropriate papers with the state by the filing deadline to be included on the ballot.
- **Evidence of a campaign:** the candidate must have made a public announcement of an intention to run, have a legally registered committee, if required, and have filed appropriate financial reports.

Implementation of Candidate Forums

1. All candidates will be invited at the same time and in the same manner by USPS mail and/or email. If an email address is not available from either the candidate or the Secretary of State, USPS mail should be used for that candidate. Invitations will include a link to the forum policy.
2. The invitation will include:
 - i. Location or website for review of the LWV RRV full candidate form forum policy.
 - ii. Provide the organization's goal for sponsoring the forum.
 - iii. Criteria for eligibility. State clearly that the candidates must meet all the criteria to be eligible.
 - iv. Candidate participation requirements. Candidates must appear in person. Campaign representatives may not participate in the forum as a substitute for the official candidate.
 - v. Time limits. Each candidate will have a time limit for an opening and closing statement to be made. Each question will also have a time limit for each answer.
 - vi. Deadline for inclusion in the forum. A RSVP deadline will be included on the invitation and it will be enforced.
3. If an invited candidate is unable or decides not to appear at a scheduled legislative or local election event, the event may still be held. This is the case even if only one candidate appears, except when FCC or FEC rules apply.

4. The League will take the following steps to receive involvement from all invited candidates.
 - i. In planning for the date and location of the forum, the League will consider the venue availability, community events, etc. to find a date and location that is the most widely accessible.
 - ii. Candidate participation is encouraged. If a candidate refuses to participate, information will be provided to media outlets stating that all candidates were invited to participate and including who has accepted the invitation to participate. The press release will include the statement that if candidates do not participate, they are denying the community an opportunity for public education about them and the issues.
 - iii. The League's decision to have candidate forums even if some candidates choose not to participate will always emphasize the League's priority to provide voter information. The candidate who chooses not to attend will have the opportunity to provide a brief written statement to be read at the scheduled candidate forum. The statement must be of a length that it can be read in the same amount of time as the opening statement of the candidates present. All other invited candidates will be able to participate in the candidate forum if they choose.
5. The candidate or candidates who attend will have an opportunity to make opening and closing statements and express their positions on issues in response to questions submitted by the audience.

Unopposed Races

1. The League will not hold a candidate forum only involving an unopposed candidate.
2. The League may consider allowing a candidate in an unopposed race the opportunity to participate with other candidates for a race in a similar election, e.g., state legislature districts.

Campaign Literature at the Forum

Literature may be placed in an area designated for the material near the room entrance.

Volunteer Responsibilities and Roles for a Candidate Forum

- A. Following is a description of each participant and the role they play:

- a. **Moderator** - The role of the moderator is that of an event facilitator. The moderator introduces the participants, explains the format and procedures of the forum, identifies whose turn it is to speak, reads the questions, ensures fairness, and maintains decorum. The moderator should be a League member or member of the community that the LWVRRV has designated and has had some formal training or has participated in previous forums in some capacity. All moderators will have participated in a training session by LWVRRV.
- b. **Timekeeper** - The role of the timekeeper is to ensure that all candidates/speakers are given an equal amount of time to present their information.
- c. **Question Sorter/Screenener** - The role of the sorter is to review written questions from the audience for appropriateness and redundancy. Questions are usually written on notecards, which the sorter reviews and puts in a recommended order for the moderator to present. The screener may revise some questions, revise the order the questions are presented or reject questions, based upon the dynamics of the event or the amount of time available. The moderator may also complete this process if needed.