

Evaluation of VOTE411 in 2020
Public Report
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VOTE411 2020 General Election coverage map for LWV of Columbia Area

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It is with pleasure that the VOTE411 Committee of the League of Women Voters of the Columbia Area (SC) presents this Evaluation *of VOTE411 in 2020*.

This project is an activity of the nonpartisan LWV, which works to empower voters by encouraging informed and active participation in government.

As we considered our work during this past election year, we realized that the countless hours of volunteer time put in by Committee members and others, brought to each of us the satisfaction of knowing that we had made a difference.

To understand why, we would like to share with you this review of the VOTE411 project and our recommendations for future participation.

Making Democracy Work,

Keller H. Barron, Chair
VOTE 411 Committee
League of Women Voters of the Columbia Area (SC)

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Note that the following naming conventions are used in this report:

- LWVUS – League of Women Voters of the US (also referred to as “National”)
- LWVSC - League of Women Voters of South Carolina (also referred to as “State”)
- Columbia League – League of Women Voters of the Columbia Area (SC)

Cover page: the [VOTE411 2020 General Election coverage map for LWV of Columbia Area](#) shows the counties that the VOTE411 Committee became involved with:

- bright green - covered all county, school board, SC General Assembly and US elections and provided extensive publicity
- light green - covered all SC General Assembly and US elections and provided some targeted publicity
- tan - covered at least one SC General Assembly race but provided no publicity to these areas

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1. OVERVIEW

The Overview presents background information about VOTE411, the purpose of this report, its intended audience, and organization.

1.1 Background

Launched by the League of Women Voters Education Fund (LWVEF) in October of 2006, VOTE411.org is an online "one-stop-shop" for election related information. It provides nonpartisan information to the public with both general and state-specific information on the following aspects of the election process:

- Absentee ballot information
- Election dates
- ID requirements
- Polling place locations
- Registration deadlines
- Voter qualifications
- Voter registration forms
- Factual data on candidates in various federal, state, and local races.
- Candidate questions and responses (to inform the public about their positions, qualifications using their own words)

In 2010, the LWVSC joined 26 other states to support the VOTE411 website. The LWVSC produced a voter's guide, which focused on all federal and state constitutional and legislative offices. Though no local elections were covered, 224 candidates were contacted.

In 2012, the LWV of the Charleston Area (SC) produced its own VOTE411 voter guide for local offices. The LWVSC paused VOTE411 participation until 2017, when the LWV of Charleston resumed providing voter guides for Berkeley, Charleston, and Dorchester counties. Support for the VOTE411 website by LWVSC and other local leagues (including the LWV of the Columbia Area (SC)) grew in earnest beginning 2018 and continues today. See [Appendix F: VOTE411 History](#) for additional details.

In 2020, the Columbia League supported the state and national LWV Leagues to implement VOTE411.org in national, state, and local elections for the counties that include or surround Columbia. The goal was to educate voters in a nonpartisan way about the voting process, the candidates, and the candidates' verbatim responses to questions posed by the League.

Spearheading the project was the Columbia League's **VOTE411 Committee**. Working with a budget of \$3000 in 2020, the team's 18+ volunteers spent over a thousand hours in the areas of database administration, publicity, outreach, and candidate Q&A. Working amidst the COVID-19 pandemic required sending out 1500 emails, placing over 100 phone calls, and holding many Zoom meetings in lieu of personal contacts.

1.2 Purpose

This report presents the results of a self-evaluation performed by the VOTE411 Committee concerning its work in 2020. It documents the Committee's efforts in the seven areas listed below, including lessons learned, recommendations for improvement, and reference information useful in future election cycles:

- 1) **Candidate Question Development and Critical Review:** how questions were developed, review of question effectiveness
- 2) **Candidate Interaction and Response Rate Analysis**
 - Methods for interacting with candidates, encouraging their participation in VOTE411
 - Statistical assessment of how the candidate question response rate varied according to type of elected office (Race Group), political party, and whether the candidate was an incumbent and/or unopposed
- 3) **Publicity and Outreach:** methods used to advertise VOTE411 to the public, outreach to specific groups
- 4) **VOTE411 Administration**
 - Roles of the VOTE411 Committee, Administrator, Columbia League Board, LWVUS, and other leagues in SC
 - Challenges / recommendations for the Administrator role (including technical), interfacing between roles, and interfacing with candidates and voters
- 5) **Financial Aspects:** budgeting, fund raising, expenses
- 6) **Project Planning:** VOTE411 Committee organization / planning for smooth execution of tasks
- 7) **Results / VOTE411 Usage:** measures of VOTE411 success for the Columbia Area in 2020

1.3 Intended Audience and Report Organization

The Executive Summary is intended for the Columbia League and LWVSC boards, LWVUS members, and the general public. The detailed section is for those League members actively involved with the VOTE411 effort, including new VOTE411 volunteers for use as a learning tool.



2 Executive Summary

As introduced in the OVERVIEW, this report presents the results of an evaluation of VOTE411.org that was conducted by the LWV of the Columbia Area (SC) in early 2021. The evaluation, performed by this League’s *VOTE411 Committee*, addresses the implementation of VOTE411 in the Columbia, SC area.

The Executive Summary presents the following information:

- Elections, Candidates, Races (Section 2.1)
- Impact of COVID-19 (Section 2.2)
- Conclusions from the seven areas evaluated (Sections 2.3 - 2.9)
- Recommendations (Section 2.10)

2.1 Elections Covered in 2020

The VOTE411 Committee worked with LWVSC and LWVUS to publish information on 241 candidates and 110 races as shown in [Table 2-1](#). The ten elections ranged from relatively small (short-notice, special, small-town, municipal) to the large multi-race primaries in June and the general election in November.

The great majority of these races were in Richland and Lexington counties, the usual targeted areas for the Columbia League. However, several more races were included in the June primaries and the November general election in an effort to increase coverage for voters in Aiken and Orangeburg counties.

Table 2- 1
2020 Election, Races, and Candidates
Covered by VOTE411 in the Columbia Area

Election Date	Election	Races		Candidates
2/11	Blythewood Town Council Special Election	1		2
3/3	Irmo Town Council & Lexington School Dist. 4 Special Elections	2		7
6/9	Democratic and Republican Primaries	22		53
6/23	Democratic and Republican Primary Runoffs	4		8
7/14	South Congaree and Eastover Mayor & Town Council General Elections	4		14
8/11	Cayce City Council District 3 Special Election	1		3
9/8	Richland County Council District 9 Special Election	1		4
9/22	Cayce City Council District 1 Special Election	1		3
9/22	Richland County Council District 9 Runoff	1		2
11/3	General Election	73		145
	TOTAL	110		241

2.2 Impact of COVID-19

The Columbia Area VOTE411 team expected 2020 to be a busy year due to the increased voter attention to the primary and general elections.

However, when the outbreak of COVID-19 occurred in March, everything changed. The team was no longer able to sponsor or attend in-person special events or to continue visiting county, school board, and town council meetings. As a result, the team promoted VOTE411 in new ways such as digital ads, billboards, yard signs, postcards to candidates and more. In some cases, these new methods resulted in more success than anticipated and have provided new resources for future elections.

Additional impacts:

- Required reprogramming of VOTE411 when two municipal elections were postponed.
- Increased communications with the LWVUS. The information provided in VOTE411 for SC about absentee voting and changes in voting locations had to be updated several times due to the pandemic. Even though the information pertained to the entire state, the Columbia League provided a great deal of the information to the LWVUS to be added to VOTE411.

2.3 Candidate Question Development

In questioning the candidates, the objective is to ask timely, nonpartisan questions which, when answered, will assist the voters in determining which candidates will best represent them.

For each election, the Committee followed a specific process for developing 3 to 6 questions per candidate (per elected office). This process considered League guidance on public policy positions, remaining nonpartisan, and writing unbiased questions. Assistance was also sought from knowledgeable persons, including educators (for school board questions) and Observer Corps members. Once formulated, questions were reviewed and approved by the Columbia League's Board.

In 2021, the Committee conducted a critical review of the candidate questions and concluded:

- Questions to candidates were consistent with League guidelines, unbiased, non-leading (with only one exception), and judged to be useful to the public.
- The number of questions was reasonable.
- The wording (and topic) did not seem to influence whether a candidate responded.
- It was challenging to construct a question that is nonpartisan while remaining true to LWV principles and positions on issues.

For additional details, see:

- Section 3.1: [Candidate Questions: Development and Critical Review](#)
- Appendix A: [Candidate Questions Exported from VOTE411](#)

2.4 Candidate Interaction and Response Rate Analysis

For the 241 candidates in 110 races during the 2020 election cycle, the VOTE411 Committee had nearly 1500 interactions with the candidates. This includes about 1000 emails issued by the VOTE411 system, followed by approximately 500 additional contacts (emails, phone calls).

Most verbal or email communication with candidates was quite pleasant and friendly.

The overall candidate response rate was 63%. All candidate responses were published verbatim in VOTE411, i.e., without editing.

To simplify this analysis, the 110 races were sorted into 6 “Race Groups” (County, County Council, School Board, General Assembly, Solicitor, and Congressional) as shown in [Table 3.2- 1](#). The response rate was found to vary significantly by Race Group ([Figure 3-2](#)). The lowest response was for county races (36%); the highest was for County Council races (75%). However, this variability was suspected to be related to the factors below, not to the Race Group itself:

- Candidate incumbency – more likely if not an incumbent.
- Race opposition (Contested or Uncontested) – more likely if contested.
- Party affiliation – more likely if a Democrat (or minority party).

Any correlation between a candidate responding and that candidate winning a race is complicated by too many other factors and would require further investigation.

For additional details, see

- Section 3.2: [Candidate Interaction and Response Rate Analysis](#)
- Appendix G [Candidate Response Rate Tables](#)

2.5 Publicity and Outreach

Publicity and outreach are closely interwoven and require coordination of messaging and timing. Publicity includes press releases, print and digital (online) advertising, signs, social media and billboards. Outreach includes efforts to increase awareness of VOTE411 through visits and presentations to municipal, county and school board meetings, booths at events, posters and flyers for libraries, and notices to neighborhoods and other organizations. The VOTE411 Committee worked to increase awareness and use of VOTE411 through a variety of efforts, including a close working relationship with the Voter Participation Committee. The Committee worked with league members in Aiken and Orangeburg counties to cover statewide races in these counties.

VOTE411 had 16,035 individual users from Richland and Lexington Counties who viewed candidate information in 2018 and 28,234 individual users in 2020, a 76% increase. Since voting information and

links to voter registration were also accessed on VOTE411, there were 45,891 users in Richland and Lexington Counties and an additional 4,886 users in Aiken and Orangeburg counties. Approximately 3.3% of all VOTE411 users in South Carolina registered to vote. Meeting that threshold in Richland and Lexington counties would mean that 1,500 people in the midlands registered to vote through VOTE411.

It is worth noting that

- The work of the Publicity team would not have been possible without the huge support of League members who made calls, wrote emails and personal notes, copy-edited letters, made face masks, designed flyers and signs, developed and placed ads and billboards, wrote news releases, talked with partner organizations, used social media -- all giving their time and expertise in a variety of ways.
- The distribution of information through free and low-cost contacts like libraries, social media and emails continues to be effective. The data from digital advertising clearly shows the effectiveness of the ad campaigns run by LWV members. Digital advertising through a media company had negligible benefit for the amount of money spent. Billboards were viewed by over 1 million people.

For additional details, see:

- Section 3.3: [Publicity and Outreach](#)
- Appendix B: [2020 VOTE411 Committee Outreach](#)
- Appendix C: [VOTE411 Online/Digital Advertising for Richland & Lexington Counties](#)

2.6 VOTE411 Administration

The VOTE411 system is an online voter guide created by the LWVUS to enable voters to find voting information and details on their own specific races and candidates. A league's VOTE411 administrator (admin) uses a software tool to customize VOTE411 for local elections.

The process to update the voter guide is part technical and part research and planning. The VOTE411 Committee plans what statewide and local elections will be covered in the guide and how interaction with candidates will take place.

The Committee also interacts with the LWVUS and the LWVSC to update, approve or provide input for some areas of the work.

Some problems encountered in 2020 were:

- Technical limitations preventing admins from sharing more of the technical work.
- Amount of coordination and follow-up tracking needed in working with candidates.
- Some confusion on managing updates needed by the LWVSC relating to the "Voting in My State" page.
- An unexpected number of municipal and special elections in a legislative election year.

- A system issue encountered by a number of candidates possibly related to a system time-out setting.
- Some candidates attempting to use cell phones to add their information, which was not supported by the system.
- Some voters unable to find their races due to confusion with screen graphics.

The VOTE411 Committee has already provided feedback to the LWVUS on many of these issues; focus groups for making improvements and enhancements to the system are being organized now by the LWVUS VOTE411 technical team.

Additional technical details are contained in the full version of this report. To request a copy, please send a note to lwvcolasc@gmail.com.

2.7 Financial Aspects

At the beginning of 2020, the Committee began work for the primaries by printing posters and business cards for distribution to libraries and at voter registration events.

As the year unfolded, the coronavirus pandemic caused the cancellation of many events and plans to interact with voters. The Committee had to redesign its outreach and publicity efforts; it decided to pursue funding and approval for two billboards, and an online ad campaign to promote VOTE411 and encourage South Carolinians to register to vote through VOTE411.

Initially, the LWV Columbia Area 2020/2021 had budgeted

- \$1200 for VOTE411 Communications
- \$1,800 in Promotional Items/Publicity including VOTE411

In June 2020, the Columbia League Board approved \$1450 for two billboards to run for four weeks each. In August the board approved a total of \$2150 for VOTE411, with \$500 to be spent on behalf of Voter Participation. The August funds were allocated for digital (online) advertising, yard signs, mailing 'Keep Calm and Vote' stickers to LWV members, and VOTE411 face masks. Some LWV members provided materials or funds and did not request reimbursement.

The major categories of expenses were:

Table 2.7.1

<i>Area</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Billboards	\$1,450
Digital/online ads	\$1,860
Postage	\$325
Print ads	\$200
Printing	\$735
VOTE411 fee	\$400
TOTAL	\$4,970

A detailed list of online advertising is in the VOTE411 Ad Cost and Results table in [Appendix C: VOTE411 Online/Digital Advertising for Richland & Lexington Counties](#).

For additional details, see:

- Section 3.4: [Financial Aspects](#)
- Appendix E: [Financial Details](#)

2.8 Project Planning

Project planning is a series of steps that lead to a successful delivery of a project. It involves creating timelines, establishing deadlines and assigning responsibility for each phase of a project.

Major areas that require planning are:

- **Outreach:** planning visits to town/city, county or school board meetings; booths at events; posters and flyers for libraries; notices to neighborhood and civic organizations.
- **Publicity:** press releases, print and digital ads, signs, social media or billboards.
- **Budgeting:** costs of the outreach and publicity, when it will be needed, and costs for the use of VOTE411.
- **VOTE411 Updates:** specifications for what goes into VOTE411, the specific order of dependent tasks and tasks handled by people outside of the VOTE411 Committee, dates for all tasks and who will perform them.
- **Candidate Interaction:** verifying candidate contact details, planning email communication, follow-up contact with candidates to remind them to return their responses.
- **Question Development:** research and input from other members of the Columbia League, the Columbia League Board and the LWVSC, as well as all other appropriate approvals.

