



## **Table of Contents for the Membership Leadership Development Handbook**

### **Chapter 1—Introduction**

MLD Program Background and Overview _____	1
Support Structure- National, State, and Local Partnership _____	5

### **Chapter 2—Engaging Your League Board**

Engaging Your Local League Board _____	6
Defining Success for Your Local League Board _____	13
Little Things to Engage Your League Board _____	15

### **Chapter 3—Outreach Best Practices**

Outreach Overview _____	17
Direct Outreach _____	23
Allied Outreach _____	25
Media Outreach _____	29
Tips on Working with the Media _____	33
Tips for Local League Websites _____	41

### **Chapter 4—How to be Visible All Year**

Overview of Being Visible All Year _____	47
Opportunities during Election Season _____	51
The LWV Making Democracy Work Award _____	59
“Hot Topics” Lunch _____	63
Activities around Historic Milestones for Women _____	65
Sunshine Week _____	69
Movie Watching and Book Club Materials _____	73

### **Chapter 5—Storytelling and the LWV Storybank**

Storytelling & the LWV Storybank _____	77
Celebrating League: Sample Stories from the Storybank _____	83

### **Chapter 6--- The Welcoming League**

Becoming a More Welcoming League _____	85
--	----

### **Chapter 7—Engaging Members to Lead**

Engaging Members to Lead the League _____	91
Qualities of a Leader _____	97

### **Chapter 8—Structures for Success**

League Leadership Models and Job Descriptions _____	103
Leadership Training and Transitions _____	109



## **Chapter 9—Leading Together**

Team Building	113
Managing Conflict	117
How to Run a Board Meeting	121

## **Chapter 10—Tools You Can Use**

1. Event/Activity Planning Checklist
2. Local Board Activity: Asset Survey
3. Sign-In Sheet
4. Evaluate an Opportunity for Allied Outreach
5. Interview Planning Worksheet
6. Three Steps of Messaging Worksheet
7. Sample “Join Us” Webpage Template
8. The LWV Making Democracy Work Award – Work plan
9. The LWV Making Democracy Work Award - Talking Points
10. Practice Your Own Story Worksheet
11. Story Solicitation Letter Template
12. Member Interest Survey Samples
13. Being a Leader Activity
14. Leadership Qualities and Skills Self-Assessment
15. Recognizing Leadership Traits Activity
16. Team Building Exercises
17. Library of Icebreakers
18. Leadership Compass Exercise
19. True Colors Exercise
20. Conflict Resolution Activity
21. Focusing Grid

## Membership Leadership Development (MLD) Program Background and Overview

*Imagine If . . .*

- YOUR League was growing in membership and funding
- YOUR League had its own coach for support, ideas, and guidance
- YOU and YOUR League leaders had training and mentoring *before* leading
- OUR League's voice was as strong and powerful as our reputation in *all* communities across the United States

In the fall of 2005, LWVUS confronted a single question that perhaps has been the biggest challenge for the League over the past 30 years of our over 90-year history: *Can something be done about membership decline?*

To answer this question, we did our own research and engaged outside specialists to assist us. We conducted interviews with stakeholders, examined organizations who conduct similar work, and reviewed news clips that featured LWV. Their research was the foundation for the strategic decisions that created this program. We discovered that. . .

*The League has a highly respected reputation and a strong and proud history. However, while there is great name recognition of the League of Women Voters, there is limited awareness about the value that the League membership offered to potential members.*

For example, the media scan, which included over three years of coverage from major media markets, found over 700 articles. Of all these articles, 50 percent were news pieces, but of that group, only one communicated the value of the LWV – the mission.

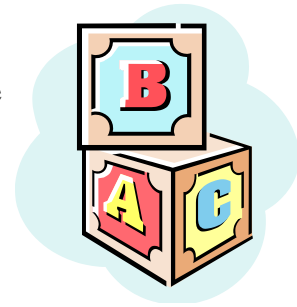
The greatest overall finding was that communications about the organization's work and about the value of LWV membership are inconsistent. While LWV has a solid reputation – largely stemming from our long history and work on election-related issues - it was clear that LWV did not have a strong, easily defined position that is distinct among groups who are engaged in similar work in similar issue areas. In other words, individuals outside the organization do not have a clear understanding of the value in becoming a member of LWV because current members are not communicating this in a consistent way that resonates with potential members. The best practices of this program were designed to address this challenge.

We also realized that many Leagues are also struggling to find trained leaders who are ready and willing to lead the League. We've begun adding components to the program to help Leagues develop leaders within their community and League. This helps to engage and retain members who have been recruited, makes the League stronger and ultimately serves our democracy.



### The Building Blocks for Success:

1. Conducting regular and intentional outreach to potential League members
2. Connecting with and becoming visible in the community
3. Developing local League leaders' skills and confidence
4. Annual training for League leaders and League coaches
5. Consistent coaching by dedicated and knowledgeable League volunteers



## 1. Conducting Regular and Intentional Outreach to Potential Members

The membership outreach campaign has been specifically designed to help League leaders communicate the benefits of League membership to potential members and to highlight the great work that League members across the country do to keep their communities healthy, vibrant and strong. The communications tactics that are outlined here are based upon marketing principles. They offer opportunities for local Leagues to weave membership outreach efforts into the unique activities that are already planned.

Being consistently “present” in the community is one of the keys to successful recruitment. The “Outreach Best Practices” section of this handbook provides tips about working with the media, collaborating with other community organizations, and maximizing the League’s own activities to generate visibility.

*The common theme in all of these techniques is to be intentional and consistent in reaching out to our community and to create and take advantage of all opportunities to invite or ASK potential members to join the League.*

## 2. Connecting with and Becoming Visible in the Community

Research has time and again shown that the segments of our communities who do know us perceive the League as an elections-time only organization. All of us at the League need to better promote and use the core work of the League as vehicles to engage potential members throughout the year. As you know your community best, we will help your League see the potential marketing and visibility opportunities in the activities you have already planned. This handbook also includes an “a la carte” menu of suggested activities, as a resource for local Leagues. *You* may choose to include some or all of these as part of their annual calendar.

**The goal is to have Leagues visible each month if possible. This will:**

- Ensure that Leagues have consistent visibility in the community and debunk the myth that we are an elections-time only organization
- Enhance what the Leagues are already doing and play up our local successes/assets
- Establish a foundation for sustained growth by offering valuable media hooks for local Leagues to raise awareness about the LWV and strengthening the way the LWV is defined both internally and externally, which will result in new members.

LWVUS has designed numerous tools and resources to help Leagues succeed in this area. These are in this handbook and available online in the program's Yahoo! Group.

### **3. Developing League Leaders' Skills and Confidence**

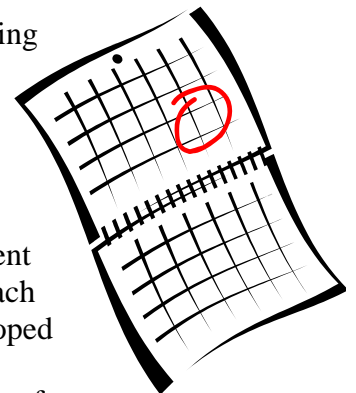
Many times, Leagues have a good number of members, but find it difficult to identify individuals to take on leadership roles. Local Leagues need to consistently and intentionally develop the skills of League members through mentoring and training. Leagues, also, need to begin to think about how they communicate the value of League leadership to potential League leaders in a way that shows it as the opportunity it is, rather than as a burden. And, once in leadership, we need to provide support to ensure that we are setting individuals up to succeed – for the good of the organization and our democracy.

### **4. Annual Training for League Leaders**

Training and planning are essential to the success of the program. The training for state coaching teams and local League teams are important components of this. Using various training methods (such as in person, over the phone and via the web), training sessions serve to orient the Leagues, answer questions, and assist in developing and carrying out outreach strategies.

During the training, we begin the process of thinking about how to implement the best practices of the program. We identify some opportunities for outreach based on what is already on your League's calendar. Using the tools developed as part of the program, we build the outreach, visibility, and leadership development components around LWV activities, and this becomes the start of your League's roadmap to success.

LWVUS provides an initial face-to-face training for newly participating state and local Leagues. After this initial training, LWVUS provides training and networking opportunities via phone and webinar. LWVUS encourages State Leagues to conduct training for local Leagues within their states after the initial LWVUS-funded opportunity.





## 5. Consistent Coaching by Dedicated and Knowledgeable League Volunteers



Past experience has proven that coaching is absolutely critical to each local League's success in growing and becoming more vibrant. By participating in this program, each local League will have the technical and emotional support of a state coach who will champion their successes, mentor them through challenges, and act as a bridge to connect the local and national coaching teams. Each state coach will likewise work with a national coach who will help them through any challenges they're facing and celebrate their successes as they connect with and advise local Leagues.

Coaching is done mostly through over-the-phone conversations, which take place each month. Coaches are given ideas from the national League to communicate to local Leagues and help provide guidance and support during these monthly phone calls. Coaching is a rewarding experience for both the mentor and mentee and builds a League support structure through which all three levels of our League work together to make our voice strong and powerful.

### Our Main Goals:

1. Experience a net increase in League membership
2. Establish a year-round, powerful and visible League presence in communities across the United States
3. Tool League leaders with the necessary training, materials, and support to lead enthusiastically and effectively



## Support Structure: National, State, and Local Partnership

The Membership and Leadership Development program is a partnership among the local, state and national Leagues. For the League to grow and strengthen, all levels of League need to work toward the common goals of the program. With that in mind, we have defined (in brief) the expectations or roles for each of us:

### **1. LWVUS (Board, Staff, and Ruth S. Shur Fellows National Coaching Team)**

- Sponsors, funds, and conducts face-to-face training for initial group of state coaches and periodic webinar training for new coaches and refreshers for ongoing state coaches
- Sponsors, funds, and conducts face-to-face 2-day training for initial group of participating local Leagues and state League
- Provides a trained national coach (Ruth S. Shur Fellow) for monthly coaching and training calls with state teams
- Creates and distributes materials and tools to participating Leagues
- Provides monthly guidance on opportunities distributed via the national coaching team
- Creates and provides online survey links to participating national and state coaches to send LWVUS feedback on progress of the program
- Monitors feedback and modifies materials to ensure success and program is sustained over time
- Provides membership numbers bi-annually to state coaches concerning participating local Leagues, based on numbers currently available in the LWVUS membership database
- Maintains LWV Storybank on [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org).

### **2. State League (State Board, State Coaching Team, State Coordinator)**

- **State Coaching Team**
  - Participates in face-to-face training for initial group of state coaches and/or periodic webinar training for new coaches and refreshers for ongoing state coaches
  - Participates in face-to-face 2-day training for initial group of participating local Leagues and state League
  - Provides guidance and support to 2 local Leagues in the state, per state coach, via regular monthly coaching calls
  - Communicates with the state's assigned Ruth S. Shur Fellow (national coach) via regular monthly coaching calls to receive guidance and support
  - Completes a monthly report on each of the 2 local Leagues coached via a monthly online survey
  - Participates in on-going training experiences via webinar presented by LWVUS
  - Provides additional materials to local Leagues as necessary (with support of state board and LWVUS)
  - Serves as membership ambassador whenever possible



## Chapter 1: Introduction

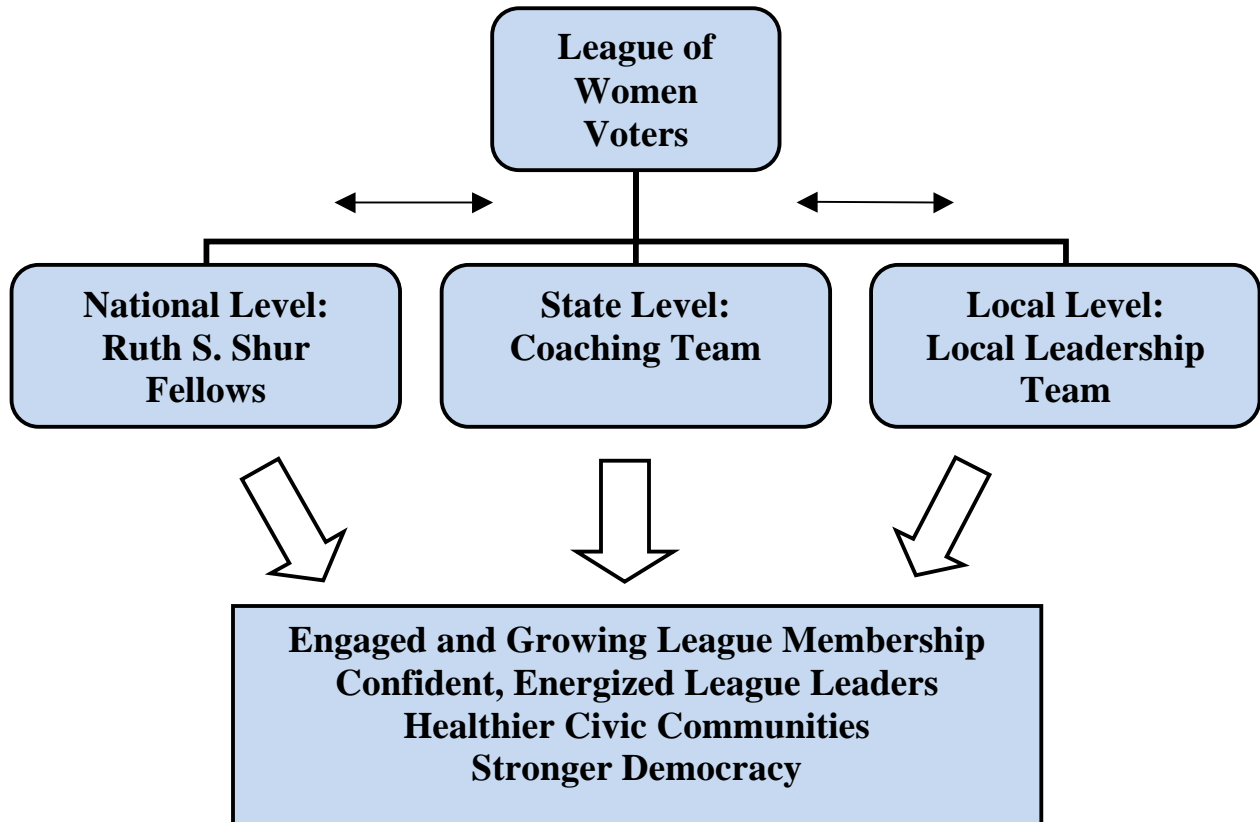
- **State Coordinator**
  - Participates in face-to-face training for initial group of state coaches and/or periodic webinar training for new coaches and refreshers for ongoing state coaches (if applicable)
  - Participates in face-to-face 2-day training for initial group of participating local Leagues and state League (if applicable)
  - Communicates with the state's assigned Ruth S. Shur Fellow (national coach) via regular monthly coaching calls
  - Communicates the program's progress and shares good ideas with the state board via regular monthly reporting
  - Completes a bi-monthly report on the state coaching team and the state board via an online survey
  - Coordinates future trainings for state coaches and local Leagues (beyond initial offering from LWVUS)
  - Serves as membership ambassador whenever possible
  
- **State League Board**
  - Participates in face-to-face 2-day training for initial group of participating local Leagues and state League
  - Recruits state coaches to participate in Membership and Leadership Development program
  - Recruits local Leagues to participate in Membership and Leadership Development program
  - Models membership and leadership development best practices at the state level
  - Promotes project outcomes and successes with Leagues throughout the state (and possibly at national venues)
  - Sponsors future trainings for state coaches and local Leagues (beyond initial offering from LWVUS)
  - Serves as membership ambassador whenever possible

### 3. Local League Teams/Coordinator

- Participates in face-to-face 2-day training for initial group of participating local Leagues and state League (and future state League-sponsored trainings as appropriate)
- Communicates with the League's assigned state coach via regular monthly coaching calls to receive guidance and support
- Consistently and intentionally engages local League board to implement the membership and leadership development best practices
- Consistently and intentionally engages local League board to use the Event/Activity Planning Checklist
- Uses the materials, activities, and messages provided by the state coach
- Seeks counsel from state coach as needed
- Serves as membership ambassador whenever possible
- Updates local League members information in LWVUS membership database regularly for correct membership number reports
- Submits personal stories to the LWV Storybank



Below is a diagram of the coaching structure for the MLD program. Local, state, and national levels of League work together to make the League's voice more powerful and our democracy stronger.





### How Coaching Really Works

State and National coaches work as mentors, cheerleaders, accountability coaches, and communicators to support local Leagues in strengthening themselves and providing better, more effective services and events to the communities they serve.

State coaches are dedicated and experienced League leaders chosen by the State Board to support and mentor local Leagues within the state. Each state coach usually coaches 2 local Leagues and is trained in coaching techniques and membership and leadership development best practices. State coaches hold monthly, regularized phone calls with each assigned local League. LWVUS recommends that these calls take place during the first two weeks of each month. During the call, the local League team can discuss their challenges, share their successes, and receive valuable guidance on growing and strengthening the League. These calls last approximately 30-45 minutes each.

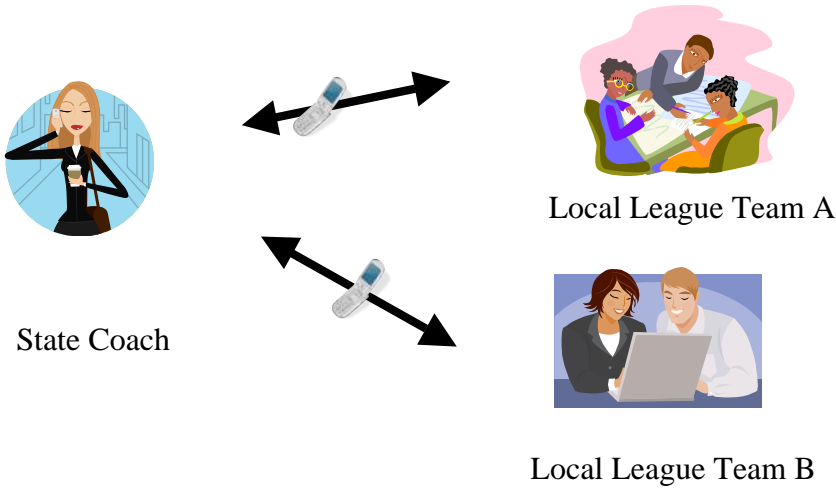
The Ruth S. Shur Fellows are dedicated and experienced League leaders selected by the LWVUS Board who act as national coaches to support and mentor state coaching teams. Ruth S. Shur Fellows usually coach 2 state coaching teams and are trained in coaching techniques and membership and leadership development best practices. The Ruth S. Shur Fellows work very closely with the national office to best support the League. Ruth S. Shur Fellows hold monthly, regularized phone calls with each state coaching team. LWVUS recommends that these calls take place during the third week of each month. During the call, the state coach can discuss challenges in supporting local Leagues, share successes of the local Leagues they coach, and receive valuable guidance on growing and strengthening the League. These calls last approximately 60 minutes each. During the fourth week of every month, Ruth S. Shur Fellows have a team call with the LWVUS Support Team.

### Recommended Monthly Schedule

Having a regularized call time and date each month helps both parties (the coach and local League) to plan – both setting aside the time and being prepared with information to share. LWVUS has a recommended monthly schedule for all state coaches to use

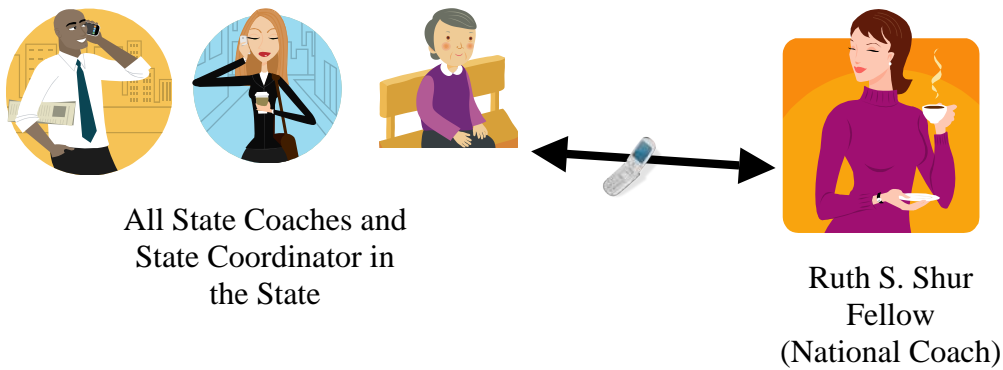
<b>First 2 weeks</b>	State coaches call local Leagues
<b>3rd week</b>	Conference call with national coach and all state coaches
<b>4th week</b>	National coaches team call with LWVUS (State coaches do not participate.)

### During the first two weeks of the month:



The state coach calls each local League coordinator/team separately during the first two weeks of the month. State coaches keep all of your conversations confidential.

### During the third week of the month:



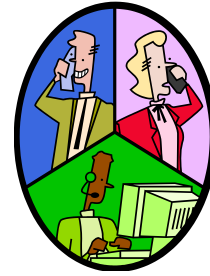
The national coach conducts a conference call with all of the state coaches in the state during the third week of the month. National coaches keep all of these conversations confidential.



**During the fourth week of the month:**



All Ruth S. Shur  
Fellows



LWVUS Support  
Team

The LWVUS Support Team conducts a conference call with all of the national coaches across the country during the fourth week of the month. The LWVUS Support Team keeps all of these conversations confidential.

## Engaging Your Local League Board

Growing the League's membership and leadership is not a one-person job. The entire local League needs to view membership and leadership development as a top priority in order for success to be achieved and sustained.

