



Observer Corps 101

An Overview and Invitation

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LWVLCF Observer Corps Leader

Government “of the people, by the people, and for the people”

- Our rights to access to government information weren't guaranteed until 100+ years after the Gettysburg Address
 - Federal Advisory Committee Act of 1972
 - Sunshine Act of 1976
- The League of Women Voters has championed government transparency since its inception
 - Founding principles include statements on the citizen's right to know

US laws pertaining to public access will only be as good as we demand them to be



Role of an Observer Program

- Ensure citizens are aware of decisions that impact their lives
- Promote government transparency and accountability
- Monitor what issues are being discussed and how they are being discussed

Who Benefits from an Observer Corps?

- **Observers**

- Learn about what is happening in their community
- Aware of how decisions are made and who the decision-makers are

- **Community**

- Has an engaged and empowered nonpartisan group representing all citizens, focused on government transparency

- **League of Women Voters**

- Strengthens ties between the League and local government
- Fosters relationships with other community organizations

Along with Voter Services, Observer Corps is one of the most visible ways to demonstrate the League's nonpartisanship and trustworthiness

What Does the Observer Corps Do?

- Attend meetings as League members
- Monitor process and protocol
- Evaluate meeting content vs LWV priorities or positions
- Share observations and concerns as necessary



LWVLCF Observer Corps – Where Are We?

- New Hanover, Brunswick, and Pender Counties
- Boards of Education
- Boards of Elections
- County Commissioners
- City Council (Wilmington)



NEW HANOVER COUNTY
The Model of Good Governance



LWVLCF Observer Corps – Who Are We?

- Characteristics of Observers

- Good listeners
- Interested in local government and community issues
- Able to summarize and interpret proceedings in a fair way

- Current observers

Jana Albritton

Connie Nelson

Kathryn Hedgepeth

Clarice Reber

Sue-Ann Rush

Leslie Antos

Barbara Burrell

Claudia Tidwell

Acting on Observations

- Signs of Possible Concerns for LWVLCF
 - Agenda not available or does not represent meeting discussion
 - Meeting is not adequately accessible to interested citizens
 - Topics or decisions are counter to LWV positions
- Determination of Next Steps
 - Observer, Observer Corps leader and identified Board members review the situation and possible responses
- Examples of Current Issues Being Evaluated
 - Limited notification of openings for interested citizens on Boards, Committees & Commissions in the city of Wilmington
 - Minutes from Pender County Commissioners meetings remain unpublished months after occurring

Observer Corps – Is it for You?

- We have meetings in all three counties that need additional observers
- We have a 30 minute training/orientation session to answer all questions
- Experienced observers can provide OJT and tips
- If you are interested, if you are just exploring, or if you want to volunteer your neighbor please reach out