Planning each year has improved and will continue to do so by formalizing lists, schedules and subcommittees into a more comprehensive plan that provides a better idea of the work coming up for the year. Some areas are larger than others and require several people to participate; other areas need good coordination to ensure work is timed and completed in proper order. Improved teamwork aids in the sharing of major tasks.

Working groups have evolved over time with many cross-area meetings and discussions for sharing information and status. The following committees/teams will be useful in the future:

- Publicity/Outreach Committee and Coordinator(s)
- Vote411 Administration Team and Coordinator
- Question Development Team and Coordinator
- Candidate Interaction Team and Coordinator
- Year-end Analysis Committee and Chairperson

For additional details, see

- Section 3.5: [Project Planning](#)
- Appendix D: [VOTE411 Election Cycle Task List](#)

2.9 VOTE411 Results / Usage

VOTE411.org had a positive impact on the 2020 electorate of the Columbia area.

In 2020 VOTE411.org had over 7.7 million sessions from January 1st through election day across the country, an increase of 141% over the 2016 presidential election year. VOTE411 was used in 2020 by leagues in all fifty states.

More than 170,000 people used the voter registration tool across the country. In South Carolina, 5,585 voters were registered through VOTE411.org.

The Columbia League has seen significant increases in the use of VOTE411 to access candidate information as well.

- Candidate information sessions for the state increased 25% over 2018 numbers (which was also a legislative election year)
- Sessions for Richland and Lexington counties increased 69% over 2018

We attribute these increases in usage to several things:

- The year 2020 was a presidential election year and a critical one to most voters.
- Many other races were highly contested and of interest to voters.
- The new venture into online advertising using Google and Instagram was quite successful.
- The use of SCIWAY continues to result in more users.
- Additional new types of advertising, such as the billboards and yard signs probably had an impact even though it cannot directly be measured.

For additional details, see Section 3.6: [VOTE411 Results / Usage](#).



2.10 Key Recommendations

Listed below are the key (most important) recommendations, sorted by the implementing league organization. These have not been prioritized and do not address implementation details.

Columbia League VOTE411 Committee:

1. Hold a kick-off meeting in December to begin to determine the number of elections that will be covered during the coming year, expected timing and what teams will be needed to support the work. Verify which targeted races have districts extending into other counties and determine if all the General Assembly races in that county can be covered; if so, consider expanding publicity and outreach efforts.
2. Build a high-level schedule in January based on the dates of the races that will be covered.
3. Contact LWVSC at-large members in surrounding counties who might like to participate in supporting additional races not in Richland and Lexington counties.
4. In January, plan the committees, chairpersons, teams, coordinators with responsibilities that will be needed during the year. Include adequate time for planning and testing.
5. Ensure adequate funding for activities is included in the local league budget.
6. Train additional League members in the development of questions which follow LWVUS guidelines.
7. Train Committee members in navigation of VOTE411, how to answer typical questions from candidates and voters, and to assist with testing after publishing.
8. Recognize the importance of testing before and after the publishing of November elections and allow reasonable time and resources for the work.
9. Look for opportunities to include new League members in the Committee's work while planning the schedule, work groups and coordinators for the year.
10. When planning candidate follow-up actions, focus especially on those who are less likely to respond (incumbents, unopposed, majority party, or a combination thereof).
11. Expand outreach targeting civic and neighborhood organizations, retirement communities, colleges/technical schools, minority organizations, younger voters and areas with lower voter participation.
12. Evaluate and plan publicity using digital (online) ads, billboards and radio advertising taking into account the number of races and voters involved each year.
13. Continue and expand the use of press releases, free and paid advertising with radio, print, or digital media to reach minority and younger voters and areas with lower voter participation.
14. Consider other ways to work with candidates who do not have easy access to a computer.

Columbia League Board:

Obtain and maintain a Columbia League email domain for use in communication with candidates.

LWVSC:

1. Renew the ongoing relationship with the SC State Library Communications Director through contact by the Columbia League VOTE411 Committee.

2. Encourage the state board and local league VOTE411 Committees to expand coordination of publicity and outreach including the use of digital advertising and billboards.
3. Take responsibility for monitoring and requesting updates to the VOTE411 “Voting in My State” page.
4. Obtain and maintain a LWVSC email domain for use in communication with candidates.
5. Consider documenting the steps and purchasing or developing a simple tool to log VOTE411 interactions with candidates and track any follow-up required.

LWVUS:

1. Investigate methods for surveying actual VOTE411 users to obtain a truly independent assessment of candidate questions with respect to lack of bias, clarity, suggestions for improvement, etc.
2. Implement enhancements to the VOTE411 system that would make navigation directly to a voter’s races more straightforward and would support cell phones for data entry.
3. Prioritize the implementation of customized system access for Vote411 administrators.

For details and additional recommendations, see the following “Details” section.



3 DETAILS

3.1 Candidate Questions: Development and Critical Review

This section describes the goal of candidate questions, the process used to develop them and the critical review considering the candidates' responses (or lack thereof). The objective here is to document "best practices" which will hopefully lead to more constructive questions in future elections.

All questions to candidates for the 2020 general election are given in [Appendix A: Candidate Questions Exported from VOTE411](#). All candidate responses were published verbatim in VOTE411, i.e., without editing.

3.1.1 Goal of Candidate Questions

The objective of questioning the candidates is to ask timely, nonpartisan questions which, when answered, will assist the voters in determining which candidates will best represent them.

3.1.2 Process Used by the Columbia League to Develop Questions

1) Each race was preceded by a description of the office. This assists the voter in deciding if the candidate, as presented, can fulfill the duties. The description of the office was obtained from information on websites for the office or government entity.

2) The target number of questions per office / candidate was 3 to 6.

3) Question content considered the League's public policy positions and other League guidance.

League public policy:

<https://my.lwv.org/south-carolina/issues-positions/>

Writing Unbiased Questions

<https://www.lwv.org/league-management/elections-tools/new-guide-are-your-voters-guide-questions-unbiased-you-think>

Sample questions for Debates and Voter Guides

<https://www.lwv.org/league-management/elections-tools/sample-questions-debates-and-voters-guides>

Remaining nonpartisan in hyper partisan times

<https://www.lwv.org/blog/remaining-nonpartisan-hyper-partisan-times>

Nonpartisan policy

<https://www.lwv.org/league-management/policies-guidelines/nonpartisan-policy>

- 4) Knowledgeable persons were consulted for their input; for example, educators were asked about school board questions, former members of offices for timely issues, other leagues for their ideas. In addition, the VOTE411 Committee solicited input from Observer Corps members who were familiar with that municipality/county/school board.
- 5) Questions were carefully developed by the VOTE411 Committee and presented to the Columbia Board for their approval.

3.1.3 Critical Review of Candidate Questions

As part of the critical review of the candidate questions, the following three questions were analyzed:

- 1) *Did candidate questions generate responses that were useful to the public?*
- 2) *Were candidate questions completely unbiased? Too many? Not enough?*
- 3) *Did any candidate questions cause the candidates not to respond? Were there any other issues which caused them not to respond?*

(1) Did candidate questions generate responses that were useful to the public?

An independent review by League members judged that questions “were great,” indicating that they were indeed useful to the public. The reviewers also suggested that future questions be developed which would capture the candidates’ views on how corruption / misuse of public funds could be prevented and/or mitigated.

(2) Were candidate questions completely unbiased? Too many? Not enough?

The questions were again reviewed for bias using the League guidelines cited above. With one exception, all questions were found to be unbiased.

According to LWVUS guidelines:

- Biased and leading questions are those that are written in such a way that one answer appears to be favored over another: These questions often provide extra information that may influence the respondent in one way or another or the reader’s view of the respondent’s answer. It is vitally important that leagues do not use biased questions in their voters’ guides.
- Do not include background information or opinions in candidate questions. The shorter the question the better.

The one question judged to be “leading” was Q3 for the Lexington County Council races (see [Appendix A: Candidate Questions Exported from VOTE411](#)).

An increase in sales tax seems to be the preferred way to increase funding. However, support for a sales tax increase has eroded. What is your solution?

“Seems to be preferred...” is vague and not clear. Preferred by whom? A poll? A previous referendum? The League?

Three of six candidates responded. One of the three was unopposed. Two were Republicans, the other a Democrat. All three rejected increasing taxes as being “preferred”:

- As a taxpayer, I believe we are already paying too many taxes over a broad spectrum.
- An increase in our sales tax is not the answer.
- In all honesty, the residents are already over-taxed from state, county and local municipalities.

Suggested rewording:

What is your position on the use of sales taxes to increase funding? Please explain any alternative solutions.

(3) Did any candidate questions cause the candidates not to respond? Were there any other issues which caused them not to respond?

The vast majority of candidates who did not respond gave no reason for it. Committee notes of conversations with the candidates (or their staff) indicated potential reasons:

- It’s difficult for some candidates to commit to anything in writing:

FROM COMMITTEE NOTES:

Filled in all his information early. Really good responses. Called him early. Said he was still working on it. After publishing, I called again. Very polite but says he does not expect to submit. I commented that I knew committing to anything in writing on taxes was hard. He agreed. (Lost)

- Some candidates are more reluctant to respond for a primary election than a general:

FROM COMMITTEE NOTES:

Completely filled out his info without submitting. Talked to twice. 2nd time said his campaign consultant told him not to submit it. If an issue was not being discussed openly right now, do not bring it up. He respects the League and what we do and knows several members. He will open his responses up for General. (Won)

Some candidates are cautious about responding in writing, especially on sensitive issues. At least two candidates really did not like the questions about reproductive healthcare but they did in fact respond:

- “This is a loaded question. There should be clinics for those at risk. Know that reproductive health care does not include Abortion. I am 100% pro life as is the majority of voters in this district.”
- “If you are asking me if I support tax payer funded abortion the answer is NO. I am 100% pro life and the opposite of that is not pro choice at least not for that child. If that offends you I apologize but I will not pretend to be something I am not. I feel that abortion should never be used as a form of birth control.”

3.1.4 Conclusions on Candidate Questions

- 1) Questions to candidates were prepared in a manner consistent with League guidelines with one minor exception.
- 2) Questions to candidates were useful to the public (as judged by League members).
- 3) The number of questions posed to each candidate was judged to be reasonable.
- 4) The wording (and topic) of the questions did not seem to influence whether or not a given candidate answered the full SET of questions: either all questions were answered, or none were answered (with only three exceptions).
- 5) It can be challenging to construct a question that is nonpartisan while remaining true to LWV principles / positions on issues.

3.1.5 Recommendations for Candidate Questions

- 1) Question developers should continue to use League guidelines.
- 2) The League should train additional members in developing questions that focus on being nonpartisan while remaining true to LWV principles / positions on issues.
- 3) The League should investigate methods for surveying actual VOTE411 users to obtain a truly independent assessment of candidate questions for lack of bias, clarity, and suggestions for improvement.

3.2 Candidate Interaction and Response Rate Analysis

As presented in Section 1: [OVERVIEW](#), the VOTE411 Committee submitted questions to candidates of each race. The goal was to solicit responses that would educate the public about the candidates' positions (in their own words).

The purpose of Section 3.2 is to present:

- *Candidate Interaction* -- interaction with the candidates in attempts to get them to respond.
- *Response Rate Analysis* – a statistical analysis of the candidates' responses to identify the possible factors which tend to influence a candidate to respond (or not).

3.2.1 Candidate Interaction

The candidates initially received questions via email. In addition to sending follow-up emails, a significant amount of time was spent during the primary and general election cycles making phone calls to the candidates who did not immediately provide any responses to the questions. Because they did not have the same opportunities to meet their voters in person as they usually did, it was important to remind candidates that responding to League questions gave them an unbiased and free opportunity to tell voters about themselves and their priorities.

[Table 3.2- 1](#) shows the distribution of contacts made to 241 candidates in 110 races during the 2020 election year. In total, there were approximately 1000 emails issued by the VOTE411 system, followed by about 500 additional contacts (emails, phone calls) made by VOTE411 Committee members.

Summary from a VOTE411 member:

Most verbal or email communication with candidates is quite pleasant and friendly. But two team callers reported they had been hung up on while explaining the reason for the call. That is very unusual. Most responses to our calls to candidates who have not completed their responses say they are still working on them, or about to respond, or will listen but not promise to respond. Quite a few say they will and then do not.

Two candidates in the general election told me by phone they would not be responding although were very polite. They commented they do not do any surveys. One said he cannot do just ours and not do others. I asked them each to at least update their contact info and add a picture. One did.

Table 3.2- 1

Follow-up Emails / Calls to Candidates in 2020

2020 Election Date	Election	# of Races	# of Candidates	# of Emails per Candidate from VOTE 411 (Notes 3,4)	Additional # of Follow-up calls, emails (Note 5)
2/11	Blythewood Town Council Special Election	1	2	2 to 4	1 to 3
3/3	Irmo Town Council & Lexington School Dist. 4 Special Elections	2	7	2 to 5	1 to 3
6/9	Democratic and Republican Primaries	22	53	2 to 5	1 to 4
6/23	Democratic and Republican Primary Runoffs	4	8	1	0
7/14	South Congaree and Eastover Mayor & Town Council General Elections (NOTE 1)	4	14	4 to 8	1 to 4
8/11	Cayce City Council District 3 Special Election	1	3	2	1 to 3
9/8	Richland County Council District 9 Special Election	1	4	2	1 to 3
9/22	Cayce City Council District 1 Special Election	1	3	2 to 3	1 to 3
9/22	Richland County Council District 9 Runoff (NOTE 2)	1	2	0	0
11/3	General Election	73	145	2 to 5	1 to 4
Totals / Estimates		110	241	964	482

NOTES:

1. Original election date for S. Congaree and Eastover was 4/14/2020. Elections were rescheduled due to COVID-19.
2. No additional emails sent for the Richland County Council District 9 runoff candidates. Race was updated to add the runoff date and remove the candidates who lost.
3. Total / Estimate assumes four VOTE411 emails per candidate (average)
4. Every candidate was contacted at least two times from VOTE411.
5. Total / Estimate assumes two additional follow-ups (calls or emails) per candidate.



3.2.2 Candidate Response Rate Analysis

“Candidate Response Rate” is the percentage of candidates responding in VOTE411 to any of the several questions posed to them.

The objective of the response rate analysis was to determine how the candidate response rate varied among groups of races and to identify for each group (*Table 3.2- 2*), which factors were more dominant in influencing response rate. This would help yield higher candidate response rates in future elections.