*The best way to ensure that membership and leadership development becomes a top priority for your local League is to engage your Board in making intentional and routine use of membership and leadership best practices.*

Your local League Board should be engaged from the very beginning of your League's participation in the Membership and Leadership Development program. Below are a few ways to get started in engaging your Board:

- **Your Board should appoint a primary coordinator for the membership/leadership growth program, and establish a team or committee to implement the best practices.** This team or committee will attend the face-to-face, instate training and work with a state coach. Not only is a team structure a great “training ground” for emerging leaders, but it will help to ensure that Board members maintain a reasonable workload. Remember that this program is not a “one-woman/man show” and will best succeed if a team works together to implement the best practices with the Board. Leagues are encouraged to include off-board League leaders on this team. And, the team can include individuals who work on other League activities, such as voters service and advocacy, to help make sure that membership and leadership growth is included in all activities. Review the **Roles and Expectations** outlined in Chapter 1 to ensure that everyone involved – the coordinator, team members and members of the local Board – understands their respective roles.
- **Your Board should create a calendar of activities for the coming year.** The League's coordinator (and her/his team) will need to know about the League's events so that they can assess the opportunities for the membership/leadership growth best practices to be incorporated. In advance of setting up your calendar, you may want to complete the **Asset Survey** found later in the “Tools You Can Use” chapter and review the successful program ideas (tried and tested by other Leagues) in **Chapter 4**.
- **Communication is a cornerstone of the MLD program. Local membership/leadership growth teams are encouraged to get to know their state coach as soon as possible and should keep the local League Board up-to-date on their discussions with the state coach.** It is vitally important that your state coaches hear from you – about successes and challenges, progress and concerns. They are your first “go-to” contacts for any questions you have. The state coaches will be in regular





## Chapter 2: Engaging Your League Board

communication with the national coaches (also known as the Ruth S. Shur Fellows), who are supported by LWVUS Board and staff members. It also is vitally important that the entire Board is kept informed about the best practices – How are they working? What are other opportunities to pursue? Have a standing item on the board meeting agenda: “Membership/Leadership Growth Update.”

*The membership/leadership growth program is meant to complement and enhance existing League program, plans and ideas. Let your Board know that it is not designed to “push” Leagues into taking on large new projects.*

- **Encourage your Board to ask people to join.** It is critical for all members (especially members of the Board) to develop a ease with “the personal ask.” This is a simple but highly effective way to be sure that your League gains new members. Have your Board members lead by example by having them start to practice and model this technique as soon as possible. Ask your Board for some time at an upcoming meeting and do the **Making the Ask exercise** (available in Chapter 10 -“Tools You Can Use” section under “Practice Your Own League Story”) together. You may want to incorporate other exercises from the regional or instate training into other Board meetings throughout the year to keep momentum for and commitment to the program strong.
- **Ask your Board to begin soliciting stories from members.** There is no better way to explain the benefits of membership than to share stories from current LWV members. The LWV Storybank houses wonderful stories of success and personal growth from League members across the country and is a great resource for state and local Leagues. Stories should highlight the value of membership in the League, particularly personal stories of achievement and leadership (see **Chapter 5**). Stories can be submitted to the LWV Storybank through [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org). All stories submitted to the LWV Storybank are forwarded to the state and local League presidents so all levels of League have access to and can promote their members' stories. And, of course, Board members should submit their own stories as well!
- **Start doing the “Little Things” to model the best practices.** Give every member of the Board a sense of ownership and partnership in this organizational building effort. Share some of the ideas from the “**Little Things**” document later in this chapter and help them get started in implementing them. Give every Board member a League pin and supply of membership brochures! These essential recruitment tools are available for free from LWVUS.



*Check out the “Tools You Can Use” section at the back of the manual for a Local League assessment worksheet – “Asset Form” — to help you focus your efforts and determine your League’s strengths and areas needing improvement!*

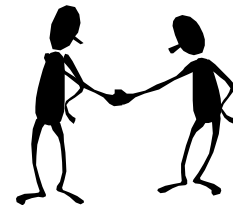
## Defining Success for Your Local League Board

As we work with state and local Leagues on this membership/leadership program, LWVUS consistently reminds League leaders that there is **NO FAILURE** in this endeavor. All Leagues and the communities they support are unique. The best practices need to be tailored to fit each situation and some of them will take longer than others to “stick.” As such, there is no universal definition for success.

However, with that said, we do need some ways to assess the progress of the program. The most quantifiable and universal measurement that we can use is membership growth. However, success is more than just numbers!

### “Harder to Measure” Indicators of Success include:

- Strong relationships with allied organizations
- Consistent messaging about the value of membership and asking members to join
- Strong relationships with local media
- Greater visibility in the community
- Engagement of numerous League leaders (including some new ones) in all League activities
- Stronger retention rates among current members
- Strong relationships with state coaches and state League
- Greater partnership among all levels of League
- League members’ stories highlighted consistently
- Renewed attitude about and enthusiasm for future of LWV



Success is not solely defined by the outcomes like membership growth. It is also defined by the inputs (i.e., what local Leagues do). Our experience to date has been that over time, *successful inputs will result in successful outcomes.*

*If you consistently use the best practices, you will grow and strengthen the League!*

State coaches will be working with local League coordinators *each month* to provide assistance in working through challenges, celebrating successes, considering how to build upon the League’s progress, and helping ensure that your League will achieve its goals. State coaches keep track of the types of inputs, such as press relationships developed, allied organizations contacted, asks made at local events, and if other aspects of the best practices are being followed and adapted as needed. State coaches complete an online survey every month to keep the national coaching team apprised of what is happening in each local League and to provide a foundation of information for the national coaching team to support the state coaches in the most effective ways possible.



**IMPORTANT REMINDER:**



Twice per year, LWVUS generates reports of participating local Leagues current membership counts. **To ensure accurate membership counts, the member database must be updated regularly by the local League.** Local Leagues are responsible for updating their own records. The LWVUS On-Line Database Users Guide is available on the Yahoo! Group and at [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org). If your League needs assistance or training on the use of the database, email

LWVUS at [membership@lwv.org](mailto:membership@lwv.org). A one-on-one telephone training session can be scheduled.



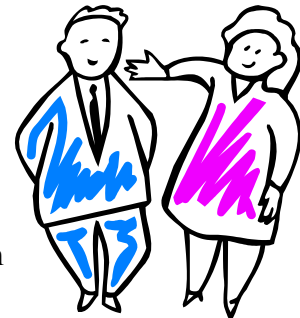
## Little Things to Engage Your League Board

As a way to engage your local League Board and to start to promote membership and leadership growth best practices in your League, we have compiled this list of *little things* that you can model yourself and encourage your Board members to do, too. With an engaged Board, incorporating best practices into every event or opportunity becomes much easier and more effective.

*These simple ideas will help to recruit new members, retain current members, develop new leaders, and engage your Board in this organizational growth effort.*

Encourage your local League Board members to:

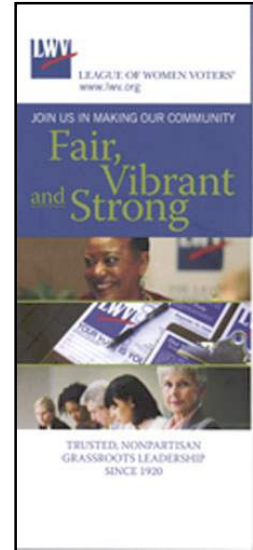
- ★ Include a membership message in their e-mail electronic signature. It's easy to add and reaches everyone they e-mail without any effort. Add a link to the "Join Us" information on your League's website.
- ★ Add a membership message to the bottom of the official League letterhead and stationary.
- ★ Always have a membership brochure– and be prepared to ASK someone to join.
- ★ Input their "League story" into the LWV Storybank. This will help your Board members have their most powerful marketing tool – the reason why League is important to them – at the ready to use when talking with potential members.
- ★ Mingle at the next community event that they attend; don't just sit with League members. Make a conscious effort to meet new people and share the value of being a member/leader in the League, as well as find out what brings them to the event.
- ★ Designate members to be membership ambassadors or greeters at the next League event. Their role will be to make people (new or potential members) feel welcome.
- ★ Have a sign-in sheet at all events and activities for interested attendees and be sure to follow up with them after the event.
- ★ Include a membership message on all visibility tools - podium signs, banners, flyers, brochures, invitations, etc.





## Chapter 2: Engaging Your League Board

- ★ Identify small opportunities for members to get involved in without being overwhelmed. Ask members or potential new members to be involved with a “bite-sized”, one-time project. For instance, bring snacks to a League event rather than planning the whole thing.
- ★ Engage members or potential new members with an “action” item. Give them a way to influence what is happening in your community now.
- ★ Have every member invite 3 non-members to your next League activity.
- ★ Provide "leave behind" informational brochures or post cards at locations with high target demographic or League appeal -- e.g., city or county government offices, neighborhood doctors' office, real estate offices (for new neighbors), faculty lounges at the local elementary, middle and high schools.
- ★ Wear League buttons to all events so Leaguers are easily identified and can be approached by those who are interested in LWV.
- ★ Think about the personal gatherings or other groups the Board belongs to (e.g., book clubs, investment groups, issue groups, friends over for dinner) and share stories about the LWV and its value the community and personal growth.
- ★ Mentor someone on some aspect of their role on the Board. Or, mentor a new member on how to become engaged in League.
- ★ Watch for potential League leaders at the next League event. Communicate any observations to the Membership/Leadership team.



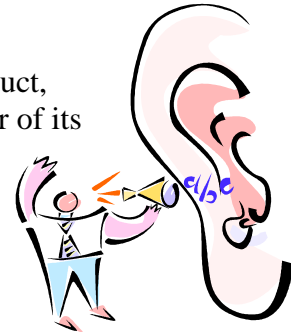
## Overview of Reaching Out to Your Community

In addition to developing a strong support network for local Leagues through the coaching structure, the Membership and Leadership Development (MLD) program provides local Leagues with a framework of tried-and-true best practices in outreach and leadership development.

*As local Leagues know their communities best, the MLD best practices are designed to enhance the effectiveness of already-planned events and activities.*

Through the program, local Leagues and their coach work together to identify key organizations, media outlets and events that will likely attract interested individuals to the League. There is no one way to reach everyone and there is no *magic bullet* to automatically make people join the League. However, by employing some basic techniques that intentionally and consistently focus efforts and engage current members, Leagues will become stronger, larger, and more vibrant.

The average American receives around *3,000 messages* from competing voices about different products and services *each day*. The greatest product, service or idea is worthless if consumers are not aware of its existence or of its value to them. With this in mind, how on earth does League make sure that its message stands out? We need to employ marketing techniques.



**Marketing is the strategy a business or organization uses to make sure the right audience hears their message. It is built on repetition and consistency.**

As an organization, one of our greatest assets is the time and energy that our members and leaders donate to the League. One of the goals of the MLD program is maximize how we use this precious resource. In other words, how do we most effectively and efficiently promote the organization while simultaneously carrying out the work related to our mission? How do we serve ourselves as we serve the larger community and ultimately our democracy?

The simple answer is: outreach. The three outreach methods outlined in this section are designed to help the League look outside itself to help engage the community and build its membership and leadership base. In order to maximize the League's continuous presence in the community *all three must be done in coordination with the League's activities*.

### The Main Methods of Reaching Your Community are:

1. **Direct outreach** – outreach on a one-to-one basis or directly to a group of people
2. **Allied outreach** - reaching out to partner with groups or allied organizations
3. **Media outreach** – building relationships with print, television, online and radio outlets



### Choosing a Target Audience

While all three of these outreach “nets” must be cast in order to build the League’s visibility and presence, Leagues should do so with a focused and intentional way. In other words, Leagues need to identify and focus on a **target audience** with their outreach efforts.



*By casting nets that attempt to reach everyone, we won’t reach anyone.*

As a society, we have come to expect customization. For survival (to be able to navigate the 3,000 messages referenced above), we have developed great filtering systems. We know within a matter of seconds whether something is of interest to us or not. If someone or something isn’t “speaking to us,” then we tune it out. It is because of this that it is so important for Leagues to think about who they are trying to speak to as they conduct outreach. What does that audience care about? What are their key values and how do they relate to the work of the League?

This last part is especially critical: How does it relate to the League? In other words, Leagues may identify what they believe is an ideal target audience (e.g., mothers of young children), but it’s important for Leagues to think through all the steps to successfully attract and engage them. What possible modifications to how the League is currently “doing business” may need to be in place to speak to this target demographic? For example, in keeping with mothers of young children, is the League willing to have babysitting available? Are there opportunities for families to participate in League events? Are there opportunities for mothers to take on roles from home and/or at “off hours” (when kids are asleep)?

These kinds of considerations are important for Leagues to think about BEFORE embarking on any work to attract a specific demographic. If we are not prepared to embrace the changes needed to “catch” these individuals, then our outreach efforts will prove to be ineffective; we won’t attract or engage our target.



If one imagines the possible modifications that will resonate with a target audience on a dial or continuum, there are some target audience choices that might require a slight shift (e.g., one “click” on the dial – meet on weekends to accommodate working people). But, there are others that might require many more changes (e.g., 7 “clicks” on the dial – information/meetings in Spanish to accommodate Latinos). Leagues know their communities, their membership, their capacity, and commitment to pursuing a given audience. It is important for Leagues to be honest about what changes they can and will make and how quickly they can achieve them.

In looking at League nationally, the easiest group for most Leagues to approach is women ages 50-65 with past engagement in civic issues. Many of them are at a transition time in their lives (e.g., becoming empty nesters, moving toward retirement), and many of the core values that they hold are strongly aligned with those of the League. They also are a large demographic pool and

one that is relatively easy to identify and engage without big changes to how most Leagues are currently operating.

Regardless of which target demographic is selected, outreach takes time and patience. If Leagues are persistent and proactive in all outreach efforts, the rewards will be great. A longtime friend may finally decide to join the League after being asked; an organization in your community may see the mutual benefits to hosting an event together; or a reporter may attend and cover an event because he or she received multiple invitations from the League.

### **What about reaching out to young people?**

When we talk about focusing outreach on a specific group of potential new members, local Leagues always want to know: how do we get young people to join the League?

Young professionals, college students, and young parents are all potential groups which local Leagues *can* choose to recruit to assist in League activities, recruit as interns, volunteers, or members, and help develop into leaders. However, just like any group, each local League should consider the necessary steps to attract and engage them and the modifications the League will need to make in order to do so.

After speaking with a focus group of young professionals who volunteered to have a conversation, we found that many wanted local Leagues:

- To offer easy, convenient, one-time-only type volunteer opportunities (such as registering voters at a high school on a Saturday afternoon)
- To be understanding and welcoming when they volunteer. Young professionals have full-time jobs and lots of activities and organizations vying for their time. Be thankful for the time given and non-judgmental if a young professional attends many events one year and then has to take a break from League the next. If young professionals are welcomed to participate when and how they can, and in meaningful ways, they are more likely to come back.
- To not expect dues right away. Young professionals are used to “trying on” an organization without being expected to pay a fee. Let young professionals offer their volunteer services to you before they become full-fledged members.





### Chapter 3: Outreach Best Practices

- To have more fun, informative, and networking events with less focus on meetings and League-only functions. Young professionals want to meet people. Give them the opportunity to network with other individuals including other young professionals and important people in the community.
- To show them why they should be interested in the League. What is the value of the League to their lives? Why they should be interested? Young professionals are passionate about issues that affect them, such as jobs and schools. . Get them involved by speaking to what matters to them.
- To make the League more accessible. If you are meeting at 11am on a Tuesday in a retirement community or someone's home, don't expect to find too many young professional banging at the door to get in. Make sure your meeting times and locations will attract young professionals. Consider meeting in the evening at a public place. Think about having wine, soda or snacks available.
- To have reasonable expectations on their time commitment. Just like most individuals, young professionals don't want to join and then immediately be asked to be the Voters Service Chair, the newsletter editor, or (even worse) the President. Be willing to streamline traditional leadership positions like board members to accommodate their lives. They will be more willing to participate if they can do it easily and guilt free. Young professionals want the ability to "earn" these types of positions after working up their skills by volunteering at League events in other, smaller capacities first. Be mindful of how it would feel to walk into a new place and immediately be asked to take the lead. Young parents will appreciate opportunities to volunteer as a family, too!
- To provide mentoring. Young professionals are definitely looking to build their experience, resumes and networks. This should not be looked at as a negative. It is great that young men and women are trying to learn new skills and go up the career ladder. The League can help! Since our founding, many women have made their start with the League. From being an observer of government to becoming an elected official – the League has produced many fine leaders over our history. Promote the fact that the League gives individuals the chance to meet prominent community figures and hone skills they couldn't learn elsewhere. Mentor young professionals and they may become League leaders one day.

Reaching out to young professionals can be a very fulfilling process for your local League. Young professionals can bring new perspectives, fresh energy, and technological savvy to your group. Being mindful of how to appeal to young professionals in a way that makes your League approachable and fun is important. Your League may need to make some changes to make the League appealing to young professionals, including how open your League is to new ideas and how welcoming you are to different people. Really consider if this is the best group for your League's outreach.



Please note that we recommend that when considering work with college and high school students that you may invite them to be volunteers with us in our activities, but that you do not put lots of time into creating student chapters or expect them to be full time, full-fledged members of the League in the traditional sense. However, reaching out to students in non-conventional ways can really build up the League in your community and help you become more visible. You may even attract other volunteers who would like to work with students.

Here are a few ideas:

- Invite students to volunteer for a one-time event (such as manning a voter registration table or attending a candidates forum) for school credit
- Partner with a college group on campus for voter registration and voter engagement work. Many times school clubs formulate around election time to do just that.
- Hold events on campus and invite college staff, family, and students to attend.
- Partner with a college professor and talk about ways to engage the students in the political discourse of your community. Local Leagues can leverage their connections to help students gain first-hand knowledge of community organizing and local government. For example, some Leagues let the students submit a few questions for a candidates forum or serve on a panel of questioners.



**This page left intentionally blank.**



## Direct Outreach

Direct outreach is communicating a message to an individual or a group of people. For the League, it is communicating a membership message to the League's target audience on a one-to-one basis.

*Put simply, direct outreach is ASKING potential League members to join!*

To be welcoming to potential new members, every League member must act as a *membership ambassador* for the League, using straightforward language to describe what we do and why we love doing it. It's not about "dumbing down" the explanation of our work—it's about opening it up so that others can understand it, find it relevant and interesting, and . . . join us!

We have heard consistently from Leagues that while making The ASK may be difficult at first, it becomes easier with practice. More importantly, Leagues have also reported that **IT WORKS!** It sounds very simplistic, but we need to ASK people to join to bring in new members.

Remember that every activity is a membership growth opportunity. Local Leagues should constantly strive to include the membership message and an invitation to join in everything the League does and says. All committees and members should look at their activities through an "ongoing outreach" lens and apply the message. No opportunity is too large or too small.

*As simple as it sounds, ASKING is THE most effective recruitment tool.*

Ways to ASK individuals to join:

- Ask your neighbor, your friends, members of other clubs or organizations to which you belong.
- Carry a membership brochure or flyer with you at all times. Give it to the next person you meet that is interested in joining the League. Purse-sized membership brochure folders and membership brochures are available from the LWVUS store at [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org) and from LWVUS MLD program support staff.
- Use a sign-in sheet at all League events to collect the names and contact information at of participants. Follow up with non-members a few days later either with a phone call, e-mail, or letter and ASK them to join.



*Check out the "Tools You Can Use" section at the back of the manual for a sign-in sheet template your League can use!*



### Chapter 3: Outreach Best Practices

- Insert a membership message and invitation to join into remarks for the League's speakers' bureau or if a League representative is participating in a panel discussion or their community event.
- Insert a membership message into press releases and media advisories.
- Include an invitation to join in statements and quotes given to the media or in an op-ed or letter to the editor.
- Deliver a membership message from the podium at League debates, forums, or events.
- Place a membership ad in all of your League publications including study reports, Voters Guides, and newsletters. A membership ad can be placed in your Education Fund publications if purchased with your League's general funds.
- Update your League website to include the membership message and an ASK to join. (Tips on how to update local League websites are included in this chapter.)
- Go to Chapter 5 to learn how to use your personal League story to make an even more effective ASK to join!
- The “Tools You Can Use” section at the back of the manual also has activities to help League members practice ASKING people to join, as well as a Sign-In Sheet you can print and use at upcoming League events to collect participant information and follow-up with them.

**Direct outreach isn't just for recruiting members!**

The same skills honed by practicing asking individuals to join can be applied to asking members to take on leadership roles and donors to support LWV!

**Here's a helpful acronym to help you remember how to make the ASK.**

**A:** Always be prepared! Keep brochures in your purse or briefcase and always be ready to tell someone about the League and how they can join.

**S:** Show your enthusiasm! Let the other person know why you love the League and let them see how excited being a League member makes you. Enthusiasm is catching!

**K:** Know your audience. Remember to use the phrase “join the League” often and speak to your audience. Let individuals know how they can make an impact in their community by being a part of the League. Let them know about the opportunities available to them as a member of the League.

(Acronym courtesy of Kay Brodbeck, MS State Coach)



## Allied Outreach

Many organizations and groups in your community may work on issues and activities that are similar to or related to those of the League. These organizations can offer opportunities for local Leagues to reach potential new members. It's important that local Leagues consider how to best connect and work with other organizations that have the attention of individuals who would be great League members!

*While much of this might seem like common sense, we can't stress enough the importance of being proactive and consistent.*

Even if you have an existing relationship with an organization, look to see if there are new ways to partner with them or to promote our core membership messages with them. If an organization has not been open to partnerships before, think of new ways to approach them. *Be consistent and persistent, and ask for opportunities.* You know better than anyone that League has a lot to offer!

Allied outreach is simply establishing and growing these connections with other organizations. While building a relationship with an allied group takes some effort, Leagues have found this to be an effective way to gain visibility and introduce the value of League membership to a large pool of prospective members. It also can be a great way to increase the efficacy of our programmatic work by strengthening our breadth of influence and by sharing the costs/burdens of the workload to achieving our programmatic goals.

