Candidates’ Forum Checklist

**General Planning** (2-3 months ahead)
- Determine which election areas or districts to cover.
- Choose format: debate, panel discussion, several districts at one meeting, etc.
- Decide on ground rules such as speaking order, time limits, type of questions, etc.
- Select choice of dates, times and facilities.
- Choose cosponsor(s), if any.
- List possible moderators.
- Identify the media in your area: contact person, address, and phone number.
- Present plan to League board for approval.

**Arrangements** (2 months ahead)
- Determine date and time of meeting.
- Check proposed facilities for adequate size, cost, location, parking, podium, microphone, and other equipment.
- Confirm arrangements with facility in writing.
- Recruit moderator or panelists, timekeepers, hostesses, voter registration person, membership person, publications person.
- Confirm arrangements with cosponsors.

**Invitations** (6 weeks ahead)
- Send individual letters to each candidate; including time, place, ground rules, format, and phone number of League contact person. Request RSVP by certain date.
- Send confirming letters to candidates with ground rules.

**Publicity** (4 weeks ahead)
- Send letters of invitation to media.
- Arrange for newspaper photographer.
- Announce meeting in League bulletin.
- Draft press release; include League contact phone number.
- Print and distribute flyers.
- Arrange for League banner, signs, decorations, and flag.
- Acquire voter registration forms and absentee ballot applications.
- Prepare written agenda; include format of candidate forum, list of candidates, office for which they are running, length of term, party designation, and election information. Optional: space to write questions, League donation/membership form, and candidates’ biographical information.
- Invite local luminaries.
- Clip newspaper articles related to meeting and election for League archives.

**Preparation** (2-3 weeks ahead)
- Procure stopwatch, gavel, and time cards.
- Distribute agenda with timing rules and order of business to moderator, president, timekeeper, candidates, etc.
- Release pre-meeting publicity promoting attendance and encouraging citizens to vote.
- Confirm all arrangements.

**Hospitality** (2 weeks ahead)
- Arrange appropriate refreshments and necessary supplies.
- Arrange water glasses, paper and pencils for candidates.
- Also prepare front tables, if used: tablecloths, name cards for panelists and moderator.
- Prepare nametags for all candidates, moderator, timekeeper, panelists, LWV president, voter service chair, membership chair, voter registration person, etc.
- Arrange press section and credentials.

**At the Meeting**
- Arrive one hour early. Check to see that arrangements are as requested.
- Hang banners and posters.
- Check audio and lighting.
- Greet League personnel, candidates, and press.
- See that the meeting begins on time.
- Thank all those involved for a successful candidates’ night.

**After the Meeting**
- Write thank you notes.
- Submit vouchers and receipts for reimbursement.
- Prepare evaluation for files.