Table 3.2- 2

Race Groups

GROUP	RACE
County	Lexington County Auditor
	Lexington County Clerk of Court
	Lexington County Coroner
	Lexington County Register of Deeds
	Lexington County Sheriff
	Lexington County Soil and Water District
	Lexington County Treasurer
	Richland County Clerk of Court
	Richland County Coroner
	Richland County Sheriff
	Richland County Soil and Water District
	County Council
Richland County Council District 2, 3, 7, 8, 9, 10	
SC General Assembly	South Carolina House District 39, 41, 66, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 91, 93, 95, 96
	South Carolina Senate District 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 35, 40
School Board	Lexington One School Board
	Lexington Two School Board
	Lexington Three School Board
	Lexington Four School Board
	Lexington-Richland Five School Board (Lexington)
	Lexington-Richland Five School Board (Richland)
	Richland One School Board At Large
	Richland One School Board District 2
	Richland One School Board District 4
Richland Two School Board	
Solicitor	Solicitor Circuit 11
US Congress	US House District 2

3.2.2.1 Response Rate Factors:

The following factors were examined to see if (and to what extent) they influenced the response rate:

Candidate incumbency

Does being an incumbent have an effect? If so, does it make one LESS or MORE likely to respond? (Expectation = LESS likely).

Candidate opposition

Does being in an uncontested race have an effect? If so, does it make one LESS or MORE likely to respond? (Expectation = LESS likely).

Combinations of Incumbency and Opposition

- Incumbents who were unopposed
- Incumbents who were opposed
- Non-incumbents who were unopposed
- Non-incumbents who were opposed

Political Party

Does being affiliated with a particular political party have an effect? If so, does it make one LESS or MORE likely to respond? (Expectation = LESS likely for the majority party).

Impact on winning was not pursued:

The question was initially asked: “Did responding help a candidate win?” Data was collected (Tables G-1 to G-6 in [Appendix G Candidate Response Rate Tables](#)) on whether the candidate won or lost the race. But because of the many factors influencing “winning” (e.g., candidate personality, messaging, name recognition, party affiliation, campaign advertising, etc.), the effort to find a correlation between winning and response rate was ultimately abandoned.

3.2.2.2 Database

The most comprehensive data available was for the 2020 General election, which contained 145 of the 241 candidates (or 60%) that were covered with VOTE11. While the actual response rate values differ between the 2020 General and the other elections that year (primary, municipal, etc.), it was assumed that the *trends* in the factors affecting the response rate would be similar.

For each candidate, the data listed in [Table G-1](#) were put into an Excel spreadsheet, “*Allcandidates – Nov 2020 General Election_4.27.21.xlsx*.” This spreadsheet was then modified to use data filters and pivot tables, providing easy data tallying operations. (Send a note to lwvcolasc@gmail.com to request a copy).

3.2.2.3 Data Tallying

By manually selecting the data filters, candidate data contained in The Database could then be tallied in a number of ways. Here is a sample:

- # of candidates
- # of races
- # of contested races
- # of candidates who responded
- # of candidates in contested races
- # of candidates in contested races who responded
- # of candidates in uncontested races
- # of candidates in uncontested races who responded
- # of incumbent candidates
- # of incumbent candidates who responded
- # of incumbent candidates in uncontested races
- # of incumbent candidates in uncontested races who responded
- # of candidates who are not incumbents
- # of candidates who are not incumbents and responded
- Cross tabulations by Race Group by Political party.

See the complete list of factors in [Table G-1](#).

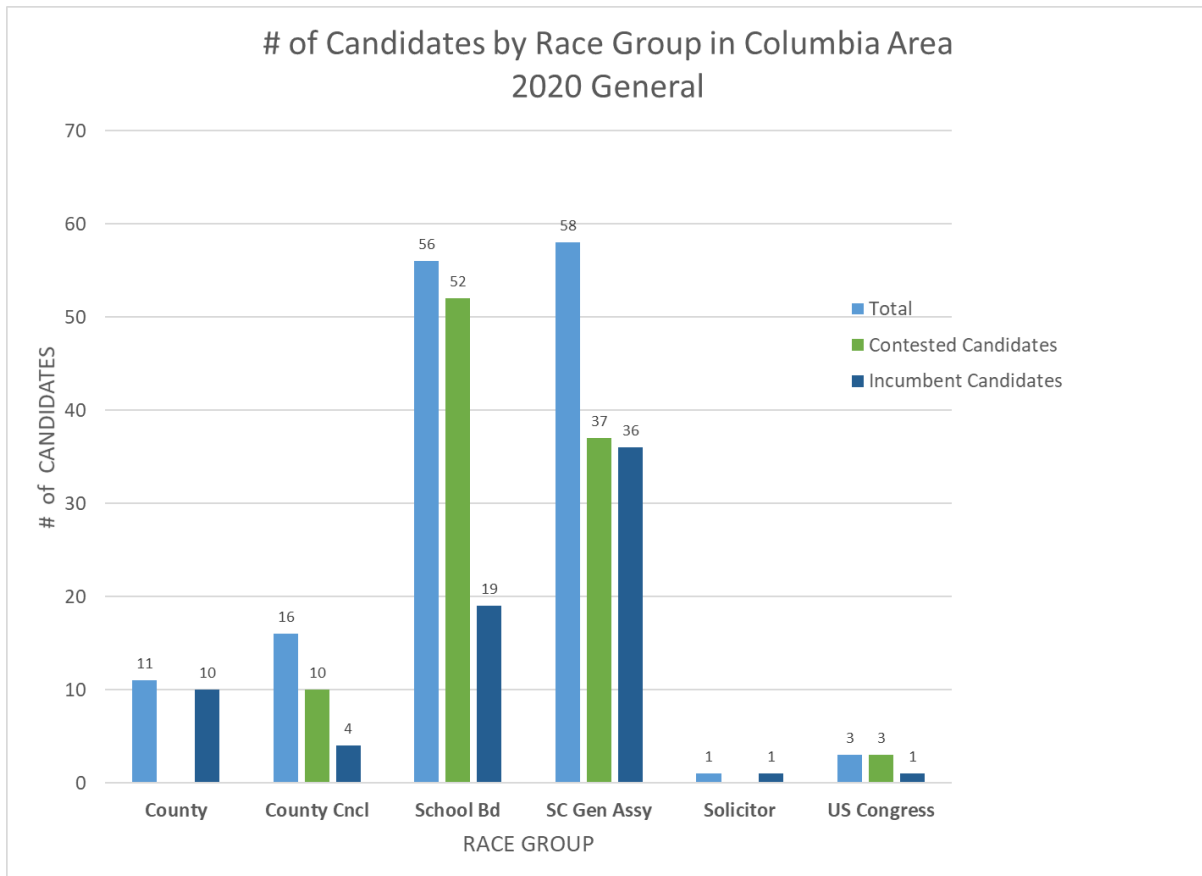
The results of this tallying process were collected in an Excel spreadsheet (used to create Figures 3-1 to 3-6 and Tables I-3 to I-6). This Excel file, “*VOTE411 candidate response analysis 2020 gen_4.27.21.xlsx*,” contains the basis for the results and conclusions in this data analysis. (Send a note to lwvcolasc@gmail.com to request a copy).

3.2.2.4 Number of Candidates by Race Group

Before examining candidate response rates for each race group, it is useful to illustrate the number of contested (opposed) and incumbent candidates for each race group. The results are shown below in [Figure 3-1](#).



Figure 3-1



Observations on the more populous race groups:

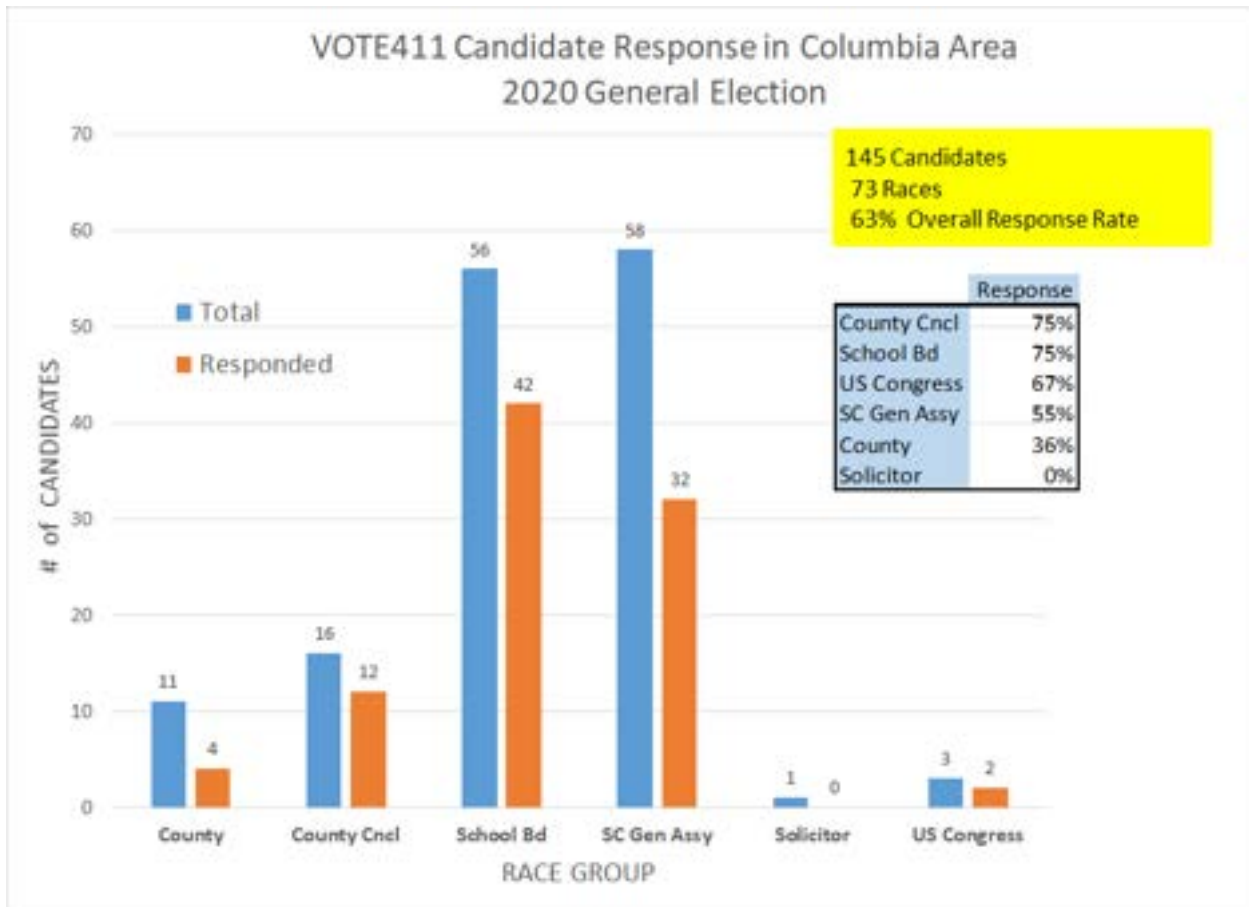
- County (e.g., Sheriff, Coroner, Treasurer, etc. [Table 3.2- 2](#) has a full list).
 - NO candidates were in a contested race (all were unopposed)!
 - Almost all (10 of 11) were incumbents.
- County Council
 - Only 25% (4 of 16) were contested.
 - Slightly more than half (10 of 16) were incumbents.
- School Board
 - Almost all (52 of 56) were contested.
 - About a third (19 of 56) were incumbents.
- SC General Assembly
 - About two-thirds were contested and incumbents.

3.2.2.5 Response Rate by Race Group

Figure 3-2 shows the total number of candidates and the total number of candidates responding to VOTE411 questions. For the 2020 General Election in the Columbia Area, the average candidate response rate for all 145 candidates (73 races) was 63%. However, the response rate ranged from a low of 36% (County) to a high of 75% (County Council), not counting the solo Solicitor (who did not respond).

Race Groups are defined in [Table 3.2-2](#) and [Table G-2](#).

Figure 3-2



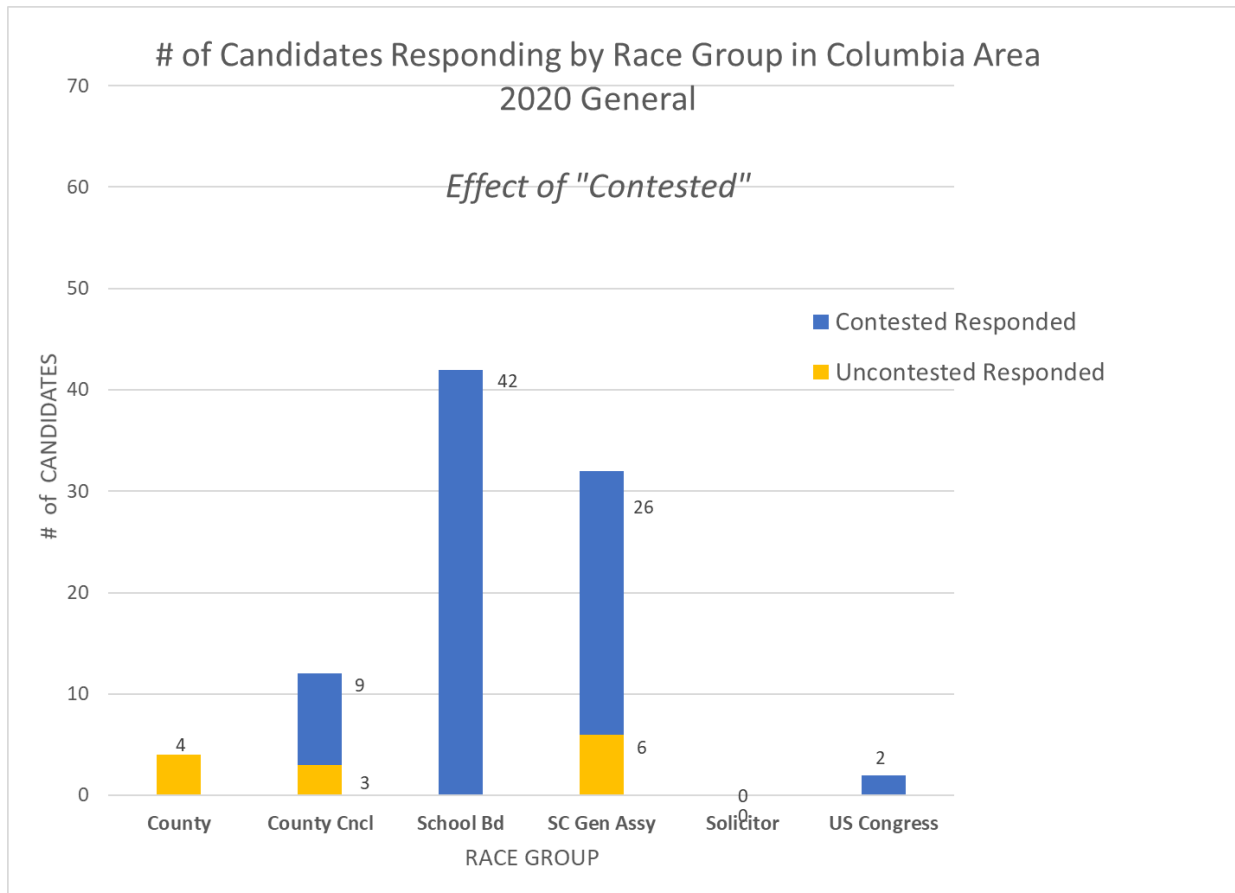
The next plots examine potential causes of the magnitude and variation in response rate:

- Effect of “Contested”.
- Effect of “Incumbency”
- Effect of political party

3.2.2.6 Effect of "Contested"

Figure 3-3 illustrates the number of responding candidates who were in a contested or uncontested race. The bar height represents the total of respondents for that race group.