### **When working with allied groups:**

- **Be persistent.** Just as League leaders are busy, so are the leaders of other community groups. Once you have identified a group that your League wants to work with, follow up with them – and expect that it may take more than one contact to establish the kind of relationship that you would like.
- **Be specific.** Know specifically what you hope to achieve or do. Do not vaguely discuss “working together.” Have a concrete proposal in mind when you contact a group. Think about the benefits to them as well as to the League.
- **Be strategic.** Maximize your efforts by prioritizing which organizations and opportunities to pursue. Take into account your target audience and what other groups to which they might belong or associate with.



## Research and Identify Targets

Brainstorm with your local League leaders about opportunities that are offered by community organizations and institutions and prioritize which opportunities will be most valuable to the League in its membership recruitment efforts. (Use the Asset Survey in the “Tools You Can Use” chapter to start the discussion with your local Board.)

### Sample Allied Outreach Opportunities include:

- Local AARP Chapter Events
- Meetings of Retired Teachers, Librarians, and other retired professionals
- City Council Meeting
- Seasonal Fairs/Festivals
- Chamber of Commerce
- Book Clubs
- University Alumni Event
- Local Business Events and Conferences
- Town Hall Meetings
- Community Fundraisers
- Church Bake Sale
- YWCA Volunteer Events



Leagues may have the opportunity to share information about the value of membership here.

While the sample list contains some of the more obvious groups/opportunities, there are a variety of additional local allies to tap for this effort as well, including local health care associations, academic institutions, local political organizations, and adult education providers and programs. Review the community calendars in local newspapers and local news outlet websites to identify additional opportunities that may exist for the League to connect with potential members. Think about your target audience. And, explore connections that League members may have (e.g., they sit on the board of another organization).

*If you don't have relationships with other groups—choose 2 or 3 and start!*

We recognize that Leagues may have relationships with many of the organizations listed above, but we urge you to look at these opportunities differently than you may have before – this time, through a membership lens. Interactions with these organizations provide an excellent opportunity for you to directly interact with potential new members.

*Look specifically for opportunities to insert membership messages and ask potential members to join the League.*

Regardless of which organization or event a League decides to pursue, local coordinators can't wait for opportunities to come to them. Leagues need to identify the specific opportunity for League involvement and ASK for it (e.g. sitting on a panel, displaying a booth at their



convention or conference, sponsoring a table at their annual fundraiser). If the Chamber of Commerce is holding a meeting about revitalizing the downtown area, Leagues should ask to be a part of the panel. A seat on the panel will provide the League with an opportunity to express the contribution of the League to the community and the value of League membership.

Don't forget the *intention* behind your request. You want to partner with another group. On one hand, you want to make sure that the League is visible, recognized, and staying true to its nonpartisanship. On the other hand, you want to make the partnership comfortable and enjoyable for the other organization.

If this is not a League event, do not expect to dictate what will happen. In a partnership, there should be some give-and-take. Listen to what the other organization wants and has planned, and remember that other organizations may have different ideas about how to run a certain event. Leagues must be open to new ideas and the sharing of information in a friendly way in order to create lasting partnerships.

## Making Contact

Local Leagues should identify the individual at the organization who can say yes to their request. Schedule a time to connect with the individual by setting up a phone call or meeting to discuss ways in which the League would like to work with the organization.

When speaking with a representative, prepare yourself and *know exactly what you're asking them for*, and be thoughtful about how you present your request.



*Check out the "Tools You Can Use" section at the back of the manual for a worksheet to help you and your League evaluate an opportunity for allied outreach!*

Are you asking to set up a booth at their regional convention? Or are you calling to see if the League might participate in advancing a shared goal of the two groups by participating in the regional convention? Know this ahead of time.

Much the same way local Leagues hone their membership messages to resonate with a given audience, your communications with allied organizations should be customized according to their interests. Local Leagues should tailor their pitch to the organization by telling them why it is mutually beneficial for them to partner with us.

After you've made initial contact, reach out again to the organization or group via phone, in person, etc., at an appropriate time – about 5 to 7 days. The key to reaching your target audience is developing partnerships with the people and organizations where they get their information.

## Fine Tuning the Target Audience

Finally, you've identified the group you are going to reach out to and the opportunity that you would like present to them! You've secured your booth at the convention, seat on the panel, or invitation to an event. Now is the time to remember the membership recruitment best practices,



think about the messaging and develop your key points for communicating with potential new members.

Consider things such as the professional background or interests in key issues, and work to fine-tune your messages and talking points to resonate most directly with the audience that you *know* you'll be speaking to.

### Follow-Up

The last thing to do is to make sure that you are maintaining your new relationship with the allied organization. Send thanks to your contact for their assistance and consider and suggest future opportunities to work together!

#### SUCCESS STORY:

The **LWV of Orange-Durham-Chatham (NC)** celebrated Women's History Month by hosting two separate screenings of *Iron Jawed Angels*, the HBO film that chronicles the struggle of women to secure the right to vote. One screening was held at UNC Chapel Hill and was co-sponsored by the UNC General Alumni Association. The second screening was held in Durham at the North Regional Library and was co-sponsored by the Durham County Library. Their events were well attended and the addition of co-sponsors added an entire new guest list of prospective new members!

### Some food for thought. . .



No! The League is different from other organizations and gives members new opportunities they might not find elsewhere. Working with allied organizations also exposes our members to new opportunities and experiences, which will help to further endear them to LWV. By working with other organizations, we expose a pool of busy, engaged individuals (i.e., potential members) to the value of being a League member. And, we all know the wisdom in the old adage, "If you want something done, ask a busy person." In short, building relationships with other organizations is a win-win situation for all involved!



## Media Outreach

While building relationships with the media can often take time, this form of outreach has the biggest potential pay-off in terms of gaining visibility for the League. Local Leagues should conduct media outreach throughout the year to serve our mission to inform and engage the public and should include League membership messages, when and where appropriate.

### The Basics of Reaching Out to the Media

#### Create an Up-to-Date Media List

Before you start crafting pitches and contacting news sources, create a media list. A media list should include all the local media outlets in your community, along with the correct person at each office and their contact information. Much of this information can be found through searches on the internet. Remember to include all media outlets, such as social media, blogs, community websites, organization newsletters, etc. This will help you stay organized and focused when planning to reach out to the media.

#### Sample Media List Anywhere, US

Name	Type	Contact Person	Phone Number	Email Address
The Beacon	Local Newspaper	Sally Murphy	240-333-9900	<a href="mailto:smurphy@gmail.com">smurphy@gmail.com</a>
Gazette.net	Online Newspaper	Sophie Yarb, Editor	240-123-4455	<a href="mailto:sophie@gazette.net">sophie@gazette.net</a>
Silver Spring Downtown Arts and Entertainment	Online Community Calendar and News	Gwen Hay, Civic Facility Manager	240-876-1234	<a href="mailto:hay@silverspring.com">hay@silverspring.com</a>
The Silver Spring Singular	Community Blog	Sara Smith, Blogger	443-987-6543	<a href="mailto:silverspringsingular@gmail.com">silverspringsingular@gmail.com</a>
Silver Spring Patch	Community Blog	Brandon Johnson, Blogger	343-567-0987	<a href="http://silverspring.patch.com/">http://silverspring.patch.com/</a>

To create a complete list and reach out to all local media, remember to:

- Include **minority media** outlets in your outreach.
- Get to know the writers at **community papers**. They may end up being the best way to get your message out.
- Contact your newspaper or public access TV station's **Community Calendars**; they will usually be happy to include your event.
- Include outreach to **local blog or web forums** discussing current events in your area.



### Make sure your story is newsworthy

Reporters are busy, so make sure your news story is timely and newsworthy. Reporters do not want to cover the same old story that everyone else is covering or one that they themselves have already covered. Track the work of the reporter you are targeting, gauge his or her interests, and note the stories he or she has done recently. Your story should either be something entirely new, or introduce a fresh angle on an existing issue.



### Know your audience

Your pitch will only be successful if you deliver it to the right person. This depends on the medium, as well as the kind of story you are pitching.

**Television** - For a feature story, such as one about the League and its local activities, you need to identify the right reporter or producer who will be interested in your pitch. The easiest way to do this is to watch the news. Pay attention to the beats that reporters cover. Then you can pitch that reporter, or his or her producer, directly. Highlighting the unique benefits of LWV membership around a particular event or speaking engagement is an excellent opportunity to garner free broadcast media coverage.

**Radio** - For a public radio station, you may want to target a specific reporter who covers a feature or lifestyle beat. Some stations may have an assignment editor, and you can always go to the news editor. If there is a particular show that you want to target, direct your pitch to the show's producer. Again, it's useful to listen to the program that you are pitching to so that you have a good sense of the kinds of stories they do and what they've already covered.

**Newspaper** - Small newspapers tend to have small staffs. If the paper you are contacting is very small, the best person to receive your pitch may be the news editor. At larger papers, you will want to find the reporter covering the appropriate beat for your story, or even consider a columnist. Again, the easiest way to do this is to read the paper and track the coverage – after a few days or weeks, it will be easy to know who covers what stories.

*Additional resources on working with the media (such tips on using social media) are available on [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org).*

### Craft a creative pitch

Reporters are constantly besieged by phone calls, e-mails and faxes from people trying to convince them to write stories. You need to stand out from the crowd. This means deciding on the best means of contact – usually e-mail or phone – and developing a pitch that is attention-grabbing and brief.

**Phone** - If you're going to pitch by phone, plan what you will say in advance. Most reporters will give you 15 seconds – maybe 30 – to make your case. Make those seconds count. Avoid overwhelming them with jargon and over-rehearsed talking points. Use a striking fact, or mention the name of a prominent person available for an interview. If they're interested, they'll keep listening. But if you can't capture their interest quickly, you'll lose them, and the story.





**E-mail** - The same rules apply for an e-mail pitch – except that reporters can delete it without ever reading it. Create an interesting subject line and make sure the first few sentences of your e-mail are attention-grabbing. Don't write a novel – one to three brief paragraphs will do. Let the reporter know that you will call to follow up – don't leave it up to a reporter to contact you.

*Note: Many e-mail addresses are set up to block e-mails with attachments. Copy and paste your text into the body of the e-mail to avoid any problems. If you are trying to share a lengthy document with a reporter, post the document online and provide the reporter with a Web address to view the piece.*

### **Strong delivery will make or break your pitch.**

Whether you're pitching the reporter by phone or following up on your e-mail pitch, consider your timing. Do not call a reporter in the late afternoon when he or she is likely to be on deadline. If you reach a reporter who sounds harried, ask when would be a better time for you to call back. Plan and practice your pitch and deliver it with confidence – but don't read it. Ask if the reporter is interested, and offer to share additional information. A reporter will rarely agree to do a story during your first call, so your goal should be to start the conversation. Be prepared to leave a brief, to-the-point voicemail message (30 seconds or less) if you do not reach a live person.

### **Follow up...but don't pester.**

You've spoken to the reporter, shared additional resources and haven't heard anything. Give a call, or send a follow-up e-mail. Ask if the reporter thinks he or she is going to do the story, or if he or she needs anything else to make a decision. If the reporter says no, ask if you can stay in touch as things develop. Your efforts now may pay dividends later. If the reporter says yes, offer to help in any way that you can (identifying spokespeople, providing background information, etc.). After the story runs, send an e-mail or note thanking the reporter for his or her efforts.



*Check out the “Tools You Can Use” section at the back of the manual for worksheets to help you and your League prepare to speak with the media!*



**This page left intentionally blank.**



## Tips on Working with the Media

As was stated in the previous section, successful media outreach takes time and effort. The most important aspect of this work is building relationships with members of the local media. This is one of the vital roles of a League leader. Whether the goal is to get the newspaper to print the League's voters guide or to get coverage of the League's recent testimony before the city council, the key is to be proactive and to be prepared.

The following tips on working with the media will help you identify opportunities, develop and deliver your pitch, and follow up successfully. These tips – along with the **worksheets** in the “Tools You Can Use” chapter – can help to strengthen your media outreach efforts and, consequently, strengthen results.

*There is an old marketing adage that people need to hear the SAME message as many as 7 times before they are spurred to action.*

With this in mind, state and local Leagues have the opportunity to increase awareness about the League's work simply by thinking about ways to deliver *concise and consistent* messages about the organization.

**Every time you have an opportunity to speak about the League, it is important to underscore the value of the organization and how it serves the community.** It is also helpful to imagine every opportunity as one that will grow the organization. Remember to talk about the members who do the hands-on work of safeguarding democracy, and always include an invitation for others to join the League. This might not always be obvious or intuitive, but these points can be woven into interviews, media releases, speaking engagements, etc.

### **To prepare for any outreach opportunity, answer these three questions:**

**What's my goal?** What do you want to accomplish in this communication? Though you may not be used to writing down and outlining your goals, it's a great exercise to practice. For any outreach opportunity (large or small) that you have, you want to have a clear goal established for yourself going into it.

**Who is my audience and what do they care most about?** Think about your audience. What issues are important to them? How can you make your points resonate with them most?

**What is my messaging going to focus on?** Once your goal and target audience is determined, deciding on what points to focus on is simple. There are three phases to sharing a message: sharing knowledge, building a connection, and spurring the audience to action. Review your goal and audience and determine how you can most effectively accomplish these three steps.



Below are tips for utilizing the four main mechanisms for getting media coverage: press releases and media advisories; op-eds and letters to the editor; editorial board meetings; and media interviews.

### Press Releases and Media Advisories

These are two methods to get out information about what your League is doing. Both provide succinct and pertinent information about your event or issue in an easy-to-read format and announce an upcoming event to the media.

**Press release:** A press release lets the media know of a newsworthy, upcoming event by providing detailed information on the event. Press releases are written like actual news stories and should include an interesting, attention-grabbing first paragraph, background information, and quotes. The purpose of a press release is to be published in a local media outlet to let your community know of the event.



**Media advisory:** A media advisory provides the media with only the Who, What, Where, When, Why of your event. The purpose of a media advisory is to invite the local media to attend your event. If the media attends your event, they may write a story about the event in a later publication of their news source.

*Press releases and media advisories are great ways to inform the public and the media of upcoming League events!*

It is absolutely vital that you include contact information on any materials you send to the press. Include your phone number, e-mail address and website address, especially if you're sending materials electronically.

While it may seem important to get the release out to as many media outlets as possible, there really is a great deal of importance placed on providing a personal touch. Taking the time to write a quick personal note to reporters, especially if you've seen their writing on your League's issues or have met them in the past, makes a huge difference. Also, remember that members of the press often set their calendars at the last minute; even if you send the release out a week ahead of time, be sure to follow up the day before the event to remind them. Even then they may not commit—but this is very normal!

LWVUS will provide press release templates related to “media hooks,” such as Women’s Equality Day and Bill of Rights Day, throughout the year. These tools will help Leagues to be in communication with the media on a regular basis. Templates will be posted on [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org) and in the Leader’s Update as they are available. (See Chapter 4 for more information.)



### Helpful Tips for Drafting a Press Release or Media Advisory:

**Always make your most important point at the top.** Reporters may only read the first paragraph before deciding if it's worth it to give you a call or include your League in a story.

**Include a good quote.** Why should they care? How does this relate to other issues affecting the community?

**Keep things short.** All information should fit on one page.

**Do not send press materials as attachments.** Paste the information right into body of your e-mail.

**Call at the right time.** Most reporters have story deadlines of 3 or 4 pm, so calling in the mid-morning is usually best. In a follow-up call you just want to reiterate why it's important that they attend your event. Keep it short and friendly, and offer to resend the information!

### Op-Eds and Letters to the Editor

Opinion pieces (or op-eds) and letters to the editor are mechanisms for Leagues to get their opinions printed. These are generally short, no more than 250 words, and use very simple, clear, concise language that will grab attention.

*Op-eds and letters to the editor serve as great opportunities to gain media coverage after an event has already happened.*

#### Op/eds:

Op/ed is an abbreviation for "opposite the editorial page" and can denote both the page itself and the opinion pieces that a newspaper publishes on the page facing the editorial page. Newspapers generally have several op-ed columnists and regular contributors but most will also print op-eds written by outside authors. Sometimes a newspaper will call upon a local community group (such as the League) to write an opinion piece on a certain issue. Op/eds are often selected for their unique or fresh perspective on a recent event or news story. Opinion pages are generally put together a few days ahead of time, so be sure to submit it early enough in advance.

Simply put, op/eds express the opinion of the author on a particular issue, and can offer an excellent opportunity for you to advance your messages.

The following are some tips for writing and submitting an op-ed that will increase your chances of getting published:

- When drafting your op-ed, make sure that you are familiar with the types of pieces that are generally published in the paper and be sure to focus on the topic's significance to the community. Introduce yourself to your newspaper's op-ed page editor by telephone or e-mail and request the publication's op-ed guidelines. Then follow them.
- An op-ed is NOT the best forum to promote an upcoming local event.



## Chapter 3: Outreach Best Practices

- Once you have confirmed the rules for submitting a piece to the paper (word counts, methods of submission and other factors vary depending on the outlet), submit one for consideration and be sure to follow up after a couple days.
- If it has not been accepted, ask if there are any adjustments that you might make to increase its chances of being published.

### More Tips for Writing Successful Op/Eds:

(adapted from PNN Online, a leading nonprofit newsletter)

- **Determine your goal.** What do you want to achieve through your op-ed? Do you want people to behave differently or take a specific action? Keep this goal in mind as you write.
- **Select one message** to communicate.
- **Be controversial or thought provoking.** Editors like essays with strong opinions that will spark conversation.
- **Illustrate how the topic or issue affects readers.** Put a face on the issue by starting your essay with the story of somebody who has been affected or begin with an attention-getting statistic.
- **Describe the problem and why it exists.** This is often where you can address the opposing viewpoint and explain your group's perspective.
- **Offer your solution to the problem** and explain why it's the best option.
- **Conclude on a strong note** by repeating your message or stating a call to action.
- Add one or two sentences at the end that describe your **name, title, and credentials** as they relate to the topic.

### Letters to the Editor:

Writing a letter to the editor is one of the best ways to respond to articles, editorials or op/eds published in your local paper. You should be prepared to submit a letter to amplify a positive editorial or highlight key information left out of an article.

The key to getting your letter published is making sure that it is timely. Ideally, you would submit a letter to the editor within 24 hours after the piece you're responding to appeared. The letter must include your full contact information and League title. The newspaper often will verify the authenticity of the submission with a follow-up phone call. When you want to submit a letter to the editor, call the opinion page office and ask them who to contact, what their submission requirements are, and if the paper is likely to run the piece. They will likely give you an honest answer. If they make edits to your letter, they may ask for your approval.



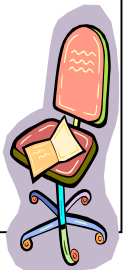
## Editorial Board Meetings

Editorial board meetings generally involve one or more people from your organization and three or more writers for the opinions section of a newspaper. They're usually not on issues of immediate news importance, but ongoing issues that are of interest to the community or the editorial board itself. They are conversations, usually about an hour, and sometimes result in an opinion piece being written. The editorial board members will have questions, but you should also have talking points prepared to make your case.

The best way to set these up is to call the opinion page office and feel out their interest and find out who the best contact person is. *If you do get a meeting, be sure to do your research!* Look through archives of the paper online, and read through any opinion pieces that have been written on the issue. This will give you a sense of the views of the board ahead of time, and you'll be prepared for what questions are coming.

### The Deskside Chat

Another way to build relationships with the media is to set the League up as a resource. Schedule an appointment with a reporter to let them know about some of the work that the League is doing and how it is impacting the community. For example, before the heat of the election season, meet with the appropriate reporter about some of the "non-horse race" stories related to the election. Discuss some important (although not typically front-page stories) related to the election season – e.g., Will the voting machines work? Does the town have enough pollworkers? What are the rules about absentee or early voting? Let the reporter know what the League is doing on these fronts and how we are the organization to turn to when it's time for these stories to break. In short, we are a great resource – we will always have the quote he/she needs! This serves the community and our mission, and it gets us visibility.



## Media interviews

Issuing press releases and fostering relationships with members of the media (print, television and radio) will hopefully result in your League being called for interviews. Local television, of course, offers the broadest exposure to information from and about the League, so you are encouraged to focus there if possible. Below are a few tips to help you maximize these opportunities.

### Prior to the Interview: Know the Message

Identify membership messages that will resonate with your League's target audience. Each message should be designed to make a connection between the work of LWV and the interests of this group of potential members.

In every interaction it will be important for you to communicate the unique benefits a League membership provides. As a member, you already know, a League membership offers one-of-a-kind opportunities to serve as a leader; it allows members to make a difference in their



communities; and as a member of the LWV, you are part of an organization where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement. The worksheets in the “Tools You Can Use” chapter will help local League with these steps.

### How to Prepare for an Interview:

- **Do your research:** The more knowledge you have, the more prepared you will be. There are several questions you want answered before the interview – some to consider are:
  - What’s the interview about?
  - What’s your organization’s role in the piece being proposed?
  - What is the interview format?
  - What outlet is it for? If it is not one you are familiar with, ask about their format: Is it a weekly, a daily, a conservative/liberal radio talk show?
- **Know what you want to say in advance.** Your expertise might enable you to discuss endless aspects about the League’s work but only one, *maybe two*, points will make it into a story and even then a consumer of the story may only remember bits and pieces. Don’t let an audience member or a journalist decide what the most important point is on this issue. Select one or two key points to make and make them well.
- **Create a fact sheet and have it handy.** To the extent possible, always have current, up-to-date information available about the League and work. You can refer to it also to help stay “on message.”
- **Tell a story.** People remember points much more if they are illustrated with a story. By forming a good story as part of your presentation, your delivery skills will automatically improve as well.
- **Use numbers, but sparingly.** Memorize one or two precise statistics that will give weight to your messages and bring your information to life.