Figure 3-3



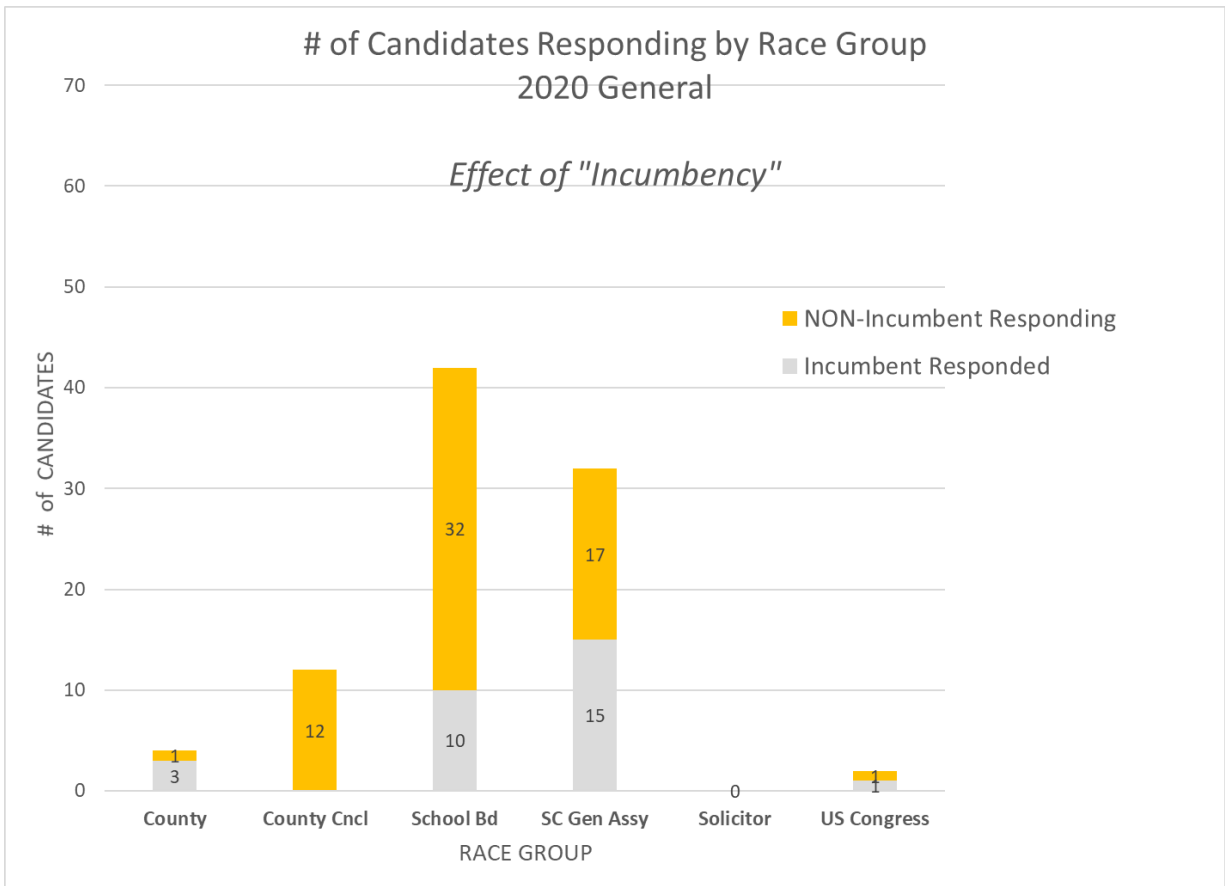
Observations:

- County – ALL respondents were uncontested; there were NO contested candidates ([Figure 3- 1](#)).
- County Council – 75% (9 of 12) of respondents were in contested races.
- School Board – 100% (42) of respondents were in contested races.
- SC Gen Assy – 81% (26 of 32) of respondents were in contested races.

3.2.2.7 Effect of "Incumbency"

Figure 3-4 illustrates the number of responding candidates who were NON-incumbents and incumbents by race group. The bar height represents the total of respondents for that race group.

Figure 3-4



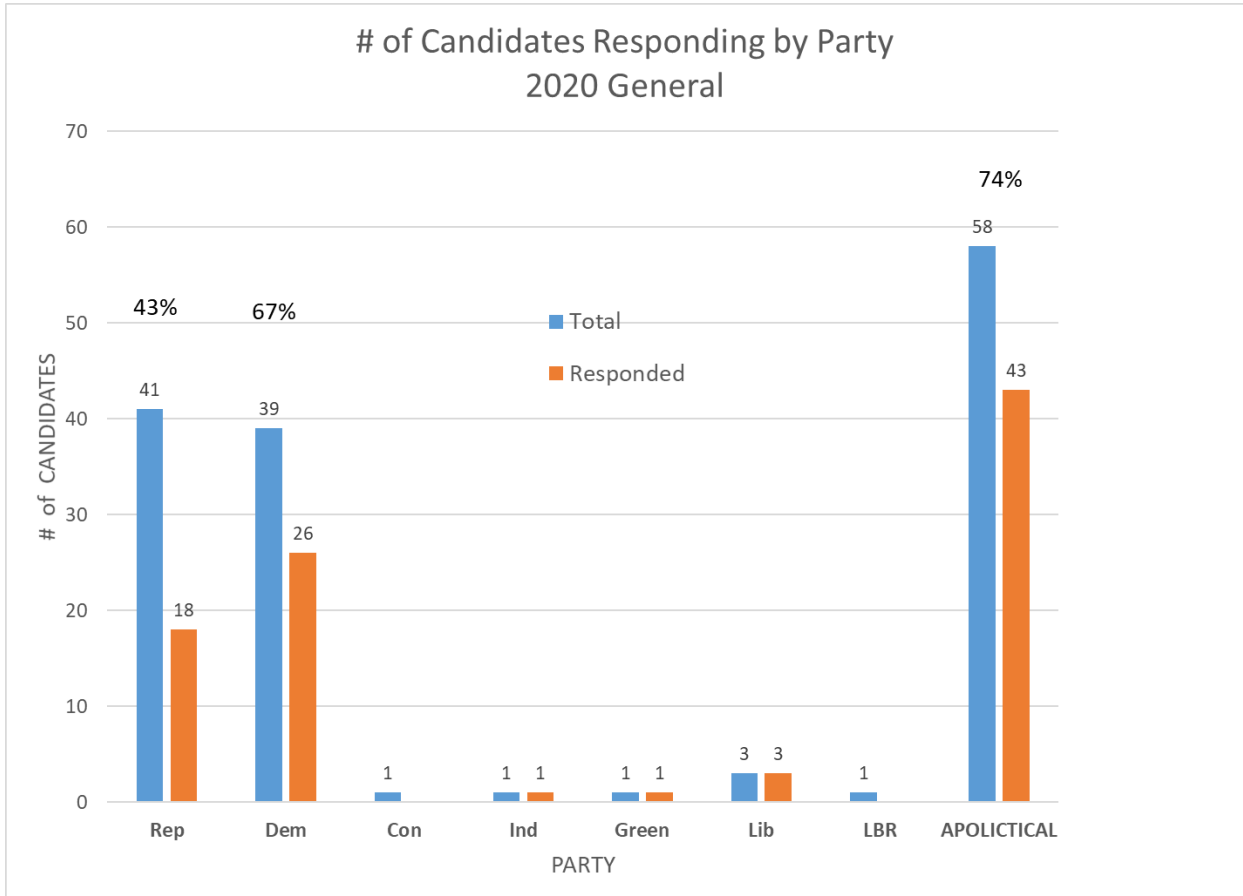
Observations:

- County – no comment. Very small sample.
- County Council – 100% (12) of the respondents were NON-incumbents (matched expectations).
- School Board – most (76%) of the respondents were NON-incumbents (matched expectations).
- SC General Assembly – incumbency did not seem to be a factor.

3.2.2.8 Effect of “Party Affiliation”

Figure 3-5 shows how the response rate varied by political party. In general, Democrats had a 24% higher response rate than Republicans. The breakout by race group was difficult to plot so Figure 3-6 was created.

Figure 3-5



Observations (averaged over all Race Groups)

- The response rate for Democrats was 24% greater than for Republicans (67% vs. 43%).
- 100% of the Libertarian, Green, and Independent party candidates responded.
- Nonpartisan (school board) response was 74%.

Figure 3-6

**Response Rates for Republicans and Democrats
Sorted by “Contested” and “Incumbency”**

	Republicans				Democrats				
	Responded				Responded				
	Yes	No	Total	Resp Rate	Yes	No	Total	Resp Rate	
Contested	13	6	19	68%	Contested	19	5	24	79%
Incumbent	3	4	7	43%	Incumbent	8	4	12	67%
Not incumbent	10	2	12	83%	Not incumbent	11	1	12	92%
Uncontested	5	17	22	23%	Uncontested	7	8	15	47%
Incumbent	3	16	19	16%	Incumbent	4	8	12	33%
Not incumbent	2	1	3	67%	Not incumbent	3	0	3	100%
TOTALS	18	23	41	44%	TOTALS	26	13	39	67%
Incumbent	6	20	26	23%	Incumbent	12	12	24	50%
Not incumbent	12	3	15	80%	Not incumbent	14	1	15	93%

Observations:

- The lowest response for both parties was for candidates who were both Uncontested and Incumbent (as expected). Response rates were very low, though Democrats in this group were generally 17% more likely to respond:
 - Republicans: 16%
 - Democrats: 33%
- The highest response rates were for Non-Incumbents but mixed by party for “Contested”
 - Republicans: 83% (Contested, Not Incumbent)
 - Democrats: 92%% (Contested, Not Incumbent)
 - Democrats: 100% (Uncontested, Not Incumbent)
- Candidates who were not incumbents generally responded at a higher rate than incumbents, regardless of party and regardless of whether or not the contest was contested.
- Candidates in contested races generally responded at a higher rate than candidates in non-contested races, regardless of party and regardless of whether the candidate was an incumbent.
- The overall response rate for Democrats was generally slightly higher (about 15 - 30%) than for Republicans, regardless of whether the candidates were in contested races and regardless of whether or not the candidates were incumbents.

3.2.3 Conclusions

Candidate Interaction

- For the 241 candidates in 110 races during the 2020 election cycle, the VOTE411 Committee had nearly 1500 interactions with the candidates. This includes about 1000 emails issued by the VOTE411 system, followed by approximately 500 additional contacts (emails, phone calls).
- Most verbal or email communication with candidates was quite pleasant and friendly.

Candidate Response Rate

- The overall candidate response rate was 63%.
- The response rate varied by type of elected office (“Race Group”) as in [Figure 3-1](#). The lowest response was for county-level races (36%); the highest was for County Council races (75%). The variability by type of race could be related to the factors below, not the type of race:
 - Candidate incumbency – more likely to respond if not an incumbent.
 - Race opposition (contested or uncontested) – more likely to respond if contested.
 - Party Affiliation – more likely to respond if a minority party.
- A Candidate is MUCH less likely to respond when she/he is an incumbent Republican in an uncontested race. Conversely, a candidate is MUCH more likely to respond when she/he is a non-incumbent Democrat in a contested race.
- Any correlation between a candidate responding and that candidate winning a race was complicated by other confounding factors.

3.2.4 Recommendations

- In planning candidate follow-up actions, focus on those who are less likely to respond, including candidates who are:
 - Affiliated with the majority party
 - Incumbents
 - In an uncontested race
 - Any combination of the above
- Consider other methods of reaching out to the candidates themselves (or their offices) such as:
 - Encouraging someone in the candidate's district to call and ask for participation.
 - Asking party officials to encourage their candidates to respond.

3.3 Publicity and Outreach

Publicity and outreach are tasks that are closely interwoven and require coordination of messaging and timing. Publicity includes press releases, print and digital (online) advertising, signs, social media and billboards. Outreach includes efforts to increase awareness of VOTE411 through visits and presentations to municipal, county and school board meetings, booths at events, posters and flyers for libraries, and notices to neighborhoods and other organizations. The VOTE411 Committee worked to increase awareness and use of VOTE411 through a variety of efforts, including a close working relationship with the Voter Participation Committee. The Committee worked with League members in Aiken and Orangeburg counties to cover statewide races in these counties.

VOTE411 had 16,035 individual users from Richland and Lexington counties who viewed candidate information in 2018 and 28,234 individual users in 2020, a 76% increase. Since voting information and links to voter registration were also accessed on VOTE411, there were 45,891 users in Richland and Lexington counties and an additional 4,886 users in Aiken and Orangeburg counties.

Approximately 3.3% of all VOTE411 users in South Carolina registered to vote. If that threshold was met in Richland and Lexington counties, 1500 people in the midlands registered to vote through VOTE411.

3.3.1 Applications

Events

The Committee developed a list of upcoming festivals and events for distributing information about VOTE41, and researched having a large banner printed. Attendance at most events was curtailed by the COVID pandemic and outreach efforts moved to online, print and email work.

Presentations by VOTE411 Committee

Presentations were made to inform politicians, candidates and the general public about VOTE411 and to encourage candidates and voters to use the VOTE411 website.

Members made presentations at city/town council meetings and school district board meetings. The Observer Corps made presentations and wrote questions for candidates based on their knowledge of current issues. Presentations made in person were extremely limited due to the COVID pandemic. A listing is in [Appendix B: 2020 VOTE411 Committee Outreach](#).

Billboards

The League paid for two digital billboards to show VOTE411 ads for four weeks, using two different designs and messages each week. One billboard was on Elmwood Avenue at Main St and one was located on Highway 378 at I-20. Overall, 1.15 million impressions were viewed. The cost was \$1450. Grace Outdoor was selected to design and place the billboards.

Online (Digital) Advertising

A League member with a degree in marketing placed ads on Google and Instagram to promote voter registration and voter education/candidate information through VOTE411. These ads produced nearly 1 million impressions and resulted in 6,242 clicks to the VOTE411 website. While both Google and Instagram ads were effective, the Google ads generated more clicks per dollar spent than Instagram. Instagram ads were most effective in reaching 18–34-year-olds. [Appendix C: VOTE411 Online/Digital Advertising for Richland & Lexington Counties](#) provides data on ad costs, results and definitions of terms used.

The Committee also allocated funds for Google ads developed and placed by a media company. These ads were less effective, more costly and resulted in fewer than 70 clicks to the VOTE411 website. For online advertising, \$1660 was approved by the board, and an additional \$200 was donated.

LWVUS also spent \$15,000 on Google ads in South Carolina with a grant from Google, generating 26,000 clicks to the website statewide.

Carolina Panorama Print and Online Ads

Ads were placed in *Carolina Panorama's* print and online newspaper for \$200 for six weeks. *Carolina Panorama* has a circulation of 10,000 print and 25,000 digital; the audience is mostly African American.