### What to Remember During the Interview:

- **Be calm and confident.** You may be nervous, but the most important thing is to be calm and confident. Getting flustered can convey a host of things – none positive! Prepare in advance, stick to your messages and you’ll ace any interview. Feel free to keep notes in front of you during a phone or radio interview.
- **Remember who you are talking to when you are being interviewed:** You are talking to the audience that reads the story or sees it on TV. You are not talking to the reporter who is interviewing you.
- **Speak up!** If an interviewer misstates something or has a fact wrong, make a correction *politely*.





- **Be concise and keep it simple.** Keep your answers between 10-20 seconds. Use clear language and avoid jargon. You don't want to bore your audience or make them feel stupid.
- **Repeat, Repeat, Repeat.** Try your best to repeat the information that is most important and relevant (website address, organization name and location, contact information, etc.)
- **Be honest!** Provide other sources that will back you up. Independent experts can help to provide support for your position.
- **Everything is on the record.** Don't give in to the temptation to tell the reporter something "off the record." If you say it aloud, or put it in an e-mail, assume that it will appear in the reporter's story.
- **Collect your thoughts.** If a journalist calls and wants to conduct an on-the-spot interview, ask if you can call back in five minutes. Use that time to gather your thoughts and review your key points.

### Training Spokespeople

The League's spokesperson traditionally is the president (or his or her designee). It's important to ensure that the organization speaks with *one voice* on policy matters. This also helps to foster strong personal relationships with the media and local government officials. Therefore, it is vitally important that the League's spokespeople are familiar with your League's membership messages, feel comfortable asking people to join, and have perfected sharing their League story. This may require some training or practice, so membership teams are encouraged to share the materials in this section with their League's spokespeople.



### This isn't just for the media!

The tips and suggestions mentioned in this section will also be helpful in other speaking opportunities and outreach activities, not just your interaction with the media. Many of these techniques will be valuable and useful when you reach out to potential allied groups, like the Chamber of Commerce or the YWCA. They also can be used in preparing to talk with a donor or potential donor. Remember to ask people to join, stay on message, be concise, and tell your story or others' success stories about the League, and you'll do well.



**This page left intentionally blank.**



## Tips for Local League Websites

In recent years, Leagues have come a long way in integrating technology into their programmatic work. Most League leaders are regularly communicating via email, many Leagues send out their monthly newsletters electronically, and more and more Leagues have dynamic websites. Websites have vastly increased the visibility and accessibility of local Leagues in their communities.

*In this day and age, it is critical that every local League have a website. Any organization that does not have a presence on the web is deemed irrelevant.*

**However, just as imperative as it is to have a website, it is important that League websites are easy for visitors to find, read, and navigate.** The information contained on the sites has to be current, and the sites have to be regularly and consistently promoted. This section provides some basic tips on how to make your website as effective and inviting as possible. It also provides detailed suggestions about how to make your League's site a successful membership recruitment tool.

### Domain Name

The name of your website is very important! The URL should be short, **simple**, and memorable. You want people to be able to find your website with little or no effort. Here are a few domain name tips:

- A good practice is simply to use your League's name or abbreviation of your League name in the URL. For example: [www.lwvpbc.org](http://www.lwvpbc.org) - LWV of Palm Beach County; and [www.lwvtexas.org](http://www.lwvtexas.org) - LWV of Texas.
- Obtaining a simple domain name can cost as little as \$10 per year. Websites like [www.godaddy.com](http://www.godaddy.com), [www.register.com](http://www.register.com), and [www.networksolutions.com](http://www.networksolutions.com) offer domain name registration and simple website creation.
- When creating your website's domain name, *keep it simple!* Avoid using excessive punctuation (/ \ ~ \_ -) or prepositions (the, of, etc.) in your domain name. Make it a name that rolls off the tongue so you can tell people easily and they'll remember it.
- While there are free website hosting options from community or search engine sites, they do have some down sides. Yes, they are free - but they often make your domain name counterintuitive. For example, LWV of Collier County's (FL) old web address was [www.naples.net/presents/lwvcc](http://www.naples.net/presents/lwvcc). They upgraded to [www.lwvcolliercounty.org](http://www.lwvcolliercounty.org), much easier to say and promote.



### Website Readability

Information is powerful. However, too much information is overwhelming and not being able to read the information is just frustrating. When creating your website, be choosy about what you say and how you format it. Here are a few tips for making the most out of a few words:

- Your website is often the first contact with many potential new members so you must place emphasis on making it as professional looking as your newsletter, signs, or other visibility/communications tools.
- Most League sites are designed primarily for members and therefore unwittingly exclude non-members just by the choice of language and content. Avoid League lingo (i.e. PMP, MAL, ILO)- especially on the front page.
- Do not place too much information on your home or front page. The front page should briefly describe who/what the League is, a place to Join/Donate and how to navigate the page.
- Make sure the most important information is "above the fold" (the area that appears on the screen that you do not need to scroll down to see). Require the visitor to scroll only when absolutely necessary.
- Keep it simple. Use simple, concise, easy to understand words. Avoid empty descriptive words like "great", "wonderful", etc. They are just not necessary.
- Check your spelling and grammar. It sounds basic but is crucial for credibility.
- Keep it scannable. It is important to have some white space on the site. To minimize eyestrain, keep paragraphs concise and text organized with headers. Also include a visually interesting image or graphic, such as the LWV Logo, a face, something so it's not all just text.
- Font formats like bold, italics, and underlines draw reader's attention away from the content, so use them sparingly. Underlines are customarily only used for hyperlinks (which direct you to another Website or page). Underlining a headline or piece of information without a hyperlink can confuse a reader.
- Verdana font was designed for computer monitors and is considered the most easily read. (Note how upper-case I is distinguished from number 1 or lower-case l.) Make sure your font size is not too large, yet is readable.
- Do not use patterned graphic backgrounds behind the body text. Use black font on a white or near white background.



## Navigating

Good navigation allows a first-time, non-technical visitor to move around your site easily. If a site is easy to navigate, visitors will return to it. Here are some tips to help ensure that your website is easy to navigate:

- Your site need not be large or complex.
- Every page should display the same overall appearance, with the same navigation options in the same place.
- Do not offer too many links in your navigation menu. Just like too many words, too many links and pages confuse visitors trying to find information. If you have a lot of pages use drop down menus that group them according to main topics.
- Many websites, of all types, fail to be effective because they lack a good intuitive navigation system. Good navigation gives visitors constant clues to answer three basic questions: Where am I? Where have I been? Where can I go?
- Always give your user a way out; don't let him/her navigate to a dead end. The back key is a solution but not a good one - not all users know it even exists!

## Testing Your Site

It is important that after you spend time retooling your website that you test it out to make sure it meets your goals.

- Test your site from a technical viewpoint in different browsers. Internet Explorer 5+, Mozilla Firefox 1.0, Opera 7.0 and Netscape Navigator 6+ make up 95% of the world's browsers.
- Make sure your site can be seen on different screen resolutions. 98% of users have 800x600 and above resolution, thus, 800x600 can be taken as the minimum resolution the site should fit.
- Ensure your pages download quickly. For this you must:
  - Minimize graphics, flash and scripts: They hugely increase your file size.
  - Optimize your HTML & script code: Make sure that your site doesn't have any unwanted tags or unused scripts.
  - Use Server Side Include (SSI) files wherever possible. SSI files once called from the web server reside in its cache so on subsequent requests they load faster.



- Test your site with real first-time users. Remember, you may know your site backwards. They do not.
- After your members test it out, find non-members to critique your site. They are your primary audience for recruitment after all!

### Maintaining League Websites

Your League website is a living document. It is not something that can be put up and ignored. It must be maintained. Content must be current/fresh. Here are a few tips to keep you on top of website maintenance:

- A League webmaster or team needs a clear job description. The League should state clearly what is expected of them. (See the Streamlining materials on [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org) for a sample job description.) If the webmaster/web team leader is not a member of your League’s leadership team, then there should be a clear line of communication/responsibility to the League leaders. Communication with your webmaster should be two-way; leaders who do not have experience with web design should especially be open to ideas brought forward by those providing the technical assistance of creating and maintaining the site.
- If there is no one technical in your League to take on the webmaster role, you can use a pre-designed template system (see below). Consider finding an intern or making an investment in your League's future by paying someone.
- Some Leagues can benefit from ‘CMS’ – Content Management System – it is a system whereby different people have permission to update content within a site, without reference to the webmaster. It enables different departments to post their latest news and activities online, using only a browser interface, accessed via a password – which enables multiple users to keep the site updated. Remember to clearly state what each individual or department is responsible for updating to ensure there are no pieces left out. NB: This software can be expensive to purchase.
- Most importantly, **don’t leave out-of-date content online!** It is crucial for credibility and clarity. You can keep it in an “archive” or note that information is there for “background” purposes or “history” only.

**Want your League’s site to look like [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org)?**

Templates for local Leagues to use to make their website look and feel like the newly redesigned LWVUS site will soon be available. Check with your state coach!

### Isn’t there an easier way?

Yes! **League Easy Web (LEW)** was developed in 2001 for Leagues in California to assist Leagues in building their web sites, and it is now offered for a fee to Leagues across the country. As of 2009, there are 163 Leagues using LEW in more than 30 states. LWV California owns and operates the product, and more information is available at [support@lwvnet.org](mailto:support@lwvnet.org). LEW enables Leagues to have a complete, branded and customized website (that includes unlimited content pages) using a system that is easy to use. According to their materials, “Anyone who can browse the Web has the skills to update LEW!”





## The "Join Us" Message

What is the tone of your League's website? It should be welcoming! Your League website is a great vehicle for recruiting new members. Here are some additional tips for making membership recruitment a seamless function of your website:

- Pepper a recruitment message throughout the website and use it prominently on the home/front page. Visitors should know after leaving the site that the League of Women Voters is where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement!
- Visitors should also be frequently reminded to join. "Join Us" links should be placed on *every* page and prominently placed on the home/front page. It should link to a page specifically dedicated to League membership. A "Join Us" Web page example template is located at the end of this section.
- Use Stories! Personalize your website by using your members' stories. Stories can personalize a membership ask or show a new side to an important issue that your League is working on. Stories build personal connections, and your website is the ideal place to connect with potential new members.
- One page of your website should be dedicated to membership and should include:
  - Brief overview of the League and its mission.
  - Membership requirement information
  - Cost of membership
  - A downloadable or printable membership form for visitors to print out and send in.
  - Contact information in case of questions
  - **A MEMBERSHIP MESSAGE!** - "LWV is the organization where your hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement! Join LWV and be directly involved in shaping the important issues to keep our community strong." Feel free to use this or your own membership message. Just be sure to include "Join Us".
- Continuous promotion of your website with a membership message is important. Include references to your League website in speeches, one-on-one communications, press releases, and in all other League communications.

Additional tools are available to assist Leagues in developing their site including website templates, League logo and usage guidelines, and information about League Easy Web (LEW) on [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org).



*Check out the “Tools You Can Use” section at the back of the manual for a sample “Join Us” Web page template!*



## Overview of Being Visible All Year

Leagues who have used the membership recruitment best practices have reported that one of the key components of their success is being more visible in their communities. Through using a mix of different approaches as much as possible (e.g. social media, up-to-date websites, letters to the editor and/or radio or local TV appearances) Leagues become more visible.

*By having a consistent presence in the public eye, Leagues are able to reinforce the value of membership in the organization and debunk the myth that we are an elections-time only organization.*

Remember, it often takes 7 – 8 times for a message to sink in and for someone to take action, such as joining the League. Holding public events, gaining media coverage for them, and working with allied groups are proven ways for Leagues to communicate their membership message. Also, the public wants to access information the League provides on issues, candidates, and other things because they know we provide factual information (rather than “spin”). If we are not visible, they can’t get that valuable information they seek from us and, of course, they won’t know where or how to join us either.

This section of the handbook is designed to provide Leagues with resources about specific events or activities that can help Leagues gain visibility. The *a la carte* menu of turnkey opportunities provided here have been tested and successfully used by Leagues across the country. Some are large scale events whose primary goal is to generate visibility and provide opportunities for media outreach (such as the Making Democracy Work Award program), and others are more simple ways to assist Leagues in being visible every month of the year (such as press templates for Leagues to customize).

Leagues know their own communities best and most Leagues are likely to have a full calendar of events planned. We encourage all Leagues to look at their own calendars first to see where some of the outreach best practices can be added to their planned activities. However, if there are “holes” in the League’s calendar, Leagues are encouraged to use the information in the following pages to fill in their calendars or to build upon what is already planned.

### **Doing Consistent Outreach Activities Year Round:**

- Ensures that Leagues are consistently present in the community throughout the year
- Debunks the myth that we are an elections-time only organization
- Establishes a sustainable and successful calendar of activities that supports growth
- Provides opportunities for Leagues to introduce the organization to new audiences
- Provides platforms for Leagues to explain and reinforce the value of being a member of LWV
- Offers chances to extend invitations to individuals to join



## Calendar of Media Hooks

Below is a list of potential media hooks adapted from the LWV national calendar available on [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org). These are nationally recognized dates and anniversaries that offer local Leagues opportunities to be visible in the community. Very simply, they are an excuse to engage local media to help build stronger relationships.

LWVUS uses these same milestones to issue statements to the media, and often a template for local Leagues to customize is also available. These templates, which are updated annually, are distributed via the weekly Leaders' Update and posted on [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org).

Marking these anniversaries or milestones – by issuing a media statement or in some other way – helps to ensure that the League is in the public's eye consistently.

### Annual Media Hooks:

#### January:

- Start of new legislative session
- Inauguration/State of Union Address
- 9<sup>th</sup>- Carrie Chapman Catt's Birthday

#### February:

- Youth Voter Month
- 14<sup>th</sup> – League Birthday\*

#### March:

- Women's History Month\*
- 8<sup>th</sup> – International Women's Day
- Mid-March (including March 16<sup>th</sup>) – Sunshine Week\*

#### April:

- 15<sup>th</sup> – Tax Day (“Check the box for public financing”)
- 19<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> – National Volunteer Week
- 22<sup>nd</sup> – Earth Day

#### May:

- 1<sup>st</sup> – Law Day
- 10<sup>th</sup> – Mother's Day

#### June:

- Announce program and leadership outcomes after Annual Meetings (local, state, and national)
- 23<sup>rd</sup> - Anniversary of the Enactment of Title IX

#### July:

- 4<sup>th</sup> – Freedom of Information Act anniversary
- 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> - Anniversary of the Seneca Falls Convention



**August:**

- 26<sup>th</sup> – Women’s Equality Day/ Anniversary of the Passage of the 19th Amendment\*

**September:**

- Voter Registration Month
- 17<sup>th</sup> – Constitution Day\*

**October:**

- Voter Education Month
- 24<sup>th</sup> – United Nations Day

**November:**

- Election Day\*

**December:**

- 15<sup>th</sup> – Bill of Rights Day\*



**\*LWVUS routinely provides customizable press templates for these milestones. Others are provided as time, resource and priorities permit. Templates and talking points can be found in the Leader’s Update. State coaches also will provide reminders as possible.**

### **Need to Sign Up for the Leader’s Update? It’s Easy!**

**Step 1:** Go to [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org)

**Step 2:** Click on “Login” at the top right-hand corner of the screen.

**Step 3:** If you are a registered user, simply input your email address and password and click “Login.” Haven’t registered yet? Simply input your name and the email address on file with LWVUS in the database and click “Register.” Once registered, repeat the first 3 steps.

**Step 4:** Click on “League Sponsored Email Lists” on the left-hand side of the screen.

**Step 5:** Check the box next to “Leader’s Update.”

**Step 6:** Click on “Submit Changes” at the bottom of the screen.

You are signed up for the Leader’s Update! Expect it in your inbox every Thursday.



**This page left intentionally blank.**

## Opportunities during Election Season

While the previous section underscored the importance of Leagues to be visible all year to help debunk the myth that we are an elections-time *only* organization, it is equally important that we capitalize on what the public wants from us and the most widely known aspect of our reputation: our elections work and the fact-based, nonpartisan information we provide. Election season is a period of natural visibility for the League, and we must maximize that opportunity to both provide the most voters with the authentic solutions they crave and also build our organization.

During a time of increased visibility, such as an election, it is critical that we are able to concisely articulate the benefits of League membership and to invite people to join. Quite simply, membership recruitment is something that can and should be done around your League's voters service efforts.

*We need to put as much emphasis on and effort into publicizing our work, engaging those who benefit from it, and promoting the value of membership in the League as we do on conducting the citizen education and engagement activities.*

To help maximize this visibility, Leagues should incorporate membership recruitment messages and employ other outreach best practices into election activities that are planned. While extremely important, these efforts need not be burdensome. The key is to be intentional about growing the League by adding to what Leagues already have planned.

*Please note: Resources about how to conduct voters service work, such as voter registration drives, candidate forums, and voters guides, are available in Member Section of [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org).*

### Assessing the Opportunities

To best leverage existing outreach opportunities, Leagues should assess how to be most visible within what is already planned in order to communicate with potential new members.

**Existing LWV Opportunities** – Leagues should review their voters service calendar and identify scheduled events (such as candidate forums), communications (such as the League website, press materials, voters guide, or fliers), and other relevant activities that will reach an external audience.

**Opportunities Presented by Other Groups** – Similarly, Leagues should reach out to partner organizations or consult community calendars (often on local media websites) to see the events and activities that are being sponsored locally, and generate a list of the opportunities that may exist for Leagues to disseminate relevant election-related materials and the membership message.



## Key Election Activities

### In a major election year, every League should strive to:

- Host at least 5 registration events
- Host at least 1 candidate forum/debate
- Pursue an online voters guide - hopefully on VOTE411.org
- Meet with local elections officials to discuss their plans and yours
- Identify 5 key media contacts and communicate at least once monthly
- Conduct get-out-the-vote with registrants, volunteers, and online networks
- Consider a poll watching/poll worker recruitment program
- Take advantage of related LWVUS and state trainings, materials, etc.

## Messaging

Once opportunities have been identified, invite potential members or members of partner organizations to participate in your election activities. While different contexts will necessitate refining your message, you always want to be speaking to your target audience. (See previous chapter.) A core theme or value that you may want to highlight (as it cuts across many groups) is: *wanting the community to be fair, vibrant and strong.*

Membership messaging should be consistent and constant. Include a membership or “get involved” message in as many of your League’s media statements, election materials and voters service activities as possible. As mentioned previously, it often takes hearing about something 7 – 8 times before someone is spurred to action. In an election season, this statistic can be even greater because of the constant bombardment of political ads! Therefore, Leagues must be persistent and utilize every opportunity to talk about the value of being a League member and how individuals can join.

## The Key Step

There is a step that League leaders must take at all voters service activities:

***You must ASK individuals to join.***

Don’t assume that it is implied.

### Create easy opportunities to join by:

- Including a highly visible and easy option for people to join on the home page of your League’s website.
- Having forms and sign-up sheets at all League events.
- Having greeters who talk about League membership and invite individuals to join at all League events.
- Bringing membership brochures and inviting people to join when addressing allied groups.
- Putting a “Join the League” ad in your voters guide (paid for by your operating fund).



## Membership Messages at League-sponsored Election Events

There are many opportunities at League-sponsored events to weave in a membership message. Below are some possible suggestions about how to do so this election season.

- **Candidate Forums.** From the podium, the moderator could include the following message in his or her opening remarks: “The League of Women Voters is a trusted grassroots organization whose members do the hands-on work to safeguard democracy. While we never endorse or oppose a candidate, we are directly involved in shaping the important issues to keep our community strong. As a League member, I have the opportunity to contribute in a leadership role (such as this one) that has a great impact on local, state and even national issues. If you are interested in learning about how you can make a similar impact, I would encourage you to pick up some of the League’s information available here tonight or visit our web site at [YOUR URL].”
- **Issue Forum.** From the podium, the moderator could include the following message in his or her opening remarks: “The League of Women Voters is a trusted grassroots organization whose members do the hands-on work that safeguards democracy and leads to civic improvement. As a League member, I have the opportunity to contribute in a leadership role (such as this one) that has a great impact on local, state and even national issues. If you are interested in learning about how you can make a similar impact, I would encourage you to pick up some of the League’s information available here tonight or visit our web site at [YOUR URL].”
- **Voters Guide.** You may place an ad for membership in the Guide: “ Join the League and play a hands-on role in keeping our community fair, vibrant and strong. As a League member, you are a part of an organization where thoughtful, active leaders work to create change in their communities. To join us please visit: YOUR LEAGUE’S CONTACT INFO/WEB SITE HERE.” An ad like this must be paid for with your League’s operating funds. *You may NOT use education fund monies for membership ads.* See next page for a sample Voters Guide ad.





**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF**  
*INSERT YOUR COMMUNITY*

**Join us in making our communities  
Fair, Vibrant and Strong.**

The League of Women Voters is where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement. Join the League and be directly involved in shaping the important issues in our community.

Membership in the League is open to men and women of all ages. With more than 90 years of experience and over 800 local and state affiliates in all 50 states, the League is one of America's most trusted grassroots organizations.

---

**Call us at:**

**Email us at:**

**Visit our Web site:**

Above is a sample Voters Guide ad to join the League! Remember every election opportunity is also an opportunity to grow the League. You may not use Education Fund monies to pay for membership ads.

Remember to make it easy for an individual to join. Have League materials (such as membership brochures and copies of your League's *Voter*) available at all League events. Offer to do follow up and engage people by telling your own personal League story (such as why you joined the League and what it has meant to you).

*Most importantly, remember to **ASK** people to join the League.*



## Opportunities for Media Outreach

The following are suggested activities that Leagues are encouraged to undertake to draw attention to their activities, drive traffic to their League’s website and, as appropriate, deliver direct membership recruitment messages through the media during the election season. Use the election as the “media hook” and wrap up all media contacts (e.g., phone conversations, interviews, press releases) with a plug for the League that emphasizes membership.