Minority Eye

Free online ads ran for 8 weeks. *The Minority Eye* has 400,000 subscribers statewide. *The Minority Eye* targets the African American population.

SCIWAY

VOTE411 ads were placed on SCIWAY (SC Information Highway) in 2018 and 2020. While the number of clicks from SCIWAY to VOTE411 went down from 37,033 to 14,365 statewide, the percentage of people who clicked on VOTE411 ads on SCIWAY was very high. Richland County and Lexington County election pages each had a click through rate of about 14.2%, and Aiken County's election page had a click through rate of 9.3%, which are all very high. These show the % of people using SCIWAY's Richland, Lexington or Aiken elections pages who clicked on the VOTE411 link. The ads cost approximately \$40 per year for each page.

Yard Signs

The Columbia League ordered 75 yard signs for \$250. Distribution included public libraries in Richland, Lexington and Aiken counties. Some were sold to LWV members. Others were placed in highly visible locations, with partner organizations, or at businesses and restaurants.

VOTE411 Face Masks

Columbia League members made and sold 37 face masks with the VOTE411 logo. The League took in \$280 from sales of masks and yard signs.

Email Blasts

A major effort was made to email partner organizations, neighborhoods, retirement homes and other organizations to provide VOTE411 information. Many organizations agreed to forward it by email to their contacts and post it on social media. Contacts included: 24 women's organizations, 25 voter registration partners, 300 neighborhood organizations, and over 20 retirement homes.

Facebook

Multiple posts about VOTE411 and voter registration were made by LWV Columbia Area leadership (over 35 since August). The Columbia League's Facebook page has 564 followers. Committee members posted VOTE411 info on multiple neighborhood and community sites including Next Door, which have over 30,000 followers.

Instagram

In addition to the ads placed on Instagram, multiple posts were made on the Columbia League's Instagram site leading up to the election.

Press Releases

The Columbia League's Publicity Chair wrote numerous articles about VOTE411 for the primary and general election and distributed them to over 60 print, digital, radio and TV outlets. This resulted in over 20 articles/TV/radio stories that were published about VOTE411, voter registration and elections and 9 articles regarding the 100th Anniversary or other recognition of the League.

An Aiken member worked with *The Aiken Standard* to host a voter registration event on July 4 for a special mask giveaway by DeMarcus Lawrence of the Dallas Cowboys. Also participating were media personnel, politicians, a black sorority, and the NAACP. *The Aiken Standard* reporter attended a voter registration event at a pop-up COVID testing site as well as the Equality Bus that made 4 stops in Aiken where VOTE411 was featured.

Radio/TV

The Columbia League's Publicity Chair sent press releases to local TV and radio stations. Committee members followed up with calls. A PSA about VOTE411 was sent to each radio and TV station. WFMV gospel radio confirmed they would air the PSA. An LWV Aiken member did a TV interview at the Aiken voter registration event. TV media attended the voter registration held at Aiken County High Schools.

Keep Calm and Vote Stickers

The League mailed 2 stickers to 190 LWV members and encouraged them to also purchase a face mask or yard sign.

Libraries and Other Organizations that promoted VOTE411

The VOTE411 Committee has a relationship with the South Carolina State Library. The Library's Communications Director distributes VOTE411 information and posters to all public and academic libraries in the state. Each year this contact must be renewed. As a result of this outreach, many local libraries post information about VOTE411 online and in posters. Other organizations that have promoted VOTE411 include the SC Office of Minority Affairs and Sierra Club.

LWV Columbia Website

The website promoted voter registration through October 5, then VOTE411 election information was promoted through November 3rd.

Posters

Posters with information about the elections and VOTE411 were distributed to businesses, USC, retirement homes, Richland and Lexington County Libraries, and city/town governments. Through a cooperative agreement, the SC State Library sent digital copies to 184 libraries statewide.

Business Cards

Business cards with election dates and VOTE411 information were distributed through libraries, local events, and at voter registration events. Distribution was greatly limited due to cancellation of many events.

Postcards

Postcards to invite candidates to participate and thank you postcards were written to candidates, elections officials, libraries, and other partners by Committee members who personally worked with the people and organizations.

3.3.2 Conclusions

- The work of the Publicity team would not be possible without the huge support of League members who made calls, wrote emails and thank you notes, copy edited letters, made face masks, designed flyers and signs, developed and placed ads, wrote news releases, talked with partner organizations, used social media, all giving their time and expertise in a variety of ways.
- The distribution of information through free and low-cost contacts like libraries, social media and emails continues to be effective. The data from digital advertising clearly shows the effectiveness of the ad campaigns run by the Publicity team. Digital advertising through a media company had negligible benefit for the amount of money spent. While the number of people who viewed the billboards and then looked for information on VOTE411 is not known, the Committee believes that it was effective and may have encouraged them to either search for VOTE411 or click on the ad when it showed up. Advertising through digital and print media enabled the Committee to present VOTE411 information to a larger and more diverse audience.

3.3.3 Recommendations

- Plan on which races efforts will be focused; work on reaching more voters in Richland and Lexington counties; kind of outreach to neighboring counties.
- Continue and expand traditional outreach through press releases, events, libraries, and emails to partner organizations and neighborhoods.
- Continue outreach to municipal/county councils, school district boards and their constituents by making presentations at council/board meetings.
- Expand outreach targeting civic and neighborhood organizations, retirement communities, colleges/technical schools, minority organizations, younger voters and areas with lower voter participation. Specific areas of focus include:
 - Richland and Lexington county neighborhoods
 - Midlands Tech, Benedict College, Allen University, Columbia College
 - NAACP, Columbia Urban League and other minority organizations
- Evaluate and target outreach using digital (online) ads, billboards, and radio advertising considering the number of races and voters involved each year.
- Continue and expand free and paid advertising with radio, print, or digital media to reach minority and younger voters and areas with lower voter participation.
- Increase outreach using promotional items including T-shirts, banners and yard signs where most effective.
- Continue to partner with the Voter Participation Team on voter registration through VOTE411 and events.
- Renew the ongoing relationship with the SC State Library Communications Director through contact by the Columbia League VOTE411 Committee.
- Engage more LWV members in planning and implementing the VOTE411 program.
- Encourage the state board and local league VOTE411 Committees to expand coordination of publicity and outreach including the use of digital advertising and billboards.

More information can be found in

- [Appendix B: 2020 VOTE411 Committee Outreach](#)
- [Appendix C: VOTE411 Online/Digital Advertising for Richland & Lexington Counties](#)

3.4 Financial Aspects

At the beginning of 2020, the Committee began work for the primaries by printing posters for distribution to libraries in Lexington and Richland counties. Business cards were printed for distribution through the libraries and at events like festivals, community events, and voter registration events. As the year unfolded, the coronavirus pandemic caused the cancellation of many events and plans to interact with voters. The Committee decided not to participate in events which would have person to person interaction and redesigned outreach and publicity efforts. The Committee looked into numerous public relations opportunities and decided to pursue funding and approval for two billboards and an online ad campaign to promote VOTE411 and encourage South Carolinians to register to vote through VOTE411.

Initially, the LWV Columbia Area 2020/2021 Budget allocated \$1200 for VOTE411 Communications and \$1800 in Promotional Items/Publicity including VOTE411. In June 2020, the Columbia League Board approved \$1450 for two billboards to run for four weeks each. In August the board approved a total of \$2150 for VOTE411 with \$500 to be spent for Voter Participation. The August funds were allocated for digital (online) advertising, yard signs, mailing 'Keep Calm and Vote' stickers to LWV members, and VOTE411 face masks. And some LWV members provided materials or funds and did not request reimbursement.

The major categories of expenses were:

Billboards	\$1,450
Digital/online ads	\$1,860
Postage	\$325
Print ads	\$200
Printing	\$735
VOTE411 fee	\$400

A detailed list of online advertising is in the VOTE411 Ad Cost and Results table in [Appendix C: VOTE411 Online/Digital Advertising for Richland & Lexington Counties](#). [Appendix E: Financial Details](#) provides a list of expenses incurred during 2020.

3.4.1 Conclusions

The Columbia League Board had made plans to support VOTE411 but provided additional funds to promote voter registration and VOTE411. Members are willing to make donations or purchase promotional items to support VOTE411.

3.4.2 Recommendations

- Evaluate the cost and effectiveness of different means of advertising and outreach.
- Identify opportunities to increase funds for outreach by selling VOTE411 promotional items or soliciting donations and sponsors.
- Work with the Columbia League Board each year to budget for VOTE411 publicity and outreach.



3.5 Project Planning

Project planning is a series of steps that lead to a successful delivery of a project. Project plans create timelines, establish deadlines, and assign responsibility for each phase of a project.

Major areas that require planning are:

- *Outreach* – to include planning visits to town/city, county or school board meetings, booths at events, posters and flyers for libraries, notices to neighborhood and civic organizations.
- *Publicity* – to include press releases, print and digital ads, signs, social media or billboards.
- *Budgeting* – to include costs of the outreach and publicity, and costs for the use of VOTE411.
- *VOTE411 Updates* – to include specifications for what goes into VOTE411, the specific order of dependent tasks and tasks handled by people outside of the VOTE411 Committee, dates for all tasks and who will perform them.
- *Candidate Interaction* – to include verifying candidate contact details, planning the email schedule, calling or otherwise contacting candidates to remind them to return their responses.
- *Question Development* – to include research and input from other members of the local League, the Columbia League Board, the LWVSC and all the appropriate approvals.

Note that not all the above need to be separate committees; there may be a good bit of overlap and coordination required among these various areas (such as Outreach and Publicity) during the life of the project.

The VOTE411 Committee has done a good job of considering all these areas and making various lists and schedules each year such as:

- A list of meeting times for meetings to attend as part of project outreach.
- A list of neighborhoods and other organizations to contact.
- A budget for expenses and advertising for the year.
- A list of typical materials needed during the year.
- A detailed task plan for the VOTE411 update steps for November general elections and June primaries.
- Lists of races and dates to be covered during the year.
- A detailed task list with begin and end dates for November general elections and June primaries.

Teamwork needs to be structured to coordinate major areas of work such as publicity, community outreach, candidate question development, candidate follow-up, VOTE411 administration, and VOTE411 testing. In 2020, subcommittees included:

- Publicity and Outreach
- VOTE411 Administration
- Question Development
- Candidate Callers
- Results Analysis

Publicity and Outreach tasks involve multiple people/teams for developing and distributing print materials at libraries and events; these tasks need teamwork for messaging, timing, and who's responsible as well as coordination with the full VOTE411 Committee. And because the League is a volunteer organization, assignment of tasks will require flexibility.

There must be open communication in each committee, and the group as a whole, to ensure that the project is moving forward in a timely fashion. It is a plus to have backups identified for certain tasks.

Planning was required for the November 2020 election as well as for the June primaries and a number of small elections scattered throughout the year. Municipalities tend to hold elections in odd-numbered years; although there are fewer races to cover in odd-number years, they require different activities and planning.

3.5.1 Conclusion

Improvement in this area will involve the development of a more comprehensive plan formalizing lists, schedules, and subcommittees that provides a better idea of the work coming up for the year.

3.5.2 Recommendations

1. Hold a kick-off meeting in December prior to a new year to determine the number of elections that will be covered during the year, the expected timing and what teams will be needed to support the work. Ask for input on what tasks Committee members would like to work on.
2. Build a schedule in January based on the dates of the races that will be covered. This schedule should include:
 - Dates for the races/elections that are to be covered.
 - Lead time for planning.
 - Lead time for publicity, outreach, and related expenses.
 - Lead time for contacting candidates.
 - Lead time to contact municipal and county governments or school boards (if needed).
 - Lead time for question development and Columbia League Board approval.
 - Recurring status meetings.

This schedule will need updates through the year since some elections are not posted until the first quarter or, in the case of special elections, can come up at any time.

3. In January, plan the committees, chairpersons, teams, and coordinators, along with their respective responsibilities, needed during the year. The following are recommended:
 - Publicity/Outreach Committee and Coordinator(s)
 - Vote Administration Team and Coordinator
 - Question Development Team and Coordinator
 - Candidate Interaction Team and Coordinator
 - Year-end Analysis Committee and Chairperson
4. Hold status meetings frequently to review budgets (if applicable), check off work items, and identify issues or risks that have arisen or are anticipated and discuss upcoming events or tasks.
5. Continue to use a detailed task list for VOTE411 work for November general elections and large June primaries. (See [Appendix D: VOTE411 Election Cycle Task List](#) for an example). Consider using a simple checklist that can be shared as needed for small special or municipal elections not held in November or as part of June primaries.



3.6 VOTE411 Results / Usage

In 2020 VOTE411 had over 7.7 million sessions from January 1st through election day across the country, an increase of 141% over the 2016 presidential election year. VOTE411 was used in 2020 by leagues in all fifty states.

More than 170,000 people used the voter registration tool across the country. In South Carolina, 5,585 voters were registered through VOTE411.

The use of VOTE411 to access race and candidate information has increased significantly over time. The candidate information sessions for the state increased 25% over 2018, also a legislative election year. Specifically, in Richland and Lexington counties where the Columbia League has covered all elections for three years, the number of sessions increased by 69% over 2018.

	2018 Sessions	2020 Sessions	Percent Increase
Lexington & Richland	22,332	37,721	68.91%
South Carolina	127,597	159,980	25.38%

These increases in usage are attributed to several things:

- The 2020 year was a presidential election year and a critical one to most voters.
- Many other races were highly contested and of interest to voters.
- Using Google and Instagram for online advertising was quite successful.
- The use of SCIWAY continues to result in more users.
- Additional new types of advertising, such as the billboards and yard signs probably had an impact even though it cannot be directly measured.

Online advertising provided by LWVCA resulted in 2,615 clicks to the VOTE411 website from users looking for voter registration information and 3,690 clicks from users looking for candidate and general election information. Advertising on SCIWAY resulted in over 14,000 clicks to the VOTE411 website in SC, with high numbers of clicks on the Richland and Lexington Election pages.

Additional Observations

1. Although the percentage of registered voters in Richland and Lexington who used VOTE411 is small, the impact on voters in surrounding counties was more than expected. Many of the districts for races covered specifically for Richland or Lexington counties extended into other counties.

The chart below shows registered voters in the ten counties surrounding Richland and Lexington counties, as compared with individual users of VOTE411:

Figure 3-7

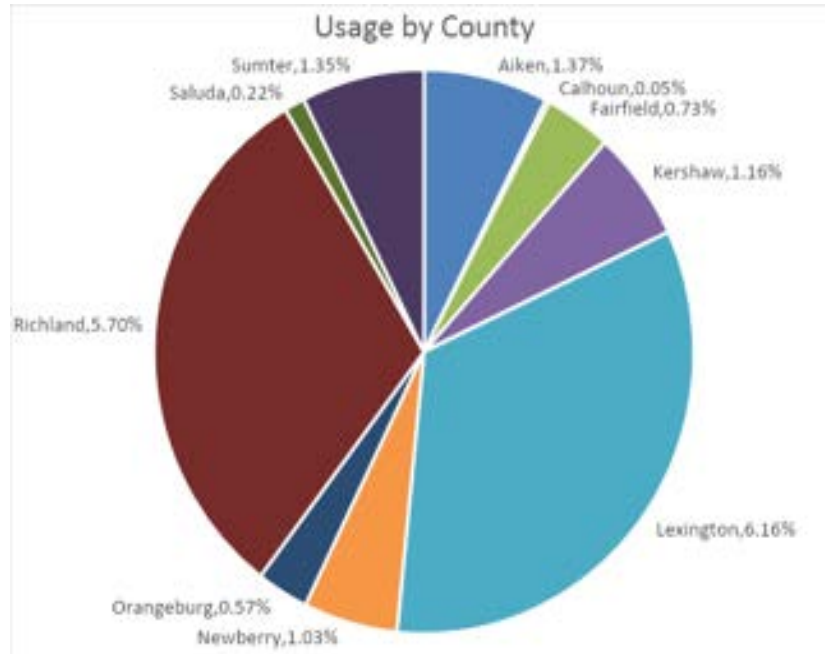
County	Registered Voters	VOTE411 Individual Users	Percent of Reg. Voters
Aiken	122,919	1680	1.37%
Calhoun	11,016	5	0.05%
Fairfield	16,222	119	0.73%
Kershaw	44,370	514	1.16%
Lexington	200,416	12,352	6.16%
Newberry	24,832	257	1.03%
Orangeburg	58,785	336	0.57%
Richland	278,632	15,882	5.70%
Saluda	12,078	27	0.22%
Sumter	73,261	989	1.35%
TOTAL	842,531	32,161	3.82%

The “VOTE411 Individual Users” in the chart represents only people who looked at the candidate information section of VOTE411. It does not include people who used VOTE411 to register to vote, find polling places or look at other voter information.

2. The difference that publishing and publicizing races in VOTE411 makes can be illustrated by looking at users in Lexington and Richland as compared with the other eight counties where there has not been a concerted effort to publish races in Vote411.



Figure 3-8



3. In 2020, all of the State General Assembly (SC House and Senate) races in the November General Election were published for two additional counties: Aiken and Orangeburg. That effort entailed adding ten more races to the plan. In Aiken, where the General Assembly races in the June primaries were covered as well, publicity work by the Aiken Committee member may have produced some increased usage.
4. The additional work to add these ten races was fairly small for the administrator. The bulk of the work involved following up with candidates who did not respond promptly and additional publicity needed to let voters know the race information was available in their areas.
5. Adding the ten State General Assembly races meant that 100% of those races were published in four counties not initially targeted. With some races already covered by three other leagues, the combined effort provided 100% coverage in eight counties: Aiken, Calhoun, Edgefield, Lexington, McCormick, Orangeburg, Saluda, and Richland.
6. Looking at the areas of the 20 General Assembly districts shows that the Columbia League alone published at least one of these races in 20 counties. The map below illustrates the extent of this coverage. Note that the Charleston, Greenville, and Beaufort leagues all covered at least one General Assembly race in these counties, and those races are counted in the percentages.

Figure 3-9



7. Voters in all of the counties shown were able to see candidate and race information on the US Presidential, Senate and Congressional candidates in addition to the State House and Senate races covered. The LWVUS publishes the Presidential race candidate information, and the LWVSC covers the US Senate candidates and coordinates with the local leagues to ensure every US Congressional race is covered.

3.6.1 Conclusions

With the combined coverage from local leagues, the LWVSC, and the LWVUS, the VOTE411 impact area is more extensive than originally expected. Points to keep in mind for 2022 include:

1. Check the coverage area of targeted races and consider expanding publicity and outreach efforts to include a few more races in the plan.
2. Since there are voters in counties surrounding Richland and Lexington counties looking for information in VOTE411, consider covering other races in large population areas in the future.

3. The decision to publish and publicize races outside of usually targeted counties depends more on the number and location of volunteers to help with that effort than on any administrative work.
4. Continuing to publish election information for races outside of Richland and Lexington counties may provide an opportunity to recruit new members for the League or at-large members from surrounding areas to support this effort.

Notes about the VOTE411 usage report:

VOTE411 Usage data is provided by the LWVUS using the Google Analytics reporting tool and has some limitations:

1. The usage chart covers usage from January 1 through November 5th and is not an exact comparison to the primary and general election timeframe. But it does show usage possibly generated by the other small municipal and special elections during the year.
2. The sessions and user numbers are based on computer device ip addresses, not people logging in or the addresses they enter to look for races and candidates.
3. The report is generated using Google Analytics which uses its own tool for tying a device to a location. No matter what tool is used, this process is not exact; some ip addresses are going to be tied incorrectly to a community or town.
4. The sessions and user numbers are based on people opening the candidate information pages and does not count instances where someone goes the site but does not open any of the published races pages.
5. The usage numbers are tied to a CDP (Census Designated Places – such as unincorporated communities), town, or city. To get a more accurate total for a county, numbers of users or sessions associated with the CDPS, towns and cities in the county must be added together, which can lead to errors.
6. Numbers for those towns and cities that extend across counties were counted with the county having the largest population from this town or city.



Appendix A: Candidate Questions Exported from VOTE411

Race: U.S. House District 2

1. What experiences and skills qualify you to represent the citizens of Congressional District 2?
2. How would you ensure adequate, accessible, and affordable health care for South Carolinians?
3. Given both the projected benefits and risks, what is your position on the conversion of the failed MOX facility for Plutonium PIT Production at the Savannah River site?
4. Given the challenge to South Carolina's coast from rising sea levels, what should be the role of the federal government in responding to climate change?
5. Reports indicate that large, better funded businesses, corporations, and other entities received more federal assistance loans during the pandemic than smaller businesses. What changes, if any, should be made to the funding distribution regulations if a future allocation of funds is approved?

Race: South Carolina House District xx

1. What experiences and skills qualify you to represent the citizens of your district?
2. How would you ensure transparency and opportunities for citizen input in the 2021 redrawing of Congressional, Senate, House, and local district lines?
3. What strategy do you recommend to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and mitigate its impact on the health of South Carolinians?
4. Under what circumstances, if any, would you support the use of public funds for private schools?
5. Forty-eight of fifty states require disclosure of donors to committees that explicitly exist for the primary purpose of influencing elections. Do you or do you not support statutory reform to require disclosure of donors to these third-party electioneering organizations? Please explain your answer.
6. How would you ensure adequate, accessible, and affordable healthcare for South Carolinians?

Race: School Board xxx

1. Given how schools have been impacted by COVID-19, what changes would you make to improve your district's ability to respond to a future pandemic?
2. Following the nationwide wave of protests this summer, what steps should your district take to promote equity and racial justice in schools?
3. What other challenges are facing your schools, and what knowledge and skills do you have to address them?
4. How will you actively communicate and collaborate with diverse stakeholders during your time on the board?

Group: County Offices

Race: Richland County Coroner

1. In addition to meeting the requirements of the SC Coroners Association, what experiences and skills qualify you to serve the citizens of your county?
2. How would you minimize wait times for the coroner's arrival after a loved one's death?
3. How would you update the tools and systems that are already in use so that the coroner's office would be more effective in its responsibilities?

Race: Richland County Sheriff

1. What experiences and skills qualify you to serve the citizens of this county?
2. What is your position on fees for access to documents under the Freedom of Information Act?
3. How would you decrease response times by your deputies in less populated areas of the county?
4. What solutions do you propose to protect citizens from phone and internet fraud and scams?

Race: Lexington Soil and Water Conservation District

1. What experience and qualifications do you have related to serving on the Soil and Water Conservation District Commission?
2. What are the top challenges or opportunities facing the Soil and Water Conservation District, and what are your recommendations to meet them?

Race: Richland County Clerk of Court

1. What experiences and skills qualify you to represent the citizens of Richland County?
2. How would you improve the transparency, implementation, and oversight of the penny tax program?
3. Describe your priorities for improving infrastructure in Richland County.
4. What programs or regulations are necessary to protect air and water quality in Richland County?
5. As the county population grows and places more demands on land use, how should the county balance tools such as land use regulations, economic incentives for redeveloping sites, and development impact fees?
6. What additional action, if any, should Richland County Council take to decrease the spread of COVID-19 and mitigate its impact on the health of county residents?

Race: Lexington County Treasurer

1. What experiences and skills qualify you to serve the citizens of Lexington county?
2. With Lexington County's rapid growth, what are your plans to make tax collection procedures even more efficient and user friendly?
3. As the custodian of all Lexington County tax funds, what do you think is most important in maintaining the safety and security of the county's money?

Race: Lexington County Register of Deeds

1. What experiences and skills qualify you to serve the citizens of your county?
2. What challenges face the Office of the Register of Deeds and what solutions do you propose?

Group: County Councils

Race: Lexington County Council District XX

1. What experiences and skills qualify you to represent the citizens of Lexington County?
2. Population growth and development are affecting roads, traffic, and schools. What would you do to help solve these problems?
3. An increase in sales tax seems to be the preferred way to increase funding. However, support for a sales tax increase has eroded. What is your solution?
4. Most constituents no longer know their county representative; how would you remedy this?
5. What additional action, if any, should Lexington County Council take to decrease the spread of COVID-19 and mitigate its impact on the health of county residents?

Race: Richland County Council District XX

1. What experiences and skills qualify you to represent the citizens of Richland County?
2. How would you improve the transparency, implementation, and oversight of the penny tax program?
3. Describe your priorities for improving infrastructure in Richland County.
4. What programs or regulations are necessary to protect air and water quality in Richland County?
5. As the county population grows and places more demands on land use, how should the county balance tools such as land use regulations, economic incentives for redeveloping sites, and development impact fees?
6. What additional action, if any, should Richland County Council take to decrease the spread of COVID-19 and mitigate its impact on the health of county residents?



Appendix B: 2020 VOTE411 Committee Outreach

Presentations by VOTE411 Committee

- Eastover Town Council- Che Che Goldman, Elizabeth Currin
- Lexington School District 4-Elizabeth Currin, Lady June Cole
- Lexington Town Council - Debbie Dickinson, Candy Coon
- West Columbia City Council - Sioux Taylor
- Lexington Democratic Party - Elizabeth Jones
- Delta Kappa Gamma - Elizabeth Jones

Organizations Contacted

- Women's Organizations (24 organizations) including sororities, WREN, Planned Parenthood, Moms Demand Action, AAUW, Junior League, Sierra Club and others.
- Voter Registration Partners (25 organizations) including religious associations, Senior Wellness Centers, health care organizations, and public housing organizations.
- Neighborhood Organizations - 300 contacts including Columbia Council of Neighborhoods (about 100)
- Retirement Homes - Lowman Home, Presbyterian Home, Still Hopes, and over 20 retirement homes were contacted about promoting VOTE411.
- The State Library (network of 184 libraries statewide)
- Office of Minority Affairs



Appendix C: VOTE411 Online/Digital Advertising for Richland & Lexington Counties

	Impressions	Clicks	Cost	Click thru rate	Cost per click
			\$	%	\$
Media Company- Develop and Place Google ads					
Voter Registration	38,435	27	350	0.07	12.96
VOTE411	37,491	36	350	0.1	9.72
Total	75,926	63	700		
Google ads placed by Columbia League					
Voter Registration	343,000	2410	353	0.7	0.15
VOTE411	548,000	3370	555	0.61	0.16
Voter Registration Trial Ads		178	28		0.16
VOTE411 Trial Ads		182	28		0.15
Total	891,000	6,140	964		
Instagram Ads placed by Columbia League					
Instagram Ads (VOTE411)	64,326	102	200	0.16	1.96
Summary for Google and Instagram ads placed by Media Company and Columbia League					
Voter Registration Totals	381,435	2,615	731		
VOTE411 Totals	649,817	3,690	1,133		
Total	1,031,252	6,305	1,864		
SCIWAY ads					
2018 Statewide		37033		8.07	
2018 Richland/Lexington estimated		5800	75		0.01
2020 Statewide		14,365			
2020 Richland/Lexington			75	14.2	
2020 Aiken (paid by Aiken)				9.3	
SCIWAY average click thru rate for display ads is .35 to .46%, so these are great numbers					

Definitions for Vote411 Statistics and Usage Information

Clicks indicate the number of people who clicked on the link to the VOTE411 website after seeing a digital or online ad.

Click through rate indicates the people who click on an ad that takes the user to the new page as a percentage of the number of impressions.

Impressions (for online ads) indicates each time that an ad is displayed.

Impressions (for billboards) When evaluating impressions for the outdoor industry, a metric was derived to provide a more accurate account of how many people look at an outdoor advertisement. The number of impressions takes into account the number of times the ad displayed plus many other factors including traffic count, eyes on the board, IP addresses for cell phones that pass the billboard location, number of hours of illumination for the billboard and is computed using an algorithm.

Individual Users (New Users) is the number of people from each area who viewed the candidate information for the first time during that time frame.

Sessions indicates the number of times the candidate information has been viewed. One user can have multiple sessions.

Important Notes: The numbers of Individual Users or Sessions actually represent people who went into the candidate information section of VOTE411. It does not include people who used VOTE411 to register to vote, find polling places or look at other voter information. These would be labeled 'all users' or 'total users' in this report.

The users and sessions are based on the computer device IP addresses, not actual people logging in. These numbers may be associated with a municipality or census designated place which is identified in the report.

Some towns and cities extend across county lines, so we have chosen to add these numbers into the county with the largest population from that town or city.