- **Membership language.** Include a membership message underscoring the grassroots nature of the League and the value of being a member in all media communications (media advisories, press releases, press statements, etc).
- **Regular media outreach.** Identify and reach out to at least five top local reporters(TV, radio, print or online) at least once monthly. Your communications need not always be formal or lengthy; in the very least you can provide a quick update on the League’s work and reiterate your willingness to be a resource should questions arise. Become a trusted source, and your League will reap the benefits!

**Tip Sheets.** Release a tip sheet with story ideas related to the election to local and regional media outlets. The tip sheet should include a brief story idea and relevant League contact information where the reporter can follow up. Reporters will be looking for ideas beyond the “horse race” story, and your League can provide those ideas. Possible ideas include: voter information and especially any local candidate information available on [www.vote411.org](http://www.vote411.org), or the impact of any new voter identification or other election rules in your state.

- **FAQ’s.** Develop a list of the top 5 questions for journalists to pose to local officials/election commissioners regarding steps that are being/have been taken to ensure voters are enfranchised in all elections.
- **Talk Radio/Public Television.** Talk with local radio shows and public television programs about hosting key League members to discuss the status of the area’s election system and issues around voter access or participation. Leagues also may consider recruiting and recommending additional participants from allied organizations. Any talking points prepared for a radio and/or TV appearance should include a membership message and refer individuals to the League’s website for more information. Leagues may also want to inquire about how to air PSAs.
- **Opinion Pieces.** Draft an opinion piece that highlights key issues around the voting process this election. Special consideration should be given to the signer of the op/ed. Leagues may consider whether co-signing the piece with an allied organization would elevate League visibility and increase its chance for publication.
- **Rapid response.** Leagues should scan media coverage on an ongoing basis through the election season to identify opportunities for the League to insert messages on voter participation (and the League’s role in increasing it) through letters to the editor.





## Elections Checklist

Now that you know how to gain visibility around the election, use this election checklist to help you remember what to do to maximize the opportunity surrounding each election activity!

### Voters' Guides

- ✓ Does the Voters' Guide include an ad to join the League? Does it have the League's contact information? (Remember: This ad must be paid for with operating fund or (c)(4) resources.
- ✓ Does your League follow up with a membership appeal to individuals who request copies of the Voters' Guide?
- ✓ Does your League put membership materials out near/with Voters' Guides that are in public places (such as at libraries, in apartment buildings, etc.)?
- ✓ Are there allied groups that could help to promote your Voters' Guides?
- ✓ Have you explored developing an online Voters' Guide through [www.VOTE411.org](http://www.VOTE411.org)?
- ✓ Have you done consistent (and persistent!) media outreach to promote the Voters' Guide (including the value of membership and/or a member's personal story in each media release)?



### Candidate or Issue Forums and Events

- ✓ Have you sought co-sponsors for the event or advertised it among allied organizations?
- ✓ Have you persistently followed up with local media outlets to get the event promoted in advance and covered when it happens?
- ✓ Are all of the moderators scripted to invite members of the audience to join?
- ✓ Is there someone present to provide more information about League, make an additional ask to join, and accept membership forms?
- ✓ Do televised events include a "crawler" or "screen shot" about how to join the League (such as telling viewers to go to the League's website)?
- ✓ Are you ready to collect contact information through sign-in sheets from attendees for additional follow up later?
- ✓ Do you have League members at the event to welcome in the public and serve as "membership ambassadors"?
- ✓ Is the League logo and name visible (on podium signs, League mugs for water, a League pin worn by the moderator)?



### Overall Election Season

- ✓ What are the visibility or membership opportunities around your League’s Election Day activities (participating in voter registration drives, staffing a voter hotline or serving as election monitors)? For example, are volunteers wearing League buttons or stickers? Are they ready to talk about the League and/or provide contact information?
- ✓ Have you worked with the media to draw attention to election issues beyond the “horse race” (such as voter information on [www.vote411.org](http://www.vote411.org), voter ID issues, etc.) and what League members are doing to address these issues? (NB: Story ideas are available from LWVUS.)
- ✓ Do you have membership information available at voter registration events? Are you collecting contact information for the individuals you help register, in order to remind them about upcoming election-related events\* and ask them to engage with the League in other ways, including joining?
- ✓ Do you have members ready to talk about their personal experiences with League and the value of being a member?
- ✓ As more and more individuals come to your League’s website for information about the election, do you have a prominent “join us” message? Do you have an easy mechanism to join? Do you have personal messages from League leaders or members?
- ✓ Are your Leagues members (or at least leaders) tooled to be “ambassadors” during this time of increased visibility and interest? Do they have membership brochures to hand out? Have they practiced asking individuals to join? Are there mechanisms to capture the contact information for interested individuals for later follow up?

*Election season is a period of natural visibility for the League, and we must  
MAXIMIZE the OPPORTUNITY!*

\*Rules governing collection of contact information from voter registration forms vary by state. Check with your statewide elections official. Follow-up communications to new registrants may only include election-related information (invitation to attend an election-related event, promotion of an online voters’ guide, reminder about election day/polling places, etc.) but should include a link to your League website, [VOTE411.org](http://VOTE411.org), etc.

### **Voters Service = Leadership Development Opportunities**



While the checklist above focuses on using election season as a time to recruit new members, it holds equally true that voter engagement and education activities also are a wonderful way to engage current members and move individuals into positions of leadership. Think about every voters service event or activity as a chance to introduce some aspect of League to someone new. Are there small tasks that can be given out to engage members and let them “try on” planning or leading an event? Are there individuals that could shadow some of the key League “doers” in the area of voters service? Are we looking to the next generation of leaders – building our own legacy by helping to groom our successors?

See chapters 7-9 for more information about leadership development. Remember that just as every event and activity is a chance to attract new members, these events are ripe with leadership development opportunities as well. And, like in membership recruitment, the critical piece is to ask!

## The LWV Making Democracy Work Award

*The LWV Making Democracy Work Award is a signature award program. This is a visibility mechanism. It is a way to get media attention and provide your League with an opportunity to talk about its good work.*

These recommendations are meant to be a *guide*, not a mandate. We know that “one size does not fit all.” You know your community, your League members and what will succeed in your area. This guide is offered as a resource; it is not meant to limit creative approaches or interfere with existing successful programs.

In order to ensure success, we strongly encourage Leagues to employ the same name for the award, use the same eligibility criteria for awardees, and most importantly, do extensive community outreach to identify nominees and to promote the award.



### Overview

The vision for the LWV Making Democracy Work Award is that local Leagues will present a community leader with an award once each year. The award was initially crafted to coincide with the League of Women Voters’ birthday, February 14 to maximize visibility; however, the award can be given at any time during the League calendar. We want to brand the award as our own and in terms that resonate with prospective members. Therefore, all Leagues should refer to it as the LWV’s Making Democracy Work Award. For simplicity, we will refer to it as the MDW Award throughout this section.

This award will recognize a non-member, preferably someone who is representative of your League’s target demographic. This award is not meant to honor a current member as it is designed to be an outreach and recruitment tool.

Each League should review the program outlined and recommendations made in the following pages and feel free to make adjustments as necessary. For example, it is not required that a League host an event at which the award is presented for this effort to be successful in raising the League’s profile among members of the target audience. *This program should be tailored according to the resources available to each League.*

The LWV Making Democracy Work Award program has been designed to both highlight the value of membership to potential League members, as well as to increase the visibility of the League’s contributions to the community.



## Benefits of the LWV Making Democracy Work Award

As this might be a new type of event for Leagues to undertake, we thought that it would be helpful for League leaders to understand the benefits to both the League and participants.

### To Leagues:

By sponsoring a community award with specific criteria for eligibility, Leagues will be able to:

- Identify and connect with a pool of potential new members
- Gain at least one new member (the awardee) and likely others
- Inform the community about the types of work and activities that the League does
- Increase the League's overall visibility in the community
- Strengthen (or create) relationships with allied organizations through the nomination process
- Strengthen (or create) relationships with the media through promotion of the nomination process and promotion of the awardee
- Brand and establish a *non-election* League event and product
- Gain experience in marketing your League and engaging current members in new and different ways
- Gain a better understanding of leaders in your community through their applications
- Highlight the value of membership in the League to leaders in the community

### To the Nominees and the Awardee:

Through the LWV Making Democracy Work Award process, the nominees and the awardee will receive numerous opportunities, including:

- Sharing their experiences and successes with community leaders and with the public
- Networking with League members and leaders
- Joining the League, one of our nation's most trusted organizations
- Receiving visibility and recognition in local media outlets
- Making a difference in their communities through their association with League



*Check out the "Tools You Can Use" section at the back of the manual for planning materials to host your own Making Democracy Award event!*



## Visibility Opportunities for the LWV Making Democracy Work Award

One of the great things about the LWV Making Democracy Work Award is all the media opportunities surrounding this activity. The media can be engaged at multiple stages of the LWV Making Democracy Work Award activity. *Sample media releases, PSA scripts and letter templates (to allied groups) are available.*

### Gain visibility for the League by:

- Releasing a call for nominations to the press
- Sending letters to local community leaders from allied organizations asking them to nominate someone for the award
- Creating and distributing a Public Service Announcement (PSA) asking community members to nominate a community leader for the award
- Asking the Mayor, City Councilman or Governor sign a proclamation naming a day for the honoree
- Sending a media advisory announcing the recipient of the award to the press
- Sending follow-up letters to all community leaders nominated for the award, thanking them for their good work and informing them about the League and how to join
- Sending follow-up letters to allied organization leaders thanking them for promoting the award and providing contact information for working together in the future

### SUCCESS STORIES:

The **LWV of Beach Cities (CA)** held their Making Democracy Work Award luncheon. The process of finding the recipient of their award began in December when more than 100 letters were sent out seeking nominations from various businesses, school districts, non-profit groups, and government representatives. They received so many nominations that it was difficult to narrow it down to just one awardee—so the committee actually added two honorable mentions! The awards ceremony was highlighted by proclamations from several elected officials including the mayor of Redondo Beach and a state senator. The award was presented by then LWV of California President Janis Hirohama.

The **LWV of Greater Lafayette (IN)** hosted their very first Constitution Day program that they plan to make an annual event. In addition to marking this important date, the League also used this opportunity to present their Making Democracy Work Award to a local community leader. In months leading up to this event, they used their *Voter* to solicit nominations from the community. Their goal was to find a woman age 50-65 that improved their community and mobilized others to help effect a change that has benefited the broader community. The event was well-attended and they look forward to more successful events in the future.



**This page left intentionally blank.**



## The “Hot Topics” Lunch

Every community has topics of interest that are unique and important to its citizens. What are the challenges that face your community today? What is the hot button issue that everyone is talking about at local government meetings? Consider using the “Hot Topics” Lunch as a venue to discuss these timely issues, while also bringing a spotlight to the League and its work.

When done with an intentional focus on organizational growth, Leagues have found these events to be an extremely successful way to attract new members to the organization. The tips below were gleaned from League experiences in Florida. We thank them for their suggestions and congratulate them on their success with this program. They report gaining 1 – 5 new members at every “Hot Topics” event!



### Getting Started

- **Step One:** *Enlist a small committee of two or three, including Board and off-Board leaders, to draw up a plan for three to four months.* The committee should decide upon the topics to be covered as well as what speakers would be appropriate. Consider “controversial” speakers or subjects that may be outside of the “usual” League interests. Customize the program to fit your League’s needs and to utilize your League’s “connections” to secure speakers. (Panels tend to get higher attendance than single speakers, but the right individual speaker can draw a great crowd.) Serving on this committee is a great discrete opportunity to develop new League leaders, too.
- **Step Two:** *Secure a venue for a luncheon that you will be able to use regularly.* A private dining room is a must to ensure that your guest speakers will not be interrupted. Also consider audio visual capability; that will be a plus as you grow! Negotiate a set price for food and beverage for your guests; remind the restaurant that you will be giving them repeat business and attracting the community’s “movers and shakers” (i.e., people who are good prospects for future business). Make sure that the cost of admission covers the cost of the meal, and some Leagues add on an additional amount to help offset the League’s operating expenses.
- **Step Three:** *It is imperative that you market your lunch programs consistently and frequently.* Attendance will grow, but it will depend on very consistent reminders.

Some proven marketing strategies from Leagues in Florida include:

- ✓ Put Hot Topics speakers on the cover of your League’s newsletter with their photograph and a brief biography.
- ✓ Send out a bright colored postcard with essential information and a “catchy” title. Be sure to include the location, price, and how to RSVP. The use of post cards



will make the invite stand out among other mail as well as cut down on your postage costs!

- ✓ Use your email database to send out a series of reminders before every luncheon. Be sure to include the RSVP contact, as well as all relevant information.
- ✓ Encourage members to invite their friends, family, and neighbors to these events! This is the perfect venue to bring friends who *might be interested* in joining the League. A personal invitation to attend – and hopefully join – will produce results.
- ✓ Use social media outlets and the League website to publicize the event and report out on events. Upload photos from one event to help to draw people into the next one!

### **Additional Tips and information:**

- **Time:** Plan on a minimum of 90 minutes from beginning to end. Arrive early, and remember to bring your banner, membership forms, past newsletters, and a reservation list! Be sure that the moderator makes a pitch for League membership at the start and end of the presentation.
- **Welcome Guests:** Warmly welcome guests to this event and invite non-members to join. Have speakers and other nonmembers introduce themselves briefly prior to the speaking portion of the event.
- **Designate membership ambassadors:** Have two of your most outgoing and welcoming members in charge of welcoming, handing out literature, and making sure new attendees are welcomed and seated with others. Make sure your membership ambassadors are comfortable incorporating “the ask” into conversations with prospective new members!
- **Keep it fun:** Make it an interesting and informative event for members and guests to network and socialize while showing them the value of League membership.

### **Sample topics:**

- Climate Change
- News vs. Opinions
- Restoring Voter Trust
- Legislative Wrap Up / Kick off
- Ethics in local government

In Florida, each of the events listed above attracted 85 – 108 attendees! LWV of Moscow (ID) continues to have great success in their community presenting luncheons.

In identifying speakers, consider local professors, reporters/columnists, agency heads, law enforcement, legislators, lobbyists, elected or appointed school officials, hospital and college administrators, local activists or organizers, and authors. Utilize connections among League members to help secure speakers.

## Activities around Historic Milestones for Women

While League has always been more than a “women’s organization,” our founding and our history make it only natural that we should acknowledge and mark certain milestones for women. This document contains a list of suggested activities that Leagues could implement anytime, but might be planned around one of these milestones as the “hook” to spark wider interest.

### Recommended Milestones:

- Carrie Chapman Catt’s Birthday (January 9)
- The League’s Birthday (February 14)
- Women’s History Month (March)
- Anniversary of the Enactment of Title IX (June 23)
- Anniversary of the Seneca Falls Convention (July 19-20)
- Women Equality Day/ Anniversary of the Passage of the 19th Amendment (August 26)
- Anniversary of Local Leagues Founding (Based on Your Local League)

These activities were selected because they provide opportunities to raise the League’s visibility among community members, draw attention to the League’s work, showcase the value of membership in the League, and ultimately generate new members. These activities, while different in content, share some common threads in how they should be implemented based on the best practices of the membership/leadership program.



### ***A SPECIAL NOTE ON WOMEN’S EQUALITY DAY...***

Given our history as an organization, LWV should be synonymous with Women’s Equality Day on August 26. Leagues are especially encouraged to take advantage of this milestone to generate visibility for the organization. It is a great way to “kick off” the League year and to put a spotlight on the great programmatic work that League does/will do.



## Common Components to Implementation

The success of the Membership and Leadership Development program has shown us that there are some key components (i.e., best practices) that should be included in every activity to make it truly successful (i.e. one that engages the community and attracts new members). These include:

**Using the Message** - Communicating concisely and consistently is critical. Leagues should incorporate messages about the value of membership in the League when communicating with potential members. Leagues should appeal to the values of their target audience or demographic. In addition, Leagues are encouraged to underscore the following benefits of League membership—

1. League members make their communities healthy, vibrant and strong.
2. League offers leadership or personal growth opportunities.

**Asking People to Join** - Asking is crucial. Leagues that explicitly invite individuals to join the League see results. Every interaction with a potential member is an opportunity to extend an invitation to join the League. It is so simple that it is often overlooked. Don't assume that it is implied; ask everywhere and every time. Obtain Membership Brochures from LWVUS at [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org) or by contacting the MLD support staff.

**Reaching Out to Allied Organizations** - Forming partnerships with organizations in your community will elevate the League's visibility within the community and expose the League to pools of potential members. Ask an organization to partner with your League on one of the suggested activities below or on other events on your League's calendar.

**Developing Relationships with the Media** – Reporters receive many phone calls, emails, and press releases daily. Building relationships with members of the media and regularly sharing information about the League's work is very important. It will increase the likelihood of the League's message getting “covered” by the media, which increases the League's visibility and in turn brings in more members. (See Chapter 3 for more information.)

**Sharing Personal Stories** – There is no better way to explain the benefits of membership than to share stories from current LWV members. These stories should profile League members and demonstrate the value of belonging to League. Visit the LWV Storybank on [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org) for stories from members across the country and ideas about how to use them. (See Chapter 5 for more information.)

## Suggested Activities

### Conduct Media Outreach

Any of the milestones (especially if the League is holding an event) are newsworthy. There are several ways that the media might be approached:

- The League president could approach the local paper about submitting an opinion piece.
- Leagues could reach out to the appropriate columnist at their local paper and/or host of a local radio program to pitch a piece that commemorates the day and acknowledges the many profound achievements of women in government over the past 90+ years.
- Leagues could “pitch” a feature story about an individual League member about how her League experience has helped to make the community healthy, vibrant and strong.
- League members could submit a letter to the editor calling attention to the milestone and relating it to the League’s work and a current community issue/topic.
- League could “localize” a sample press template from LWVUS. (LWVUS produces sample press templates/statements for Women’s Equality Day, the League’s birthday, and Women’s History Month.)

Regardless of which option is pursued, Leagues must be persistent! Build relationships with reporters and follow up consistently. When you finally do get an interview or issue a release, be sure to remember that in addition to the milestone being celebrated or promotion of the event that is being hosted to mark it, you want to include the messages (outlined above), stress the importance and value of the League’s work, and (whenever possible) remind people how they can join the League.

### Partner with a Library

Partner with the local library and **develop an exhibit** that documents the history of women’s role in government. The League could contact their local library and propose working together to develop an exhibit that demonstrates the profound achievements of women throughout the past 90+ years.

Leagues could draft a press release on the day of the exhibition opening and if resources allow, host a launch event at the library. Leagues could invite members of the local press, community leaders, elected officials and members/friends of the League.

In conjunction with this or as its own event, Leagues could sponsor a **“democracy storytime”** at their local library. Besides using the library’s own public relations network, Leagues could advertise the event to homeschool groups, Girl and Boy Scout troops, and other organizations. While the children are unlikely to join League, the parents, grandparents, and aunts who accompany them will. While the children are working on an activity, make a plug for the League’s upcoming events and why people would want to join the League.



### Host a Women’s Leadership Luncheon – Longest League Member Keynote

Leagues may host a luncheon or other social event (e.g., dessert, tea) for community leaders, celebrating the role of women’s leadership in their community over the past 90+ years. The keynote speaker could be the woman who has been a League member for the longest period of time, who has a personal story to tell about membership in the League. This League member could prepare a speech, telling her story and the story/history of the League. Leagues could invite other outstanding women leaders in the community, members/friends of the League, as well as select members of the local press.

Leagues should distribute a press release to members of the local media and place follow-up calls to select reporters, inviting them to the event or soliciting an interview with the League member and/or League president for inclusion in a potential feature or news article. Leagues should leverage this event to offer information about the League, the value and benefits of a membership, as well as information about the issues the organization represents and is *presently* working on to make the community and our democracy stronger.

This type of event is also a good opportunity to encourage the League members in attendance to submit their own stories about what their involvement in League has meant to them. Stories can be entered online at [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org). These “testimonials” are wonderful recruiting tools and can be used at future events or in other League communications.

Leagues also may consider holding a “Suffrage Anniversary Event,” a breakfast that features an elected official (or several elected officials). In particular, Leagues may want to spotlight women who hold public office. Planning materials for such an event, including a sample agenda and media advisory, are available from LWVUS.

#### SUCCESS STORY:

The LWVs of Manistee County and Grand Traverse (MI) packed the State Theatre for a screening of the HBO Film “Iron Jawed Angels” to celebrate the anniversary of the ratification of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment. Over 100 people attended the benefit reception at the Park Place Hotel before the screening to welcome Michigan’s former First Lady Helen Milliken. After the reception, guests walked from the hotel to the State Theatre where they were greeted by filmmaker Michael Moore. Prior to the screening Moore spoke to the group and praised “Iron Jawed Angels” as a “story that needs to be told, retold and above all, remembered!” The event was described as electrifying and emotional, and at the end of the film, guests stood, cheered, and cried. Many people even pulled out their wallets to support the LWV and all the good work it does. The event generated great visibility for the local Leagues.



## Sunshine Week

Sunshine Week, held the week of James Madison's birthday (March 16), is a nationwide effort to open up dialogue on the importance of transparency in government and freedom of information. During this week, the League of Women Voters and other "good government" groups can encourage citizens to play an active role in promoting open government at all levels. This section contains recommendations and tools for maximizing outreach efforts around Sunshine Week.