Appendix D: VOTE411 Election Cycle Task List

Vote411 Tasks - November 3, 2020 General Election Cycle

Created 7/14/20, Last updated 1/18/21 (RWD)	Project Start: July 1, 2020 Project End: December 31, 2020	Vote411 Publish Date: September 8			
TASK	ASSIGNED TO	PROGRESS	START	END	ACTUAL COMPLETION
Election Prep and Details					
Arrange Vote411 software payment.	Keller	100%	12/1/19	12/31/19	1/2
Obtain new login for Vote411 admin.	Rachel		8/10	8/13	N/A
Plan budget.	Keller/Debbie	100%	7/1	8/3	8/3
Plan and manage publicity	Debbie	100%	7/1	9/30	10/31
Hold Kick-off Meeting.	Keller	100%	7/14	7/14	7/14
Assign responsibilities.	Keller	100%	7/14	8/31	9/30
Identify races & no. seats.	Anne	100%	7/1	7/14	7/14
Identify race districts.	Rachel	100%	8/1	8/15	8/7
Identify race filing dates. (Final 8/17)	Anne	100%	7/1	7/14	7/14
Complete Table of Races.*	Rachel	100%	7/13	8/15	8/22
Complete Candidate Spreadsheet.*	Anne/Rachel	100%	7/1	8/20	8/18
Verify candidate email addresses.	Elizabeth/CheChe	100%	8/10	8/22	8/22
Develop race/office descriptions.*	Rachel/Keller	100%	8/12	8/25	8/28
Identify any ballot measures.	Anne		8/17	8/31	N/A
Candidate Questions & Invitations					
Solicit input from observers.	Keller	100%	1/28	3/25	3/25
Solicit input from local & state leagues	Keller	100%	7/15	8/7	8/14
Develop candidate questions for each race.*	Eliz C./Debbie/Keller	100%	7/1	8/15	8/3
Review & revise invitation emails.*	Keller/Rachel	100%	8/10	8/14	8/22
Do last edits on all VOTE411 documents.	Sparkle	100%	8/10	8/20	8/20

Create question sets table for Vote411.*	Rachel	100%	8/13	8/20	8/18
Submit questions to pres/board.	Keller/Debbie	100%	8/17	8/18	8/3
Submit candidate emails pres/board.	Rachel	100%	8/17	8/18	8/23
Plan/order postcard reminders.	Debbie	100%	7/15	8/7	8/7
Send 1st candidate email invite	Rachel	100%	8/25	8/25	8/25
Answer questions from candidates.	Rachel/Anita/Susan	100%	8/26	11/2	10/31
Track and Resolve Issues	Rachel	100%	8/26	11/2	10/31
Organize/Assist follow-up callers.	Keller/Rachel	100%	8/31	9/30	9/30
Track & report status of responses.	Anne	100%	8/31	9/30	10/31
Print or format address labels for postcards.	Anne	100%	8/20	8/24	8/26
Mail postcards.	Anne	100%	8/26	8/27	8/27
Send 2nd candidate email invite/reminder	Rachel	100%	8/28	8/28	8/31
Send 3rd candidate email - last notice.	Rachel	100%	9/3	9/4	9/7
Publish race & candidate info.	Rachel	100%	9/8	9/8	9/8
Follow up by phone	Callers	100%	8/31	9/30	9/30
Follow up by Facebook.	CheChe/others	100%	8/31	9/30	9/30
Send 4th candidate email - info published	Rachel	100%	9/9	9/10	9/10
Prepare/distribute election press releases.	Anita	100%	9/8	9/15	9/15
Notify Comm. and others info published.	Rachel	100%	9/9	9/9	9/10
Vote 411 Software Updates - Admin					
Upload new shapefiles. (School Board)	Admin	100%	8/14	8/21	9/9
Clean up old election info.	Rachel	100%	8/1	8/15	8/22
Verify race names with Megan	Rachel	100%	8/14	8/21	8/20
Update bio, party, race group fields.	Rachel	100%	8/14	8/21	8/15
Set up question sets.	Rachel	100%	8/14	8/21	8/22
Upload Candidate Spreadsheet(s)	Rachel	100%	8/14	8/21	8/22
Add race specifics.	Rachel	100%	8/14	8/21	8/22
Add descriptions.	Rachel	100%	8/21	8/28	8/28
Set up candidate email templates.	Rachel	100%	8/21	8/24	8/29
Add races to Megan's Google spreadsheet .	Rachel	100%	8/21	8/28	9/30

Plan system testing and create test doc. *	Rachel	100%	8/21	9/4	9/7
Test and update as needed.	Anne/Spark/Candy	100%	8/21	9/11	9/11
Notify Megan when ready to publish.	Rachel	100%	9/3	9/3	9/7
Add ballot measures (?)	Rachel		9/1	9/30	N/A
Post Election Tasks					
Collect candidate & race info for eval.	Susan/Anne/Rachel	100%	11/1	11/30	12/31
Request usage report from Megan	Rachel	100%	N/A		
Study/assemble candidate & race info	Rachel/David	100%	11/1	11/30	12/31
Assemble race/candidate statistics.	David	100%	12/1	12/31	12/31
Identify candidates in runoff.	Anne	100%	N/A		
Unpublish Races (except runoffs).	Anne	100%	11/16	11/20	11/20
Archive losing candidates (except runoffs).	Anne	100%	11/16	11/20	11/20
Compose candidate email for runoffs	Keller/Rachel		N/A		
Send candidate email for runoffs ASAP.	Rachel		N/A		
Create mail labels for thank-you postcards	Anne	100%	11/9	11/13	
Have thank-you postcards printed.	Debbie	100%	N/A		
Send thank you postcards for candidates who lost.	Anne	100%	N/A		
Unpublish all runoff races.	Anne		N/A		
Archive losing runoff candidates.	Rachel/Anne		N/A		
Compile list of admin issues & recommendations	Rachel	100%	12/1	12/31	
Hold Evaluation Meeting.	David	100%	12/9	12/9	12/9
Clean out old documents.	Rachel	100%	12/1	12/31	1/10
Archive important documents.	Rachel	100%	12/1	12/31	1/10
Publicity **					
List upcoming local events.	Adam	100%	1/28/20	2/12/20	
Select suitable events. *	Adam/Committee	100%	1/28/20	3/15/20	
Coordinate with voter registration events.	Sparkle	100%	4/1/20		
Organize participation in events.	Committee	100%	2/11/20		

Organize outreach to women's groups.	Debbie	100%	1/28/20	5/22/20	
List possible newspapers/journals.	Anita	100%	1/28/20	5/26/20	
Identify suitable newspapers/journals *	Anita/Committee	100%	1/28/20	5/26/20	
Investigate radio and tv.	Anita	100%	1/28/20	5/26/20	
Investigate costs of any appropriate ads.	Anita/Debbie	100%	1/28/20		
Coordinate ad for SCIWAY	Debbie	100%	1/28/20	5/18/20	
Work w/board on social media PR	Susan/ Maggie	100%	1/28/20	5/26/20	
Write & distribute news releases.	Anita	100%	1/28/20	5/26/20	
Request updates to Columbia LWV website	Susan/Maggie	100%	1/28/20		
Plan printed materials needed.	Debbie/Maggie/Committee	100%	1/28/20	4/25/20	
Determine costs of materials.	Debbie/Maggie	100%	1/28/20	4/25/20	
Make updates to printed materials.	Debbie/Maggie	100%	1/28/20	4/25/20	
Order printed materials.	Debbie/Maggie	100%	1/28/20	4/25/20	
Identify locations to leave materials.	Committee	100%	1/28/20	5/26/20	
Organize distribution of materials.	Committee	100%	1/28/20	5/26/20	
Take materials to locations.	Anne/Sparkle/Committee	100%	1/28/20	5/26/20	
Send poster to State Library, LWV chapters	Keller/Debbie	100%	1/28/20	2/15/20	
Design and order T-shirts.	Maggie/Adam	90%	1/28/20	5/26/20	
Create list of council meetings. *	Lady June	100%	1/28/20	2/11/20	
Organize council meeting visits.	Committee	100%	1/28/20	3/31/20	
Contact Councils to be on agenda.	Che Che/Elizabeth C/Committee	0%	1/28/20	3/31/20	
Research ads on billboards, yard signs	Candy	100%	5/12/20	5/26/20	
Obtain Neighborhood contacts	Che Che	100%	1/28/20	5/26/20	
Email Neighborhoods, LWV members	Susan	100%	1/28/20	5/26/20	
* indicates a document is needed.					
** Most PR/Publicity tasks were begun during primary election cycle.					

Appendix E: Financial Details

**VOTE411 Budget
2020 Election Cycle**

	Costs incurred 2020
Costs paid by LWVCA July-Dec 2020 (FY2020/2021)	
Billboards	1,450.00
Digital ads (Media Firm, Google, Instagram)	1,660.00
Face masks	17.99
Yard signs	251.02
Stamps	122.50
Postcards	91.50
Digital/Print Ads Carolina Panorama	200.00
Total	3,793.01
 Costs incurred for primary (FY2019/2020)	
VOTE411 (cost to participate in website)*	400.00
postcards	38.00
postage	77.40
posters	65.00
business cards	210.00
Total	790.40
 Costs incurred 2018	
SClway \$150 two years, not used during off years	
 Non-reimbursed expenses (donated by members)	
Stamps	125.00
Google ads	200.00
Flyers for members (masks, signs)	80.00
Total	405.00
Total Cost	4,988.41

Appendix F: VOTE411 History

SUMMARY

- In 2006, the League of Women Voters of the United States launched VOTE411 (<https://www.vote411.org/about>).
- For the 2010 General Election, the LWVSC participated in VOTE411 and produced a voters guide to statewide and legislative elections. See report at end of this document*.
- In 2010 and 2012, LWV of the Charleston Area participated in VOTE411 and produced voters' guides for local offices.
- The Columbia League urged LWVSC to also participate in 2012 and 2014, making the following argument.

In 2012, over 800 people visited the vote411 Charleston guide; the Columbia League informed LWVSC that this number would grow if surrounding leagues were covering races, and especially if LWVSC were covering statewide races. If LWVSC didn't participate, then the statewide races were not covered; voters who go to vote411 looking for a candidate guide wouldn't get to see the statewide races (governor, superintendent of education, US Senate, etc.). LWVSC decided not to participate. In 2014, the Columbia League Board decided that the money and time spent would not be worth it if there were so many gaps in the information because the statewide races were not covered. They voted to participate in 2014 only if LWVSC were willing to participate. As LWVSC opted out again in 2014, the Columbia League decided against, so a gap ensued until 2017.

- In 2017, LWV of the Charleston Area participated in VOTE411 and provided guides to candidates and questions on ballots in Berkeley, Charleston and Dorchester counties.
- In 2018, at the urging of the Charleston Area League and other league leaders around the state, LWVSC participated in VOTE411 and provided voters guides for statewide races. LWV Charleston Area managed VOTE411 for statewide races. LWVSC offered a financial incentive (\$100) to local leagues who participated in VOTE411 and covered local and state legislative races in their area. Participating leagues included: Clemson Area, Charleston Area, Columbia Area, Darlington County, Greenville County, Hilton Head-Bluffton Area; Spartanburg County.
- Since 2018, LWVSC and local leagues have participated in VOTE411, at least for even-numbered election years.

DETAILS for 2017

In 2017, the Columbia League decided to take a stab at participating in the LWVUS' VOTE411 project. Anne Sinclair and Anne Mellen were the main data gatherers, with another group of members taking on the role of formatting the received data into paper form. At the time, however, we did not participate in the actual Vote411 website, but created a paper oriented Vote411 product.

The two Annes first created the question set and then divided the elections by county. Anne Sinclair covered Arcadia Lakes, Blythewood, and Columbia, in Richland County, while Anne Mellen covered Batesburg-Leesville, Chapin, Irmo, Pelion, Pine Ridge, Springdale, Summit, Swansea, and West Columbia in Lexington County (Pelion and Summit did not have any contested races). Not all races were contested, however, and we concentrated only on those that did.

After finishing the questions to be asked, we gathered candidate data by going to our local election boards. I don't believe SCVotes.org had this data online for 2017, and the election boards made copies of all candidate filing applications for us, with smiles on their faces. After Anne Sinclair and Anne Mellen agreed on the format of the letters to the candidates, we sent them to the respective candidates via email, if one was supplied, or by regular mail, if not.

When the candidate answers came back, sometimes after numerous contacts, we sent all of it to the Columbia League VOTE411 Committee, who formatted the answers by town for us. Once this formatting was completed, we brought multiple copies to the various county libraries (the librarians were very receptive to placing copies on their bulletin boards). Of course, we brought only info on Swansea candidates to the Swansea library, etc. We also sent them to as many of the area newspapers and websites that we could find. For example, we sent all entries to The State and only the applicable candidate sets to the various local papers. Several of these entities put the information on their websites. I don't believe any published them in their papers though.

In Lexington County, there were 14 contested races. We had 25 candidates respond and 18 others not respond (58 percent response rate). Only two of the races had no responses (both in Batesburg/Leesville), two had only one response each (Pine Ridge and Springdale), while three races had all candidates respond. We don't have comparable Richland County races information at this time.

After this relatively successful project, the Columbia League decided to join the Vote411 project in its entirety for 2018 and beyond.

DETAILS for 2018

While the League of Women Voters of Columbia has provided information to voters about the candidates running for office for many years, in 2018 the League began using the national VOTE411 website to provide candidate and voting information. That year, the League worked with candidates in Richland, Lexington and Kershaw counties, to provide information on 41 races with 121 candidates. The races covered were 19 SC House Districts, one SC Senate District, US House District 2, 5th Circuit Solicitor, Richland and Lexington County Councils, city/town councils and mayors from Lexington and Cayce and several school boards.

The League held a kickoff event with candidates at the Richland County Public Library. Presentations were made to high schools in Lexington School District One about voting and to register new voters. The VOTE411 Team printed business cards, flyers, and bookmarks for distribution through Lexington and Richland County Libraries, college libraries, senior centers, and at events. League members distributed materials at Soda City, St Lukes Church, the Okra Strut and at voter registration events. Through a cooperative agreement with the State Library, VOTE411 information was distributed digitally to 184 libraries statewide. LWV Columbia members distributed over 2,000 printed materials promoting VOTE411.

Multiple press releases were distributed with several news articles being published. Paid ads were placed with SCIWAY, the SC Information Highway, to run on the Richland and Lexington County pages. VOTE411 information was placed on Facebook.

VOTE411 Statistics

In 2018, a total of 16,649 individuals visited the VOTE411 site 23,230 times!

VOTE411 Statistics from SCIWAY

From August 17 through November 11, SCIWAY sent VOTE411.org 37,033 unique visitors statewide.

DETAILS for 2019

In 2019, the only elections scheduled were municipal elections. The VOTE411 Committee decided to provide information on them in order to continue building VOTE411 as the 'go to' place to find information about upcoming elections and candidates. Several spring elections had been missed. Races for mayor and council members were covered for Arcadia Lakes, Blythewood and the City of Columbia in Richland County, and for Batesburg-Leesville, Chapin, Irmo, Pelion, Pine Ridge, Springdale, Summit, Swansea, and West Columbia in Lexington County. A December special election for Richland County School District One was also covered. A total of 25 races and 65 candidates were covered through VOTE411.

During the year, the Committee organized and assigned responsibilities for the following tasks:

- creating a list of all upcoming races with filing dates and election dates
- creating a list of all candidates for each race
- administration - compiling data and entering it into the VOTE411 system
- developing a calendar of key dates and tasks for contacting candidates, emailing questions, following up with candidates, making VOTE411 information available to the public and all the related steps
- writing race descriptions and questions for candidates
- inviting input from Observer Corps members for questions for the candidates
- composing and updating emails to be sent to candidates to invite their participation, remind and encourage them to participate, and thanking them for their participation

The Committee made plans to introduce city council members and citizens to the League of Women Voters and VOTE411. Wearing bright blue VOTE411 t-shirts, members visited and spoke at the council meetings in 9 of the 12 municipalities. Cooperation was solicited because to be successful, both parts of VOTE411 must be executed: candidates must answer the questions and voters must click on the VOTE411 website and use their address to find their ballot and see the candidates' positions.

The Committee also publicized VOTE411 through local newspapers and local events like Soda City, the Irmo Okra Strut, and other festivals and events. The team coordinated efforts with voter registration at the NAACP Yard Sale, Health Empowerment Tour, and the Historic Columbia Jubilee. Anita Baker, publicity designee for the League, wrote and distributed releases about VOTE411. Posters and handouts were printed and distributed through Richland and Lexington County libraries, community centers and colleges. League members posted VOTE411 information on the Columbia League website and on Facebook. The Committee also sent thank you cards to all candidates.