As in all communications activities, the intent of this outreach is to reach more members of your community and ultimately garner new membership for the League. *Leagues will need to tailor recommendations to fit the needs in their communities.*

### Background

Journalists, civic groups, libraries, schools and others interested in the public's right to know have banded together to help promote this nonpartisan effort to enlighten and empower individuals to play an active role in their government at all levels, and to give them access to information that makes their lives better and their communities stronger. The Sunshine Week initiative originated from the work of several newspapers, and it has grown, in large part, because of the media's continued support. Journalists around the country are encouraged to report on government transparency issues during this week, and as such, it is a great opportunity for Leagues to engage reporters in their area. More information about the history of Sunshine Week is available at [www.sunshineweek.org](http://www.sunshineweek.org).

### Recommended Activities

Below is a list of possible activities for Sunshine Week. The first part of the list contains activities to directly engage members of the community (i.e., potential new members of the League). The second part of the list deals with media outreach. These *are only suggested activities*. As always, we encourage each League to brainstorm ideas based on local events/activities/issues that may be taking place in your community and what is already on your League calendar. *However, all Leagues are encouraged to take advantage of the media opportunities around this week.*

**Program/Community Discussion** – For the past several years, LWVEF has cosponsored a national panel discussion of experts from inside and outside government to discuss different aspects of federal openness policies and opportunities for people to use government information to make a difference in their communities. These events were webcast live, and Leagues are encouraged to host "viewing parties" in their communities and/or set up their own panel discussion on this important topic with local experts/officials. These events are announced via the Leaders' Update beginning in January of each year.



**Tour of City Hall** -Tours of City or Town Halls are easy to schedule and are a great way to symbolize openness in government. During Sunshine Week, Leagues might encourage the citizens of their community to visit City/Town Hall and take a tour to learn more about how their local government works. Leagues could contact their City Hall and inquire about setting up tours. Leagues can then schedule 1-2 tours during Sunshine Week and show non-members what being engaged in government can mean. Information about the tours could go on the League's Web site, be shared with other organizations/individuals in their community, and personal invitations could go to "hot" prospects. Some Leagues also have had success in organizing tours of the local courts.

**Observe a Meeting** - League members could offer to be "guides" to local government meetings that week. For the uninitiated, attending a City or Town Council meeting can be an overwhelming experience. League members can encourage individuals to attend and offer to show them how the process works – how they can make their voice heard. Of course, have membership materials available too!

#### Other Ideas

- Observer Corps Activities (see LWVEF publication "Observing Your Government in Action: Protecting Your Right to Know" available on [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org) for more information and ideas.)
- Conduct a FOIA Audit (see LWVEF publication "Looking for the Sunshine: Protecting You Right to Know" available on [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org) for more information and ideas.)
- Have a proclamation issued about Sunshine Week from a local government body (sample language is available from LWVUS)

#### SUCCESS STORIES:

The **LWV of Palm Beach County (FL)** hosted a "Go See" trip, an organized tour of the county and federal courts. Despite being the same week as local municipal elections, the League got radio press coverage of Sunshine Week and two letters to the editor were picked up by both major area papers - the *Palm Beach Post* and the *Sun Sentinel*.

The **LWV of Oakland (CA)** hosted a discussion about the city's Sunshine Ordinance at City Hall. The speakers included the city attorney and a columnist from the *San Francisco Chronicle*. The discussion focused on why Oakland needs its Sunshine Ordinance, how it's working and what more needs to be done in this area. The presentation was picked up by a local government access channel.



## Media Outreach

To garner visibility for Sunshine Week and specifically for the League's activities during the week, Leagues should conduct media outreach in advance of and during Sunshine Week.



**Schedule a “deskside chat” with a reporter**– Openness in government is always a “hot topic” now especially among journalists. Call your local political/government reporter two – three weeks in advance of Sunshine Week to discuss the issue and any of your League’s upcoming event(s) that they might find interesting. Be prepared to provide the reporter with key details about Sunshine Week and include as many local specifics as you can in order to make it relevant – examples of local government getting it right or wrong can be helpful to a reporter preparing a story.

**Draft an op-ed for submission** - Op-ed is an abbreviation for “opposite the editorial page” and can denote both the page itself and the opinion pieces that a newspaper publishes on the page facing the editorial page. Newspapers generally have a stable of op-ed columnists and regular contributors but most will also print op-eds written by outside authors. Op-eds are often selected for their unique or fresh perspective on a recent event or news story. Please see Chapter 3 for tips on drafting and submitting op-eds.

**Write a letter** - Writing a letter to the editor is one of the best ways to respond to articles, editorials or op-eds published in your local paper. During Sunshine Week there is likely to be some coverage (hopefully generated by your League!) and you should be prepared to submit a letter to amplify a positive editorial, or highlight key information left out of an article. The key to getting your letter published is making sure that it is timely. Ideally, you would submit a letter to the editor within 24 hours that the piece you’re responding to appeared. Watch the LWVUS’ weekly Leaders’ Update for sample letters to the editor and other press templates for Sunshine Week.

**Publicize all League events** - Leagues should draft a **media advisory** that provides the important details of the community event(s) planned for Sunshine Week and distribute it one week in advance. Remember that an advisory is short; it gives the *who, what, where, and when* of an event. Each League should also be prepared to make follow up phone calls to select members of the local media to gauge if there is interest in writing a story about the LWV event and/or the LWV involvement with Sunshine Week. Having reporters attend the event is the most effective way to get a story written. Some sample talking points are included on the following page.



## Talking Points

- The League of Women Voters is an organization dedicated to improving our systems of government and impacting public policies through education and advocacy – it’s truly the organization where leaders volunteer to make democracy work.
- League members are passionate about safeguarding democracy and are directly involved in shaping the community in which we live – Sunshine Week is a week to get involved and to discuss the issues that matter greatly to the members of our community.
- League members provide fact-based information. The League is non-partisan; we don’t endorse any political parties. And, we don’t support or oppose candidates for office. We are one of America’s most trusted organizations.
- We want government to work for all. The League of Women Voters is dedicated to expanding public awareness about accountability and transparency in government; Sunshine Week presents an ideal forum to discuss these issues and learn more about the community in which we live.
- Since 1920, the work of our members keeps our democracy healthy. We observe government meetings, we provide facts about issues (not spin or “sound bites”) to the public, and we encourage everyone to make their voices heard on the decisions that impact our families and our community.
- We extend an invitation to all those who want to join our efforts to participate in [EVENT or ACTIVITY NAME] during Sunshine Week to learn more about how openness in government impacts us all and what we can do to uphold our right to know.



## Host a Movie Watching Party or Create a League Book Club

Time and time again, we hear that League members continue to be a part of our organization because they think the League is FUN! They enjoy the good people, lively conversations, and the ability to learn from the other individuals in the League. Incorporating some fun activities, which are still related to the work of the League, is a great way to keep your members involved and engaged in the League. It will also help members bond with and get to know one another.

Moving watching parties and book clubs can be used to help generate dialogue about issues important to your community and to the country in a new way. For instance, one way to mark Women's History Month is to host a viewing of the HBO film, *Iron Jawed Angels*, which chronicles "the struggle of suffragists who fought for the passage of the 19th Amendment," or to screen the film *Patriocracy*, which discusses the heightened partisanship of our current political era.

Leagues may want to partner with an allied organization in the community that will help to reach potential new members for a movie watching event or book club meeting. An important element of this visibility opportunity is to ensure the presence of potential new members and to recruit them into your League.

### Hosting an LWV Movie Watching Party

You and your guests are going to have a good time, especially if you pick a good film! Here's why....

- It offers an opportunity to educate people about a chosen topic and to recruit new members to the League.
- It offers an opportunity to create visibility for your League if you do a media advisory, press release, and/or Op Ed relating the movie to current voter engagement or other League efforts in your community.
- It offers an opportunity to talk about your League's current activities, connecting the past and the present.
- A good film can have a high entertainment value, and can also be extremely inspiring.



Following the film, Leagues may host a discussion about the topic at hand or about the movie in general. The League president could facilitate the discussion in partnership with the allied organization's president and/or spokesperson. Leagues should also be sure to incorporate messages about the value of League membership and issue an invitation to join the League.



**Party Points:**

1. Consider hosting it at someone's home, a local university, a local restaurant, bar or club. Invite your guests to come at least a half-hour before the start of the film.
2. Encourage your guests to bring beverages and snacks (that way you won't be solely responsible and others will feel more ownership for the party).
3. Have a specific RSVP date and time (this helps you anticipate your party size, and makes your attendees accountable for showing up).
4. Invite more potential guests than you can accommodate, and then do follow-up calls and/or e-mails.
5. Use the sign-in sheet provided to keep track of who attended your party.
6. Give your guests directions to the party location. It's always helpful to include a map of the area (check out Map Quest at [www.mapquest.com](http://www.mapquest.com)).
7. Keep in touch with everyone who attends your event, especially anyone who is not currently a League member. This is an excellent opportunity to recruit and retain new members and engage new members. Invite participants to attend other League functions, such as an upcoming candidate forum.
8. Ask non-League members to join the League to continue the work of strengthening women's roles in our democracy and in our communities.
9. Get creative! Keep it fun! Enjoy the movie as much as your guests!

**Party Points for Pre-Movie Discussions:**

If you anticipate your group leaving directly after the movie, give yourself enough time to have a discussion before the film begins.

1. Invite people over an hour or more beforehand. Have food and drink! (See above.)
2. Do your best to keep your discussion related to the film. Inevitably people will want to discuss other things, which is fine, but as the host it will be your responsibility to bring it back to task every so often. (Remember this is a FUN event, too. Try to be gentle with reminders to get back to the movie.)
3. Because you will be discussing something you may not have seen, the most powerful tool for your group will be planting seeds of thought. Ask the group to think about a few points while watching the movie.

**Party Points for Post-Movie Discussions:**

1. It will be up to you as the host (or someone you designate) to get a discussion going after the film. Generate a list of discussion topics before the party and use it to steer the discussion. Feel free to have participants ask questions to the group, too.
2. Some films will be sure to get your group riled up. Take advantage of that energy! If you are gathering as a group who supports a specific cause, discuss what you can do to create solidarity surrounding your issue.

## Creating an LWV Book Club

A book club offers the same opportunities as a movie-watching event. There is potential for fun, joint learning, and engaging new members in the League.

And, as with planning a movie event, there are some things to consider prior to setting up a book club. Thinking through these points will be especially important if the book club will meet regularly (e.g, every month).

### What to think about prior to setting up the book club:

What is the purpose of the book club? What do you hope to get out of it?

- Be sure the purpose of the club is transparent to all members and that the book selection is parallel to club's theme.

Who do you want to make up the club? How diverse do you want the group and how will you reach out to non-members? What is the minimum and maximum number of participants (this could be reliant on the space)?

- Make announcements at every League Meeting, post notices at the local library, bookstores, and Town Hall or advertise online. Be sure to include the organizer's contact information! And, think about your League's target audience for recruiting members. Where is it best to advertise for them and what's the best method to do that (e.g., social media, fliers, word of mouth)?

Who will lead the club and how will they be selected?

- Decide before the first meeting if you will rotate moderators or if there will be one person to lead the discussion on a regular basis. This is great opportunity to develop new leaders!

How much time will be devoted to each meeting? Where will they be held and will refreshments be provided?

- It is generally best to meet in a public space, perhaps where you normally have League meetings.

How often do you plan to meet?

- Setting a regularized schedule will help to get regular participants. Individuals can mark their calendar well in advance and will be there.

How will the books be selected? Will the book be decided by the group or selected by the moderator?

- It is helpful to provide a list of retailers or libraries for members to purchase or borrow the book selected for each meeting.





### Important Reminders for Your Book Club

1. Prior to the first meeting, send everyone an e-mail detailing the basic ground rules for the group – e.g. What type of books the group will read, how long each meeting will last. It is a good idea to start on online blog or forum to keep track of the discussions. This is especially useful for recruiting new members.
2. Be sure to welcome each participant at the beginning of each meeting and introduce everyone. Ensure that group is warm and welcoming. Have membership materials available!
3. Make sure everyone has the opportunity to speak his or her opinion. Be sure the moderator is comfortable steering the conversation away should it become dominated by one view or person.
4. If a discussion becomes heated, be sure to remind everyone to have fun and respect the other members' opinions. At this point, you could start a new discussion.

### Selecting a Good Book

There are many online sites that offer suggestions for different books.

1. Bookbrowse and Penguin allow you to search for books according to topic, such as Current Affairs.
2. You can also search on many popular bookseller website, such as Barnes and Noble or Amazon, to see the latest titles in a certain genre.
3. Another great resource is your local library. You could contact a librarian directly for a recommendation or access their card catalog in the branch or online to look up different book options.

Resources:

<http://school.familyeducation.com/reading/fiction/37737.html>

[http://articles.cnn.com/2009-12-18/living/obc.book.club\\_1\\_book-club-prospective-members-first-meeting?\\_s=PM:LIVING](http://articles.cnn.com/2009-12-18/living/obc.book.club_1_book-club-prospective-members-first-meeting?_s=PM:LIVING)

[http://www.ehow.com/how\\_2171570\\_run-book-club.html#ixzz1DDCXLeFu](http://www.ehow.com/how_2171570_run-book-club.html#ixzz1DDCXLeFu)

<http://www.wikihow.com/Start-a-Book-Group>

<http://www.realsimple.com/work-life/start-book-club-checklist-0000000001100/index.html>

## Using Stories to Recruit New Members

While “storytelling” (the art of conveying information or educating people using a story) has been a part of almost every culture throughout history, it was shunned by many nonprofits for decades. Instead, perhaps in an effort to be “corporate-like,” organizations have focused on data and “hard facts.” However, very recently, this trend has begun to change. Both corporations and organizations have rediscovered the tremendous value of “storytelling.” They have come to understand that:

*There is no more powerful marketing tool than a story about the organization.*

According to Andy Goodman, a trainer and national expert on storytelling, “We [the nonprofit world] remain a sector devoted to data and enamored of empirical evidence. And while we will always need hard facts to make our cases, we often fail to realize that the battle for hearts and minds starts *with the hearts*. The audience you seek will only give its attention to things it cares about, and caring is not an entirely rational activity. Consequently, it’s incumbent upon us to make an emotional connection *before* we start feeding them raw facts, and stories have this ability. That’s one of the reasons that they have been around for eons, and, to my mind, continue to be the single most effective communication tool at our disposal.”

Beyond “emotional” response, neuroscientists believe that they have identified a section of the brain whose sole purpose is to take in information and make sense of it by fitting it into the story of our own life. In other words, we are “hard wired” to receive and process stories. Stories make abstract concepts or ideas, such as “good government,” understandable, relatable, and even compelling. Very simply, stories are incredibly persuasive.

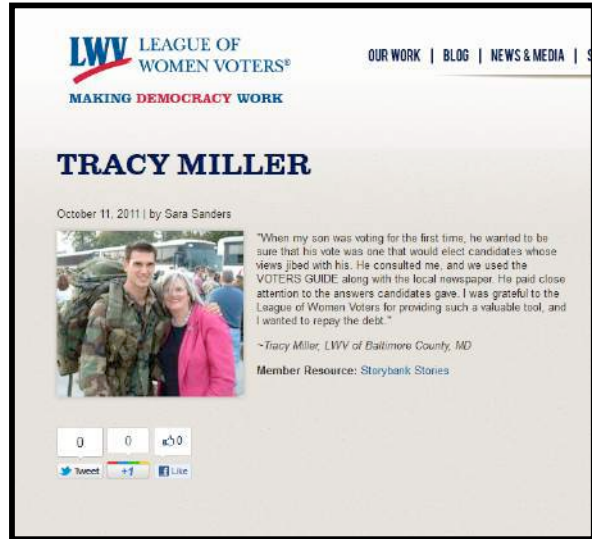
It is not difficult to see examples of how corporations have started to embrace storytelling. Ad campaigns have been developed around personal stories by supermarket chains, home improvement stores, and television stations. The League also utilizes this approach as part of the Membership and Leadership Development Program. LWVUS created the LWV Storybank, a vehicle to collect stories from members about the value of League membership.

**This section of the handbook contains recommendations for the solicitation, promotion, and use of League members’ stories. The stories can be used in a variety of ways to create a personal connection between potential new members and the League.**



### The LWV Storybank

The Storybank is housed on the LWVUS website. To ensure that the Storybank is as robust as possible, it is very important that League members use the online submission tool on [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org) to submit their stories. LWVUS will forward a copy of any story submitted to the Storybank to the appropriate local and state League president and initiative coordinators for local use. The Storybank form has mechanisms in place (such as an automated “thank you” to the submitter) to make the collection process efficient and easy.



### How to Collect Your Members’ Stories

**Via Letters/E-mails** - Direct outreach to local League members is important. A personal letter asking them to submit a story is a good way to start. Members will feel honored that their personal stories can help put a “face” on the League and assist in membership recruitment. In a letter or e-mail, encourage members to use that online submission form on [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org). If you prefer to send letters (some members find e-mails impersonal), we suggest pairing the solicitation with one of your League’s regular mailings, such as a membership renewal notices or fundraising appeals. These mailings may actually improve renewal and fundraising returns as the members solicited will feel more connected to/invested in the League after telling their own story. A solicitation letter template is available.

**Via Meetings** - League meetings are perfect opportunities to bring up the Storybank. The next time your League gathers, rather than just asking people to participate in the Storybank, start by reading a personal story or asking one or two members to share their stories orally. This is incredibly energizing and a great way to remind those there about why they came to the League. Once they are engaged, explain what the Storybank is and how it will assist your League with membership recruitment. Conclude by asking members to participate by submitting their own stories. Members need to know that their work of writing and submitting stories will make a difference. Remind members that stories do not have to be long (a maximum of 300 words) or about a large-scale project or initiative; succinct stories about what League membership means to them personally or what their membership in League means to their community will be very powerful tools in recruiting new members. Reiterate that every story, big or small, is welcome in the Storybank.







***Via a Story Event*** - Your League may consider holding a “story event” where you spend an evening or afternoon explaining the Storybank, telling stories, and collecting more stories from League members. This is a great opportunity to capture stories from members who do not have access to the internet or a computer. Set up a “submissions corner,” where a member can sit down at a computer and submit his/her story on the online submission form. You may need to have one member assist those who may be uncomfortable working online. This event is a great way to introduce new members to your League as well. Learning from your League's "elders" is an excellent way to engage new members and encourage them to think about taking a leadership role in the organization in the future. New members will learn that it doesn't take expertise to be a leader, just the willingness to participate. Collecting stories from your newer members is also important as their “current” experience will be helpful in attracting new members.

***Via State and Local Voters*** - Your local *Voter* (or newsletter), or any other regular publication (print or electronic) to members, is an easy way to solicit stories and promote the Storybank. The best way to capture the attention of your membership is to provide examples. Your League should include stories in the newsletter paired with information about the Storybank and how they can participate. Repetition is also important. Don't assume that members will know about the Storybank after you publish information about it in a single newsletter. Consistently having information about the Storybank and highlighting a new story every month as an example will establish this project as an important one – one worthy of members’ time and efforts.

***Via State and Local League websites*** - Your League’s website is the public face of your League. Highlighting a member's story weekly or monthly on the homepage is a great way to personalize the value of membership in LWV. Stories also can be sprinkled throughout your website. For example, do you have a League member who has worked passionately on “Sunshine” issues? Then, add his/her story to the section of your site devoted to local government information. At the end of each story have the link for members to submit their own story to the Storybank and a link to your League's membership information for non-members to join. Remind members (through your other communications) to check out the League website to read the highlighted stories and to submit their own stories.

## **How to Use Stories**

***State and Local Voters*** - Some Leagues send their local *Voters* (print and/or electronic newsletters) not only to members, but also donors and people who have expressed an interest in joining the League. The LWVUS office follows this practice and hopes that your League considers the *Voter* to be a public communications tool, as well as a membership information tool. *Voters* should contain information about how to join the League and why to join the League, including personal stories. Stories can be highlighted in a monthly column format (promoting and soliciting more stories) or more subtly included in articles about issues and events. Your *Voter* is probably your League’s most widely distributed communications mechanism and should be utilized to the fullest as a membership recruitment tool.



**Speaking Engagements** - Many Leagues have speakers' bureaus or are asked on occasion to make speeches on specific issues and/or about the League. Stories can be used to provide a more complete image of the League to your audience. It is important to stress that LWV's greatest asset is its membership. Because of the work of our members, communities are healthier, stronger, and more vibrant. The best way to show this is by sharing personal testimonials from your League members. According to expert Andy Goodman, "in a two-hour speech, people will remember a 2-minute story." You will need to judge the circumstance and audience first, but if appropriate, sharing

stories "from the field" of members' work will inspire others to join. Just make sure you have membership materials and information about how to join available at these engagements!

**State and Local League Website** - As was previously mentioned, League members' stories should be highlighted on the League website. Not only do the stories build goodwill within your League, but potential new members who are visiting your website will read them. The stories personalize the League and will make non-members aware that the League is a place where they can make a difference in the community. Stories that specifically highlight why a member joined the League or what impact the League has made in their life are particularly useful for drawing in new members. Of course, be sure to have a link to information about how to join or have that information prominently placed near the story. Quotes from stories also can be used and "peppered" throughout your site for an increased personalized impact.

**Press Releases** - In some cases, press releases can be strengthened with selected quotes from your members' stories. This can be done two ways.

- First, if you have a press release pertaining to a specific issue (e.g. land use, housing), search your League story database for members who have worked on those issues. Their stories can show how an individual's work can impact the whole community. Testimonials are powerful and may give reporters a new angle on the issue/story.
- The second way to use stories is in "soft" releases (e.g. the League's birthday, celebrating 50-year members). Select quotes and/or stories can be used to make the release more appealing by providing some specific achievements as well as "human interest." Personal stories, though not vital news stories, are regularly reported on because they engage readers. Be sure your communications or public relations chair has easy and quick access to your League stories in case a press release needs to get out fast or a reporter is on deadline.