Appendix G Candidate Response Rate Tables

Table G- 1

Candidate Data Collected

FIELD	VALUES
Fullname	Full name of candidate
lastname	Last name of candidate
race	Name of elected position (City Council, etc.)
party	Rep (Republican), Dem (Democrat), Green, Lib (Libertarian), BLANK (nonpartisan)
street1	Street address 1
street2	Street address 2
city	City of residence
state	State of residence
zip	Zip code of residence
contactemail	Email address
Phone	Phone #
Count	Counter used in pivot table (1 or blank)
Unopposed	1 = Unopposed Blank = opposed
Responded	1 = Responded to at least one of our questions Blank = did not respond
Winner	1 = won their race Blank = did not win
Opposed & Responded	1 = candidate was opposed and responded Blank = was not both of these
Incumbent	1 = candidate was an incumbent Blank = not an incumbent
Race Group	See Table G- 2
Race counter	1 = identifies a unique race Blank = if the race has previously been identified with a "1"

Table G- 2

Race Groups

GROUP	RACE
County	Lexington County Auditor
	Lexington County Clerk of Court
	Lexington County Coroner
	Lexington County Register of Deeds
	Lexington County Sheriff
	Lexington County Soil and Water District
	Lexington County Treasurer
	Richland County Clerk of Court
	Richland County Coroner
	Richland County Sheriff
	Richland County Soil and Water District
	County Council
Richland County Council District 2, 3, 7, 8, 9, 10	
SC General Assembly	South Carolina House District 39, 41, 66, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 91, 93, 95, 96
	South Carolina Senate District 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 35, 40
School Board	Lexington One School Board
	Lexington Two School Board
	Lexington Three School Board
	Lexington Four School Board
	Lexington-Richland Five School Board (Lexington)
	Lexington-Richland Five School Board (Richland)
	Richland One School Board At Large
	Richland One School Board District 2
	Richland One School Board District 4
	Richland Two School Board
Solicitor	Solicitor Circuit 11
US Congress	US House District 2

Table G- 3

November 2020 General Election: Candidate Tally by Race Group

PARAMETER	COUNT	% of ALL	Breakdown by Race Group						TOTAL	
			County	County Cncl	School Bd	SC Gen Assy	Solicitor	US Congress		
#candidates	145	100%	11	16	56	58	1	3	145	
#races:	73	100%	11	11	10	39	1	1	73	
#contested races:	32	44%	0	5	8	18	0	1	32	
#candidates who responded:	92	63%	4	12	42	32	0	2	92	
<i>% responded by party (or Race Group)</i>			<i>36%</i>	<i>75%</i>	<i>75%</i>	<i>55%</i>		<i>67%</i>	<i>63%</i>	
#candidates who responded who won:	46	32%	4	7	17	17	0	1	46	
#candidates who responded who won or in runoff:										
<i>% responded and won by party (or Race Group)</i>			<i>36%</i>	<i>44%</i>	<i>30%</i>	<i>29%</i>		<i>33%</i>	<i>32%</i>	
#candidates who responded and lost:	46	32%	0	5	25	15	0	1	46	
#candidates in contested races	102	70%	0	10	52	37	0	3	102	100%
#candidates in contested races who won:	46	32%	0	5	22	18	0	1	46	45%
#candidates in contested races who responded:	79	54%	0	9	42	26	0	2	79	77%
#candidates in contested races who responded and won:	33	23%	0	4	17	11	0	1	33	32%
#candidates in contested races who responded and won or in runoff:										
#candidates in contested races who responded and lost:	46	32%	0	5	25	15	0	1	46	45%
#candidates who did not respond:	53	37%	7	4	14	26	1	1	53	100%
#candidates who did not respond and won:	42	29%	7	4	9	21	1	0	42	79%
#candidates who did not respond and lost:	11		0	0	5	5	0	1	11	21%
#candidates in contested races who did not respond:	23	16%	0	1	10	11	0	1	23	100%
#candidates in contested races who did not respond and won:	13	9%	0	1	5	7	0	0	13	57%
#candidates in contested races who did not respond and lost:	10	7%	0	0	5	4	0	1	10	43%

Table G-3 November 2020 General Election: Candidate Tally by Race Group (continued)

PARAMETER	COUNT	% of ALL	Breakdown by Race Group						TOTAL	
			County	County Cncl	School Bd	SC Gen Assy	Solicitor	US Congress		
#candidates in uncontested races:	43	30%	11	6	4	21	1	0	43	100%
#candidates in uncontested races who responded:	13	9%	4	3	0	6	0	0	13	30%
#candidates in uncontested races who did not respond:	30	21%	7	3	4	15	1	0	30	70%
# of candidates who are NOT incumbents	74	51%	1	12	37	22	0	2	74	100%
# of candidates who are NOT incumbents and who responded	63	43%	1	12	32	17		1	63	85%
#incumbent candidates:	71	49%	10	4	19	36	1	1	71	100%
#incumbent candidates who won	65	45%	10	4	14	35	1	1	65	92%
#incumbent candidates who responded	29	20%	3	0	10	15	0	1	29	41%
#incumbent candidates who responded and won:	26	18%	3	0	7	15	0	1	26	37%
#incumbent candidates who responded and lost:	3	2%	0	0	3	0	0	0	3	4%
#incumbent candidates who did not respond:	42	29%	7	4	9	21	1	0	42	100%
#incumbent candidates who did not respond and won:	39	27%	7	4	7	20	1	0	39	93%
#incumbent candidates who did not respond and lost:	3	2%	0	0	2	1	0	0	3	7%
#incumbent candidates in UNcontested races	37	26%	10	3	4	19	1	0	37	100%
#incumbent candidates in UNcontested races who responded	8	6%	3	0	0	5	0	0	8	22%
#incumbent candidates in contested races	34	23%	0	1	15	17	0	1	34	100%
#incumbent candidates in contested races who won	29	20%	0	1	10	17	0	1	29	85%
#incumbent candidates in contested races who responded	21	14%	0	0	10	10	0	1	21	62%
#incumbent candidates in contested races who responded and won	18	12%	0	0	7	10	0	1	18	53%
#incumbent candidates in contested races who responded and lost	3	2%	0	0	3	0	0	0	3	9%
#incumbent candidates in contested races who did not respond	13	9%	0	0	5	0	0	0	5	15%

Table G- 4

November 2020 General Election: Candidate Tally by Party Affiliation

PARAMETER	COUNT	% of ALL	Breakdown by Party Affiliation									TOTAL
			Rep	Dem	Con	Ind	Green	Lib	LBR	APOLITICAL		
#candidates	145	100%	41	39	1	1	1	3	1	58	145	
#races:	73	100%	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
#contested races:	32	44%	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
#candidates who responded:	92	63%	18	26	0	1	1	3	0	43	92	
<i>% responded by party (or Race Group)</i>			44%	67%						74%	63%	
#candidates who responded who won:	46	32%	9	19	0	0	0	0	0	18	46	
#candidates who responded who won or in runoff:												
<i>% responded and won by party (or Race Group)</i>			50%	73%		0%	0%	0%		42%	50%	
#candidates who responded and lost:	46	32%	9	7	0	1	1	3	0	25	46	
#candidates in contested races	102	70%	19	24	1	1	1	3	1	52	102	
#candidates in contested races who won:	46	32%	8	16	0	0	0	0	0	22	46	
#candidates in contested races who responded:	79	54%	13	19	0	1	1	3	0	42	79	
#candidates in contested races who responded and won:	33	23%	4	12	0	0	0	0	0	17	33	
#candidates in contested races who responded and won or in runoff:												
#candidates in contested races who responded and lost:	46	32%	9	7	0	1	1	3	0	25	46	
#candidates who did not respond:	53	37%	23	13	1	0	0	0	1	15	53	
#candidates who did not respond and won:	42	29%	20	12	0	0	0	0	0	10	42	
#candidates who did not respond and lost:	11		3	1	1	0	0	0	1	5	11	
#candidates in contested races who did not respond:	23	16%	6	5	1	0	0	0	1	10	23	
#candidates in contested races who did not respond and won:	13	9%	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	5	13	
#candidates in contested races who did not respond and lost:	10	7%	2	1	1	0	0	0	1	5	10	

Table G-4 November 2020 General Election: Candidate Tally by Party Affiliation (Continued)

PARAMETER	COUNT	% of ALL	Breakdown by Party Affiliation									TOTAL	
			Rep	Dem	Con	Ind	Green	Lib	LBR	APOLITICAL			
#candidates in uncontested races:	43	30%	22	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	43	100%
#candidates in uncontested races who responded:	13	9%	5	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	13	30%
#candidates in uncontested races who did not respond:	30	21%	17	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	30	70%
# of candidates who are NOT incumbents	74	51%	15	15	1	1	1	3	1	37	74	100%	
# of candidates who are NOT incumbents and who responded	63	43%	12	14	0	1	1	3	0	32	63	85%	
#incumbent candidates:	71	49%	26	24	0	0	0	0	0	21	71	100%	
#incumbent candidates who won	65	45%	25	24	0	0	0	0	0	16	65	92%	
#incumbent candidates who responded	29	20%	6	12	0	0	0	0	0	11	29	41%	
#incumbent candidates who responded and won:	26	18%	6	12	0	0	0	0	0	8	26	37%	
#incumbent candidates who responded and lost:	3	2%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	4%	
#incumbent candidates who did not respond:	42	29%	20	12	0	0	0	0	0	10	42	100%	
#incumbent candidates who did not respond and won:	39	27%	19	12	0	0	0	0	0	8	39	93%	
#incumbent candidates who did not respond and lost:	3	2%	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	7%	
#incumbent candidates in UNcontested races	37	26%	19	12	0	0	0	0	0	6	37	100%	
#incumbent candidates in UNcontested races who responded	8	6%	3	4	0	0	0	0	0	1	8	22%	
#incumbent candidates in contested races	34	23%	7	12	0	0	0	0	0	15	34	100%	
#incumbent candidates in contested races who won	29	20%	7	12	0	0	0	0	0	10	29	85%	
#incumbent candidates in contested races who responded	21	14%	3	8	0	0	0	0	0	10	21	62%	
#incumbent candidates in contested races who responded and won	18	12%	3	8	0	0	0	0	0	7	18	53%	
#incumbent candidates in contested races who responded and lost	3	2%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	9%	
#incumbent candidates in contested races who did not respond	13	9%	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	5	13	38%	

Table G- 5

November 2020 General Election: Candidate Tally – Cross Tabulation by Party Affiliation and Race Group

PARAMETER	COUNT	% of ALL	Breakdown by Party Affiliation								TOTAL		
			Rep	Dem	Con	Ind	Green	Lib	LBR	APOLITICAL			
CROSS-TABULATION (# Candidates: by RaceGroup by Party)													
County	3	2%	6	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	11	8%
County Cnd	3	2%	7	7	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	16	11%
School Bd	56	39%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	56	56	39%
SC Gen Assy	58	40%	26	28	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	58	40%
Solicitor	1	1%	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1%
US Congress	3	2%	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	2%
TOTAL			41	39	1	1	1	3	1	58	145	145	100%
			28%	27%	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	40%	100%		
CROSS-TABULATION (# Candidates: by RaceGroup by Party) who responded													
County	4	3%	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	4%
County Cnd	12	8%	4	6	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	12	13%
School Bd	42	29%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	42	42	46%
SC Gen Assy	32	22%	12	17	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	32	35%
Solicitor	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
US Congress	2	1%	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2%
TOTAL			18	26	0	1	1	3	0	43	92	92	100%
			20%	28%	0%	1%	1%	3%	0%	47%	100%		
CROSS-TABULATION (# Candidates: by RaceGroup by Party) Response Rate													
County			17%	67%							50%		
County Cnd			57%	86%		100%	100%						
School Bd											75%		
SC Gen Assy			46%	61%				100%	0%				
Solicitor			0%										
US Congress			100%	100%	0%								

Table G- 6

November 2020 General Election: Response Rate by Race Group (Sort on “Contested” and “Incumbency”)

Response Rate - County Candidates

	Responded		Total	Resp Rate
	Yes	No		
Contested	0	0	0	x
Incumbent	0	0	0	x
Not incumbent	0	0	0	x
Uncontested	4	7	11	36%
Incumbent	3	7	10	30%
Not incumbent	1	0	1	100%
TOTALS	4	7	11	36%
Incumbent	3	7	10	30%
Not incumbent	1	0	1	100%

Observations

There were 11 candidates for 11 races (none contested).
 Very little incentive to respond - only 4 of 11 responded (36%)
 Low response probably since all are uncontested.

Incumbent Reps in Uncontested races drives low response:

- Party: 1 of 6 Republicans responded (17%)
- Party: 2 of 3 Dems responded (66%)
- Party: 1 of 2 Apolitical responded (50%)

Response Rate - County Council Candidates

	Responded		Total	Resp Rate
	Yes	No		
Contested	9	1	10	90%
Incumbent	0	1	1	0%
Not incumbent	9	0	9	100%
Uncontested	3	3	6	50%
Incumbent	0	3	3	0%
Not incumbent	3	0	3	x
TOTALS	12	4	16	75%
Incumbent	0	4	4	0%
Not incumbent	12	0	12	100%

Observations

There were 16 candidates for 11 races (5 contested).
 The driving factor for response rate was the candidate being a non-incumbent in a contested race (90%).

In general, Dems were slightly more likely to respond

- Party: 4 of 7 Republicans responded (57%)
- Party: 6 of 7 Dems responded (86%)
- Party: 0 of 1 Green responded (0%)
- Party: 0 of 1 Indep responded (0%)

Table G-6 November 2020 General Election: Response Rate by Race Group (Sort on "Contested" and "Incumbency") (continued)

Response Rate - School Board Candidates

	Responded		Total	Resp Rate
	Yes	No		
Contested	42	10	52	81%
Incumbent	10	5	15	67%
Not incumbent	32	5	37	86%
Uncontested	0	4	4	0%
Incumbent	0	4	4	0%
Not incumbent	0	0	0	x
TOTALS	42	14	56	75%
Incumbent	10	9	19	53%
Not incumbent	32	5	37	86%

Observations

There were 56 candidates for 12 races (8 contested).
 Only candidates in contested races responded (81%).
 Overall, incumbents were 33% less likely to respond (86%-53%).

There is no party affiliation. Overall response was 75%

Response Rate - SC General Assy Candidates

	Responded		Total	Resp Rate
	Yes	No		
Contested	26	11	37	70%
Incumbent	10	7	17	59%
Not incumbent	16	4	20	80%
Uncontested	6	15	21	29%
Incumbent	5	14	19	26%
Not incumbent	1	1	2	50%
TOTALS	32	26	58	55%
Incumbent	15	21	36	42%
Not incumbent	17	5	22	77%

Observations

There were 58 candidates for 39 races (18 contested).
 Candidates in contested races were much more likely (70 %
 vs. 29%) to respond. Incumbents were about 35% less
 likely to respond

Democrats and Libertarians are more likely to respond:

- Party: 12 of 26 Republicans responded (46%)
- Party: 17 of 28 Dems responded (61%)
- Party: 3 of 3 Libertarians responded (100%)
- Party: 0 of 1 Labor responded (0%)