**Statements/Letters** - Though it may not be appropriate or practical in all instances, if your League feels that a personal testimonial from a League member about a particular issue would strengthen your argument, your League should consider including stories from League members in public statements and letters. Personal stories can create a more powerful image for the reader or listener about the impact that your League has had on the community. Be sure that whoever is issuing the statement or letter (presumably your League president) is comfortable with the member's story being quoted in case they are asked about it later by the press.

**Membership Brochures** - Many Leagues create and print their own membership brochures. Short stories or quotes from stories are wonderful to add to your brochure to create a testimonial for League membership. The story selection should specifically highlight the value of being a member of the League. Potential new members will relate to the quotes and stories and will be more likely to join your League. If your League does not produce its own brochure, feel free to use the LWVUS- printed membership brochure (available through the LWVUS field support team), which includes stories from League members from across the country. Create and include an insert about joining your local League and put it inside the LWVUS-printed brochure!

**Publications** - Stories or quotes from stories should be considered for any publication that your League may produce. Study findings or reports, Voters' Guides, public newsletters, and others can all be membership recruitment tools especially with the inclusion of relevant stories. Please note that if you are using education fund monies to underwrite the cost of a publication, any direct "join" message and membership information (story or other) should be purchased with general/operating fund monies using a calculation based on the percentage of space used for the "join" message. If you are only including quotes from stories to underscore the main purpose of the publication, you do not need to do this.

*Check out the "Tools You Can Use" section for a worksheet to help you and your League's members formulate their own personal story about the League! This is a great activity to engage your Board in recruiting new members. Look for other story-related worksheets, too.*





SUCCESS STORIES:

The **LWV of Glendale/Burbank (CA)** includes a detachable membership form in every issue of their monthly *Voter*. They also have stressed their commitment to membership growth and outlined their membership goals in their newsletter. To help “personalize” the League to prospective new members, they often include a personal story as well.

In each issue of the **LWV of Beach Cities (CA)** newsletter they feature a member story entitled “Why I joined the League.” The LWV of Beach Cities has, like other CA Leagues, softened the language in the membership advertisement. Rather than using the word “application” on membership forms, they call it in “invitation” to join the League.

Each issue of the **LWV of Orange-Durham-Chatham (NC)** *Voter* contains an entire section dedicated to membership news. They feature bios and pictures of “honorary members” and welcome new members. They also provide information about dues renewal, a comprehensive calendar, as well as a member interest form (i.e., a survey of interests).

**Celebrating League: Sample Stories from the LWV Storybank****Jennifer Waggoner, LWV San Francisco, CA**

The League has made me the person I am today. No other organization has given me such amazing opportunities to learn, network with fascinating leaders in their fields, and get involved in my community. I have been involved with all sorts of organizations and none give me more satisfaction than being a League member.

**Melanie Harrington, LWV of Atlanta-Fulton County, GA**

When I graduated from law school years later and began looking for organizations to join, my mother asked, "Have you thought about joining the League". She recounted for me how the League enriched her life. I remembered that my mother and her fellow Leaguers were the audacious women who supported other audacious women, and they were the women who nurtured my dreams. Today my mother and I are both members of the League of Women Voters.

**Dianne Haselton, LWV of Charleston, SC**

When I joined League, I had two young children, two years of college and was the typical southern wife, mother, churchgoer. League welcomed me with open arms. We learned so much at our meetings about an array of topics. Quite an education! We helped each other, took turns baby-sitting, and friendships developed that are still in place 43 years later. Not only are these League women intelligent and knowledgeable, they are caring and concerned friends!

**Jo Sapp, LWV Columbia-Boone County, MO**

Wherever civic interests are served, chances are you'll find at least one League of Women Voters member. This dedicated corps of citizens holds a unique place in public life. We may be small, but we are mighty—in large part because of the principled way we approach political discourse. The League of Women Voters may not have all the answers, but it is dedicated to finding the best course through the rocky shoals of democracy.



**Marcia Lamel, LWV Palm Beach County, FL**

I continue to be amazed and encouraged by the work that is done by the League and the caliber of my fellow members. The Leaguers that I meet and work with are interesting, informative, active people who care about their communities and want to make a difference. They come from different places and different walks of life. Whatever else I am involved in (and there are many things), I value my interactions with League members, the issues I get to work on, and the positive benefits to our communities which we achieve. The League has certainly enriched my life.



**Carol Reimers, LWV of New York, NY**

Through my League experiences, I learned to be a citizen activist, improved my leadership skills, managed a non-profit organization and made some lifelong friends. Not only did I grow while being a member of the League, I had lots of fun doing it! My membership in the League gave me gifts that keep on giving now and for the rest of my life.

**Thea Brodtkin, LWV of Los Angeles, CA**

Who would have thought that I would be able to use my League experience to help me get through a difficult life change and to make me feel needed again? Thank you, LWV.

**Kathy Solecki, LWV Southwest Indiana**

These women are really smart, and hanging out with them inspires me to learn more about the issues and the candidates. It's been a great way to keep up with current events, make a difference in my community, and best of all, to enjoy some wonderful friendships.

**Mary Larsen, LWV of Greater Pittsburgh, PA**

As time went by, League provided the training for me to serve as Unit Leader, Discussion Leader and then President. It was then that I felt the influence the League could have in its community. My League membership has led me into some wonderful experiences. . . I am most grateful.



## Becoming a More Welcoming League

Leagues should examine how they welcome potential members and new members. This sounds very simple, but it is a critical piece to recruitment and retention. Think back to when you first joined the League – Were you familiar with League lingo? Did you know everyone at the meeting? We all know that first impressions mean a lot, so make the initial experiences of new and potential members great ones. Make individuals feel welcome and eager to join.

Many League members think of membership recruitment and retention as two separate practices. However...

*Good retention practices begin as soon as a new member is recruited and never stop.*

Retention is a continuous activity to which League time and resources should be devoted - just like membership recruitment! Below is a list of suggested best practices that Leagues can use to welcome new members, keep members engaged, and reach out to members considering leaving LWV.



### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

#### Welcome Packet

Every new member of your League should receive a Welcome Packet. Ideally, this would be information about your League, including a welcome letter from the president, a calendar of activities planned, a member contact list, and a small League item (such as a pin, lanyard, button, or bumper sticker). Some Leagues' resources might not permit creating something as elaborate as this, but new members need to know the basics of how the League works and how they can get involved. This is the first official communication from the League so make a good impression and think about what goes into the packet. Include the most critical pieces of information that they will need to get started, not everything. Overwhelming a new member is not a good strategy.

Be sure to send a Welcome Packet as soon as possible once a member's form and check have arrived. Your League will not make a good first impression if a new member's check isn't cashed for weeks or if they don't hear from you soon after deciding to join.



### Survey Interests

You can check with new members about topics or issues that interest them as well as how busy or engaged they hope to be – ongoing, one-time task, one task/month, etc. Also, ask some courtesy questions: What’s the best way to contact you? When are you available for meetings?

Ask some questions that might help League: What other groups are you active in? What are your skills – or what skills might you be interested in developing? How did you learn about the League?

Surveys can take different forms: an actual form sent via email or created using a survey tool, a hard copy survey, or a quick phone call.



*Check out the “Tools You Can Use” section at the back of the manual for sample interest surveys your League can customize and use!*

### Orientation

Many Leagues have had success hosting new member orientations at the beginning of a new League year or twice a year (in the fall and spring). These orientations should be a fun way to familiarize new members with League process, programs, lingo, and activities. Make it a casual experience by having a lunch or reception orientation. Don't be afraid to try new things and make sure there is time for them to ask their questions about the League. Provide concrete examples of the League’s work/successes and share individual, personal stories about the League.

### Mentoring Program

Start a mentoring program by pairing new members with seasoned members of the League. Mentors can give new members first-hand insight and advice about League practices and actions and provide them with valuable history. Consider pairing people together based on similar backgrounds or interests. The bond between new members and their mentors is irreplaceable, and many stay close throughout their years in League together.



### Introduction

It is always intimidating to be the new person in the group. New members should be introduced at their first meetings to the whole membership and recognized at annual meetings. Having the League president say, "Please welcome, our new members Jane Smith and John Doe," is simple and an easy way to open the door for other members to welcome them to the League and makes the new members feel welcomed. Leagues also might consider asking those gathered at an event to wear nametags. This will help the new member get to know the names of League members, too.

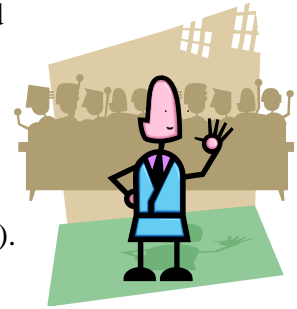
### President Outreach

The local League president (or his/her designee) should make a point to reach out to new members by calling them when they join and thanking them for becoming a member. This is a good time to ask new members what their interests are and to inform them about upcoming events. The personal welcome, interest, and invitation will mean a lot.



### New Member Ambassador/Committee

Leagues are encouraged to have a specially trained group to effectively and consistently communicate the value of membership. They can serve as “membership ambassadors” in communicating the value of League membership to non-members. The ambassadors can be trained to use consistent membership messages and to share the stories of specific League members (such as the reasons they’ve joined, the value of membership and the personal and League successes that they have enjoyed). The main job of the ambassador is to communicate these messages clearly and consistently, and most importantly, to ASK others to join the League!



Designate one member as the new member ambassador or create an entire committee of new member ambassadors. The ambassador(s) should be responsible for welcoming new members, sending them their packet of information, setting them up with their mentor, answering any questions they have, and keeping track of their interests.

A new person finally showed up to one of your events. . .and she’s young, too! There are so many ways you could welcome her to your League. So, what should you do? Here are a few tips:

- Make sure new people have time to casually, naturally, and comfortably get to know League members on their own terms by having social time with wine and appetizers before your event or meeting starts. Encourage everyone to mingle with people they don’t know and talk about non-League topics.
- Be open to allowing your new or potential members to decide how involved they’d like to be. Find out what THEY are interested in and look for ways to involve them in those areas. After meeting a new recruit, send a hand-written note to them thanking them for attending and letting them know when the next event will be. Don’t assume that they immediately want or have time to be your next newsletter editor or Voters Service chair. When you do approach them with the ASK to be more involved, by taking on a larger role like board member, be ready to streamline the role as needed to accommodate their work and personal lives. They will be more receptive if they do not see it as too much of a demand on their time. Once you get them engaged, they will likely remain that way.
- Find the right balance between being warm and welcoming and being overwhelming. Sometimes, our best intentions go awry. While you think it may be a great way to be inviting, it can just be embarrassing or too much to take in for someone just getting their bearings. For instance, introducing every single Board member to a new person at a meeting; singling out a new member to an entire group at an event and asking them to say a few words



## KEEP MEMBERS ENGAGED

The best way to retain members is to never have them consider leaving the League in the first place.

*League members who are engaged, having fun, and feel fulfilled will stick with the League for the long haul.*

### Have an Agenda

Nothing frustrates people more than not knowing what is going on. People don't want to waste their time. Try to have an agenda for every League meeting. It doesn't have to be fancy. Simply list the items of business and an estimated timeframe in which things will be addressed. Members, new and old, will appreciate the organization and consideration for their time. Less time will be wasted, leaving more to connect with fellow League members.

### Create a Calendar

Just like an agenda, people want to know what is going on in the upcoming year. At the beginning of the year send all members a tentative calendar.

Nothing is set in stone, but giving members an idea of what will be happening in the coming year will allow them to plan accordingly and set aside dates when appropriate. It will also help your Board and committees organizing your League events maximize the media, community visibility, and recruitment opportunities in advance. LWVUS/EF has a national calendar that lists many important dates that your League may want to consider placing on its calendar. The LWVUS/EF calendar is located in the "Members" area of [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org).

### Continuously Promote Member Benefits

Why are you a member of the League? Mentioning the benefits of membership and leadership development opportunities, both tangible and intangible, in member communications like your League's monthly newsletter will remind people what they are getting out of all the hands-on work they do. Members join for a variety of reasons - from shaping the important issues in their community to getting the online communications from LWVUS. Remind people of the benefits of being a League member wherever possible.

### Remind Members

Send out e-mail reminders the week of an event (in addition to listing events in your newsletter). Very simply, people are busy and may forget about events that were announced weeks or months before. Reminders can be quick and easy. Assign someone who is working on the event the task of e-mailing the entire membership when the event approaches. A quick reminder will get more people at events and will remedy any "I meant to go to that!" laments.

### Create Small Opportunities

Not everyone has a lot of time to contribute to the League. Many people want to help but are afraid that they will get assigned to be a chair of a committee if they speak up. In all League undertakings, make sure that there are small opportunities for members to help out with and be sure to announce that these small opportunities exist. Whether it is sending out the reminders or

delivering voters' guides to the library, small tasks make people feel like they are contributing without being overwhelmed.

### **Make Members Feel Special**

Always, always, always make members aware that they are special and appreciated. Send thank you e-mails or notes to the committee or members that helped put together an event. Recognize League members who have give 15, 25, 35 or even 50 years of service to the organization. Recognizing birthdays with a cake at one meeting a month is a nice addition to the business at hand. Whatever way your League chooses to express appreciation, just be sure that members know that they are extraordinary for all that they do in the service of the League.



### **Member Interests**

Try surveying member interests at the beginning of the year after you create your calendar. This will give event leaders a better feel for who may want to assist with their event. Interest surveys also provide you with an opportunity to ask what sort of tasks members would be willing to undertake throughout the year. You can plan events accordingly when you know who is going to be available to help. You will also see if there are any topics of interest to your members that may not be being covered during the year. This can be remedied early in the year, before their interest in the League drops. Sample surveys are available in the “Tools You Can Use” section.

*Knowing what people like to do and discuss  
is very important in keeping interest in the League high.*

### **Satisfaction Survey**

A survey will examine ways in which the League can better meet the members' needs. The information members provide is vital to the betterment of your League. This is a time for them to voice any comments, concerns and criticisms. Let them know that if they don't feel like answering a specific question, they don't have to. Assure them that their personal information will not be shared and responses will be kept anonymous.

### **Have Fun!**

Above all else, make sure your members enjoy the League and are having fun. Just because we take on the important issues facing our communities does not mean we have to be serious all the time. Bring a bottle of wine or have a potluck at your next meeting. Have educational reception events - combining the League with some hors d'oeuvres or finger foods. Strictly social events can lift the spirits of League members and are just as important in creating change in the community. The League is a social network by nature and League friendships often last a lifetime. Why not make the time we spend together as enjoyable as possible?



## DON'T GIVE UP ON MEMBERS

It's always discouraging when members drop from League rosters. However, your League doesn't have to be passive when members decide not to renew. Reach out with the tactics below to ensure you have done everything possible to keep that person a member of the League.

### Ask

When a member doesn't renew their membership, make sure that someone is assigned to reach out to them. First, send out an e-mail reminding them that they have not renewed (some people just need a reminder). If they don't renew, call the member and ask why they are not renewing. Listen to their concerns and make note of them to take to the Board, but also be sure to ask them to reconsider. Have your local League president send a note or call the lapsed member and ask them to reconsider again and address their concerns. Be sure to let them know that the League values their membership and wants them to continue to grow with the League. Make sure you exhaust all three of these methods before giving up. The personal ask always has tremendous power in recruitment and retention.

### Follow Up

Whether a member does or does not rejoin after asking, make sure someone is responsible for following up with either a "Thank you" or a "We'll miss you" note or e-mail. Again, making the member feel wanted and valued (whether they renew or not) is crucial to future interactions. Sincere follow-up leaves the member with a good impression of the League, and the former member will be more likely to reconnect with the League at a later date or perhaps support the organization in some other way.

### Reconnect

Revisit your old member lists and reconnect with members who have dropped in the past five years. Send them "We miss you" post cards or e-mails, an invitation to an event, or a discounted membership rate if they reestablish their membership. Former members know the importance of the League and are more likely to rejoin the League than those not familiar with the organization.

### SUCCESS STORY:

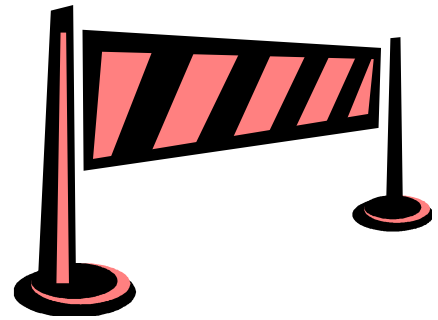
The **LWV of New Castle County (DE) Voter** often contains an entire section welcoming new members. When space in the *Voter* isn't limited, they include a picture, contact information, and a brief biography of the new member! Personal contact and making people feel welcome is one of the most important aspects of membership recruitment. Identifying new faces, bringing them "into the fold" at meetings, and extending positive messages is the best way to make new and prospective members feel welcome. The Leagues in Delaware are also working to do away with some of the "League lingo" that is used at their meetings to help make them more inclusive experiences.

## Engaging Members to Lead the League

Leadership Development is the process of developing leadership skills in people so that they are empowered to be involved in League decision-making practices.

The League, at all levels, has a system for almost everything. We have a system for determining our program for the upcoming year, a system for studying an issue and coming to consensus, and so much more. The one thing for which we don't have a system is succession planning to ensure each League has a prepared, supported, and motivated leadership team.

Leagues are faced with different leadership challenges. Some Leagues have one League leader who has been the President for years, who is tired and who would love to step down if another leader could be found. Some Leagues have 50 members but are on the verge of disbanding because no one can be found to step up and lead the League. Still other Leagues have a very cliquy Board who does not want or welcome newer leaders to take the helm. Many League Presidents across the country are brand new members who were immediately asked to become President and who were not ready to take on the responsibility. While the challenges are myriad, the solution is the same.



*To survive and thrive, we must start systematically preparing and encouraging individuals to lead the League.*

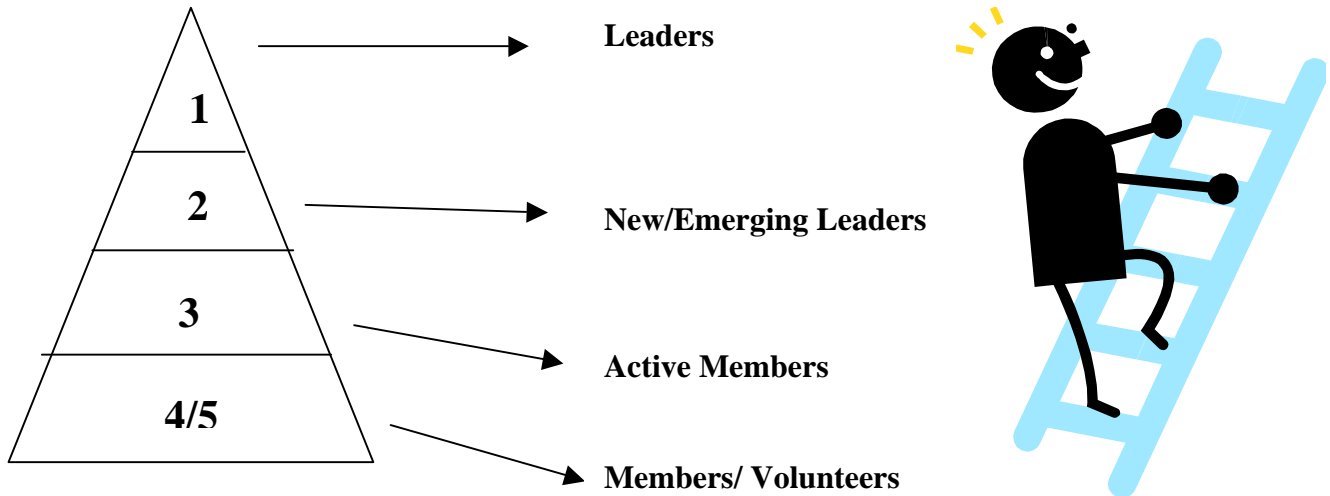
This has been done at times and by some Leagues, but doing this in an organized and intentional way ensures new leaders are developed. Leadership development is a key component for successful Leagues and will lead to more engaged members, stronger communities and a more vibrant democracy.

The question is: what systematic structure should we use to ensure members are developing and using leadership skills?

## Utilizing the Leadership Ladder

LWVUS has done extensive research on leadership theories and on the practical leadership challenges facing our local Leagues. We found that the best way to view the process of developing League leaders is as a ladder, on which we continuously try to move capable and enthusiastic individuals up and up.

The basics of the leadership ladder can be seen in the diagram below.



<b>1</b>	<b>Leader</b>	Board member or key committee chairperson, can be a leader on key events and projects, the League can count on the fruits of their labor, they feel skilled and confident organizing others, can be trusted to carry out activities, have undergone leadership training and reach out to develop emerging leaders
<b>2</b>	<b>New/Emerging Leader</b>	Identify as a League leader, take on a specific responsibility, make specific commitments, are dependable, been through some trainings, helps to support and train new members with Leadership Development Team guidance
<b>3</b>	<b>Active Member</b>	Attends meetings or issue committee meetings regularly, begins to identify with League as “we”, Leadership Development plan is started
<b>4</b>	<b>Member</b>	Sends League a check, has the right to participate in organizational decisions
<b>5</b>	<b>Volunteer</b>	On our contact list, have attended at least one event or participated in at least one Action Alert

Basically, a League will (ideally!) have a large group of members and volunteers who start at the base of the ladder. These are individuals who have may come to a League event or two, are on your contact list, and may pay dues to support and be affiliated with the League. Each



member should be seen as a potential leader. While not everyone who is in this group will want to join the League and take on responsibilities to lead the League, some will. Continue to ASK these individuals to attend League events and engage them by sending them action alerts and newsletters.

Once a member or volunteer has officially joined the League by paying dues and has come to multiple events, they should be considered an active member. Active members are prime candidates for future leadership positions and should be engaged to start moving them up the ladder. A great way to engage an active member, who has shown interest in being involved in the League, is to reach out to them to find out what they like best about the League and how they'd like to be more involved.

*It's important to start ASKING active members to take on small tasks and get involved with the League more and more little by little.*

The way we communicate and ask members to take on leadership opportunities is just as important. Much like we need to change the way we speak to potential members about why to join the League, we need to change the way we speak to our current members about leadership opportunities with the League. Instead of looking at League leadership as a chore, let's remember what makes League great. We need to reframe how we think about and offer personal leadership development opportunities to potential new League leaders. By doing so, we can continue to ASK capable and enthusiastic individuals to take on more and more responsibilities to move them up the ladder.

*It will be easier to find individuals, who would like the opportunity to take on the unique benefits of leading the League, when we emphasize the wonderful opportunity it has afforded so many of us.*



*Check out the "Tools You Can Use" section at the back of the manual for a worksheet to help your Nominating Committee and Board reflect and brainstorm how to talk about League leadership in a positive and enticing way!*

Having a larger pool of individuals will obviously help in your efforts to develop League leaders gradually. Perhaps there is "old guard leadership" that discourages any new leaders? Or lots of long time leaders and lots of new members, but no pathway between them for new leaders to advance? There should always be more new people coming in than leaders at the top of an organization, so there are lots of new people to grow into leadership positions. Successful organizations are always bringing in new members who have leadership qualities, building relationships with them, understanding their interests and motivations, and finding new roles in the organization that develop their leadership skills and qualities. That is how organizations grow and stay strong. The more members you recruit, the easier the leadership development



process will become. However, no matter what size your League, the important part to remember is to have this systematic structure in place to continuously develop the leadership skills of interested individuals.

As individuals move up the ladder, it is important to make sure that the individual is being fully engaged, without being completely overwhelmed. A good way to ensure this is true for all of your emerging leaders is to consider their level of comfort in taking on new tasks. There are four different “zones of learning,” ranging from the easy zone, in which a task can be done with very little effort or discomfort, to the discomfort zone, in which a leader is overwhelmed and ill-equipped to complete the task at hand. Leadership development happens when people are in their learning zone.

Here is a description of the different zones of learning:

**Easy Zone:** Tasks and activities are so comfortable that the person doing it finds no challenge. While these tasks may be boring for one person, they may be a challenge for someone else. Consider training a new leader to take over this task or activity.

**Comfort Zone:** Tasks and activities that require skill but a person is really comfortable doing. While staying in this zone is comfortable, they need to move outside the comfort zone to develop new skills.

**Learning Zone:** Experts say that a person learns best when they are outside your comfort zone trying a newly mastered skill – this is the learning zone. Here it is good to have support preparing for the activity and an evaluation of their work afterwards.

**Discomfort Zone:** This is when one feels completely out of their depth. Think about getting help breaking the project into smaller pieces and picking one that would feel comfortable to a new person trying it with support. We don’t want people to be doing work that is in their discomfort zone.







Remember to always try to keep individuals within the circles. Going outside the learning zone will not be fun or interesting for a leader, only overwhelming. If you see someone is very comfortable doing a task, you can start to consider trying to push them towards more responsibilities and think of a newer leader to take on the easier tasks.

## **Engaging the Board in Leadership Development**

While leadership development is not simply a job for the Board or the Nominating Committee, it is important to fully engage them in your leadership development efforts.

Aside from having the Board brainstorm reasons why it is great to be a League leader, you should engage them in reaching out to League members to be more active and to continuously move up the Leadership Ladder.

*Basically, the Board should always be incorporating succession planning into the everyday work of the League.*

Here are a few ways for the Board can develop future leaders:

- When planning each event or activity, have the Board (or the respective committee) incorporate leadership development into their planning before, during, and after the event/activity. They should consider asking “who else” can be incorporated into planning the event, discuss what small tasks can be divvied up and given to potential future leaders, find ways to publicly thank individuals for helping to make the event possible, and showcase the opportunities provided to League leaders throughout.
- Board members can start mentoring rising leaders in the organization. Have the Board brainstorm a few names of individuals who could be great League leaders and then should interview these individuals to find out what their interests are. The Board should reach out to these individuals to assist in planning and executing events and activities that pertain to their interests. A great way to learn is to shadow others. Give someone the opportunity to start learning what the Board does *before* they are thrown into their discomfort zone as a new and unprepared Board member.
- Have the Board brainstorm things they wish they had, such as an up-to-date website or some extra help on program planning. Can you then brainstorm ways to get League members involved in achieving these goals? Maybe a younger member of the League is very tech-savvy and could help update the website. Maybe you’ve seen a couple individuals consistently come to program planning meetings in the past. Can you ask them to help this year?



## Engaging the Nominating Committee in Leadership Development

Engaging the nominating committee in leadership development is absolutely necessary to ensuring prepared, enthusiastic, and welcoming leaders are chosen to lead the League for years to come.

### Evaluate the strengths of your current leadership team

It is useful to assess the skills of your current leadership team to identify the skills you currently have and what you may want to build or strengthen within the Board of Directors. Sometimes this assessment or dialogue affords an individual board member the opportunity to look for ways to strengthen their own personal skills in an area, take on different responsibilities that suit the member's interests and time better, or help find others who can support them or fill the needed role.

### Take Concrete Steps towards Creating a Strong Board

The excitement and energy, generated by enthusiastic League members in the communities where they live, is palpable. Here are some concrete steps to initiate a recruitment process:

- Determine what qualities you are seeking.
- Create a job description.
- Invite new prospective leaders to participate with the board in activities of the League.
- Advertise positions you want to fill. Use word of mouth to see if there are already good candidates in your midst. Always remember to ask yourself “who else” could do this job?

### ASK Individuals to Become Leaders

Asking someone to take on a leadership position is much like asking a potential new member to join the League. It may be awkward at first, but it will get easier (and hopefully more rewarding!) over time.

### What to Say to a Potential Leader:

- Stress the fact that the League offers a good learning experience, that the League is fun and that it is the basis of lasting friendships.
- Remember to share what the League has personally meant to you, to your own development as a leader, and to your community.
- Ask the individual what types of activities would be of interest to them and listen carefully to what they like to do and where they feel they can be successful.
- Offer a chance for them to become involved in areas that fit their interests.

\*These materials were adapted from materials developed by the Maine People's Alliance with *excerpts of some materials developed with Northeast Action, the Northwest Federation of Community Organizations (NWFCO), and Midwest Academy* and from the *Little Green Book*.

## Qualities of a Leader

Leaders come in all shapes and sizes. Our communities are filled with every-day leaders, who run businesses, non-profits, governments, community organizations and associations. Strong leaders have different goals and aspirations, as well as different skills, strengths and weaknesses. But, they have a common set of identifiable characteristics that can be learned, practiced and strengthened.

*Leadership qualities are attributes that we can identify and develop in our emerging leaders.*

### Practices of a Leader

Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner, leading researchers and authors in the study of leadership, believe there are *five practices* which exemplary leaders follow. These five practices are listed below and provide a top-level description of what your League will need in a leader.

**1. Leaders model the way.** They clarify the values that guide them. They find their own voice so they can clearly and distinctly articulate their values. They set their own personal standard of excellence as an example for others, and earn the right and respect to lead through their direct involvement and action.



**2. Leaders inspire a shared vision.** They help breathe life into dreams and get others to see the exciting possibilities of those dreams. They envision the future by imagining exciting possibilities, and enlisting others in a common vision by appealing to shared aspirations.

**3. Leaders challenge the process.** Strong leaders look for innovative ways to grow or improve their organization. They look for ways to move beyond the status quo – experiment by generating small wins and learning from mistakes.

**4. Leaders enable others to act.** They empower other leaders, foster collaboration and build spirited teams with trust as the foundation of their team relationships. They strengthen others by sharing power and making it possible for others to do good work.

**5. Leaders encourage the heart.** They address the need to uplift spirits and share in the rewards of effort. Good leaders recognize, celebrate and honor the contributions made by every team member. They appreciate others and create a spirit of community.



## Qualities of a Leader

In other words, there are certain qualities which you can look for and develop in League members who are engaged in League work and are interested in taking a leading role in the League.

- **Motivates, inspires, & develops others:** A good leader motivates, inspires, and develops others and is recognized as a leader. This is most important – above all, *leaders are people who have followers*.
- **Values & Vision:** Good leaders are clear about their values and have some idea about what they would like the world to be like. A good leader is committed to work to advance those values and vision.
- **Positive Outlook:** Leaders look for solutions to problems instead of focusing on the difficulties. Leaders can see through disappointments and setbacks to stay positive about achieving our vision. Leaders are not easily discouraged. When leaders fail, they try, try, try again. Leaders bounce back.
- **Imagination:** Good leaders rely on their imaginations to find creative solutions to problems, to think of solutions they've never tried before.
- **Confidence:** A leader that is confident will understand their weaknesses and ask for help when they need it. They will also stand up for themselves and their organization even in the face of adversity.
- **Trust in people:** Good leaders believe in people. They encourage them, listen to them, and respect them. They see the potential in others and want to help them use that potential to the greatest degree possible. Leaders don't violate the *Iron Rule of Organizing*: Never do for others what they must do for themselves. Good leaders are able to share power and responsibility. They do not wish or need to do everything or control everything. They believe in collective leadership and encourage and develop the talents of others.
- **Critical Perspective:** Leaders are frequently the people who ask "why" and "why not?" A healthy skepticism – especially of unaccountable leaders and institutions – is a useful quality in a leader.
- **Sense of Humor:** A sense of humor acts as a safety valve for anger. It's a way of staying sane during the struggle for change. Good leaders can sit back and laugh once in a while.
- **Agitation:** A leader stirs things up. You can't get clothes clean without an agitator!
- **Courage:** A leader has courage and is willing to take risks. As the saying goes, "Nothing ventured, nothing gained." A good leader is willing to accept challenges and to work outside their "comfort zone."



- **Passion at Injustice:** Passion can propel you to act. Passion can be helpful and constructive when it is focused and aimed for good.
- **Open to learning:** Leaders see mistakes and disappointments as opportunities to learn. They understand that one can't get ahead without falling behind sometimes. As Samuel Beckett said, "Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better."
- **Listening:** A key skill for all leaders is active listening. Understanding each person's self-interest, motivations, worries, and hopes allows us to match their self-interest with organizational roles and activities to maximize their interest and engagement.
- **Personally organized and accountable:** A good leader lives up to his/her commitments and is interested in reciprocal relationships. A good leader holds others accountable for their commitments and is willing to be held accountable by others. They need good systems for keeping track of meetings, following up with people, making calls, etc. Without good systems, follow-through does not happen and commitments not upheld.
- **Lot's more...!** What are qualities that could be added here that we value in our leaders?

## Expectations of a Leader

### Leaders bring people together and nurture community

Often, people are leaders in their families and among their friends but do not see those skills as leadership skills. They are. Leaders are aware of the people around them and supporting their growth. Leaders inspire and motivate others because they care about the group, and not just themselves. Leaders build community.

All leaders need to be able to recruit others to work with them. Learning the nuts and bolts of a recruitment plan and having experience in recruiting others is an important skill. Leaders also understand "Event Math" = you always have to recruit more people than actually show up!

One-on-one organizing brings people into deeper relationship with one another and builds stronger more powerful communities and organizations. Ultimately, people get involved because someone they trust and respect invites them to step up and supports them in doing so.

Without new members and leaders, organizations get stale. In a healthy, growing organization, all leaders see developing new leaders as a key leadership task and build it into their activities.

### Leaders help build their organization.

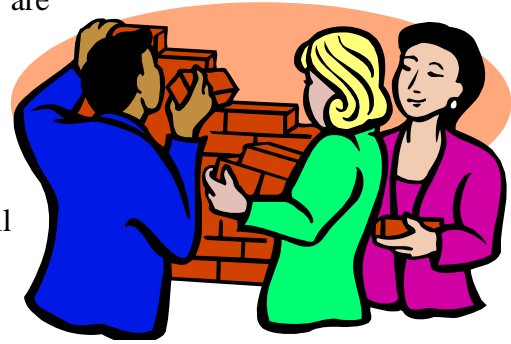
Leaders are skilled at inviting others to join, reminding them, turning them out, and supporting them to stay involved. Leaders understand that it takes work to build and maintain community, and they are willing to do that work.



There is nothing like a badly run meeting to turn off new members. Being able to run efficient meetings (where everyone is heard and decisions are made in a timely manner) is an important leadership skill. Leaders can also participate in a meeting without dominating so that others can shine. Leaders know when to step forward and when to step back.

Community and civic organizations are strongest when they are accountable to their members. Building democratic practices into our organizations and taking the time to follow them is an important leadership skill.

While we mostly rely on organized people – we also need organized money to be successful. Fundraising is a key skill for a successful grassroots leader. There are many kinds of fundraising.



All leaders need to develop skills in setting measurable and realistic goals and following through. Leaders know that event planning takes work and commitment. They are thorough and organized.

We learn by doing. And we learn better when we get feedback on what we did. Strong organizations and leaders have a culture of evaluation where every major activity or event is reviewed to better understand what went well and where we can improve.

### **Leaders do outreach and communicate about issues.**

Communicating about issues that we care deeply about can be hard, but it is important if we are going to bring others along with us. Leaders are able to talk to people they know and people they don't know about community issues they think are important.

Leaders know that to make change, we have to get out there and talk to people. The League is an outward looking organization that wants to improve our democracy, education citizens and make our communities better. To achieve this, we need to reach out to others and engage them in what we do.

### **Leaders communicate with members, the media and allies.**

Leaders can respond to Action Alerts to contact their public officials on a League issue, or invite and help others to take action.

Understanding what different media outlets look for in a story can help shape our presentations to best insure our story is covered. Remember to explore new media outlets too.

Leaders need to be able to clearly communicate the League vision, to connect this vision with others, and help members learn and celebrate. The key to any good presentation is to take the time to lay out the key points to make and to identify a few stories that best make those points – this is developing a clear message and personal story.



Once one has their story – they need to understand the audience and figure out how to connect what is said to that audience. They also want to have the presentation connect back to the broader organizational vision.

Being a good public speaker requires practice, practice, practice.

**Leaders help plan and carry out strategies to implement the League mission.**

Knowing the formal process of how a bill becomes a law is important. Equally important is the understanding of the forces that influence the democratic process.

A key piece to achieve our vision is understanding how the electoral process works and what roles the League plays in advancing full participation in this process.

Helping other members see connections between issues and how to develop a shared vision for action.

Leaders need to use good judgment in making decisions and that requires a clear understanding of the complex relationships of our organization, our allies, and our opponents.



**Leaders build relationships with public figures.**

Leaders understand the League Nonpartisan Policy and our issue positions. Leaders build relationships with elected officials to build impact for the League to help us achieve our goals.

Actions are where we show our strength and numbers to our members and our targets. Learning how to plan an effective action includes a turn-out plan, developing a message and developing creative tactics.

A key leadership skill is to be able to make a presentation on behalf of the League.

Being a leader requires one to think on their feet and show good judgment. Role-playing scenarios ahead of time can help ensure that one is prepared for every outcome.

**Leaders understand and can help participate in coalitions.**

We are stronger when we work together in coalition with allies. Knowing the keys to building and maintaining strong coalition partnerships is an important leadership skill. Leaders understand how coalitions work, and the benefits and tradeoffs of joining them, and they can participate in decision-making around coalition participation.

Leaders can network with other individuals and organizations to build relationships. By building relationships and joining forces with others, our organization becomes stronger.



## Chapter 7: Engaging Members to Lead

If people are clear on their own – and their organization's – self interest, then they can understand the self interest of allies and opponents, which allows one to make commitments and compromise.



*Check out the “Tools You Can Use” section at the back of the manual for worksheets to help you and your League Board recognize your own leadership qualities and those of your members!*



## League Leadership Models and Job Descriptions

Until recently, the majority of local Leagues have successfully used the traditional management model (one person serving as president) to lead the League. However, to keep up with the ever-busier volunteers who make the League the great organization it is today, the League should rethink how we lead ourselves and how we most wisely use our volunteers' precious and limited time.

As Leagues are adapting to meet current volunteer needs, e.g. enough time and flexibility for volunteers to successfully be president, they have begun to experiment effectively with different management structures. A number of state and local Leagues use one of a variety of non-traditional models, which are whole-heartedly recommended by LWVUS.

Sometimes they adopt a particular model; in other cases they are more flexible, using different models to address their own changing leadership circumstances. Increasingly, local Leagues are trying one or more of the non-traditional models outlined in this section to address their leadership challenges.

*Regardless of what model your League decides to use to structure you leaders, it's always important to remember that League leadership is a team effort.*

Just as the Membership Chair is not the only individual responsible for trying to increase membership and asking new potential members to join and the Nominating Committee Chair is not the only individual responsible for finding and training new leaders, the president is NOT the only one who should lead areas of the League's work.

LWVUS recommends trying out a non-traditional model in your League to keep up with the busy lives of your members.

### **The Management Team Model** (four or more persons)

The Management Team model has four or more persons doing the work done traditionally by only the president. Leagues that use this model often have the rest of the board follow the traditional model (explained later in this chapter): one or more vice-presidents, a secretary and treasurer, or secretary/treasurer, and a pre-determined number of elected and appointed directors.



However, some Leagues use the Management Team approach to share all board duties. For instance, one large city League with an office has a five-member Management Team. To handle administrative tasks and communications with the public and members, each Management Team member goes to the office one day a week and takes care of everything that comes in on that day.



## Chapter 9: Structures for Success

For continuity, Management Team members keep daily logs, detailing what was done each day and what needs to be done on subsequent days.

One local League has a nine-member Management Team constituting the entire board. At the beginning of the year, jobs are defined and divided among team members according to individual interests and talents. Responsibilities are broken down into small, manageable increments and most team members do two or three of these smaller jobs over the year.

Other Leagues assign positions to Management Team members based on the current year's goals. One team member would be responsible for election-related matters, another might be charged with coordinating a proposed study process, and a third would focus on fundraising and development. These responsibilities would change from year to year, depending on the League's priorities.

A few Leagues use a combination of the shared presidency (three persons acting as president) in combination with management teams made up of the remaining board members.

There has also been a movement in the League to think of new, creative, and effective ways to structure League leadership, especially for smaller Leagues where it may be hard to find enough people to fill up an entire slate of board members. By working as a team, a smaller board can be just as valuable, powerful and successful as a larger board.

Below is a new, streamlined way to consider structuring your League's leadership. Leagues should feel free to adapt this structure to meet their needs and resources.

The **Leadership Team** includes a Spokesperson/Convener, Money Person/Treasurer, Webmaster, and Member Coordinator. This team works as a committee of the whole to plan and coordinate mission-critical, community-oriented activities and to create an annual calendar with public meetings to educate members and community and to raise money, create media relationship, and develop ties with allied organizations.

The team meets quarterly to review League principles, policies and annual goals; develop leadership skills of team members; identify visibility activities between public meetings to maintain a year-round community presence; and propose annual local program.



**The Leadership Team consists of:**

- **Spokesperson/Convener**
  - Presides at team meetings (including developing the agenda and identifying issues of policy or governance for discussion)
  - Speaks for the League (orally and in writing)
  - Represents the League at state and national League meetings
- **Money Person/Treasurer**
  - Develops budget
  - Maintains League funds
  - Oversees dues payment and renewals
  - Keeps minutes for team meetings and League records
- **Webmaster**
  - Creates and maintains an up-to-date website
  - Coordinates website content to include features usually published in a VOTER/newsletter
- **Member Coordinator**
  - Cheerleader for the League – encourages management team and members to build the League by asking others to join
  - Develops methods to recruit welcome and involve new members in discreet tasks
  - Makes membership recruitment a part of every event
  - Devises system for regular communications with members and prospects (telephone tree and/or an e-mail list)
- **Advocacy Person (Optional)**
  - Keeper of local League positions
  - Ensures member understanding of local, state, national positions
  - Undertakes targeted advocacy campaigns including LWVUS and state Action Alerts

**The Shared Presidency Model (two or three persons)**

Because the single presidency can be very time consuming, Leagues are finding it increasingly difficult to find a candidate willing or able to devote so much time to a volunteer position. In the shared presidency model, the presidency is shared by two or three persons. The rest of the board follows the traditional model: one or more vice-presidents, a secretary and treasurer (or secretary/treasurer) and a pre-determined number of elected and appointed directors.

While members of the shared presidency have the same duties as those listed for the single presidency, in the shared presidency the duties are divided up clearly between two or three people in a variety of ways. The division of duties should be based on the experience, available time, and personalities and interests of the participants.



Responsibilities (which are clearly designated and commonly understood among the co-presidents and board) may be divided by activities, such as Administrative, Program, Advocacy, and Voter Services. Activities may be divided between internal and external League functions. Internal functions include things such as presiding at meetings, making plans, setting goals, and evaluating progress. External functions include speaking for the League and promoting and representing the League.

Alternatively, administrative duties such as presiding at meetings, representing the League, and speaking for the League can be divided or alternated. Responsibilities can also be divided by blocks of time. For instance, each member of the shared presidency can perform all of the duties of president for a portion of the League year, with support from the other president(s) during these periods.

Some Leagues utilize the shared presidency model with just two participants and provide for election of the co-presidents in alternate years. The result is a year of learning for the less experienced member of the team, followed by a year of mentoring for the newly elected co-president.

### **The Traditional Model**

In the traditional model, one person serves as president. The rest of the board is made up of one or more vice-presidents, a secretary and treasurer (or secretary/treasurer) and a pre-determined number of elected and appointed directors as outlined in the bylaws. Presidential duties include presiding at meetings, speaking for the League (orally and in all written communications), promoting and representing the League, making plans and setting goals, coordinating work of administrative, educational, and advocacy committees, overseeing League funds and fundraising, setting and following policies, communicating with the membership, fostering leadership development and succession, supporting League activities, and supervising personnel, if pertinent. The president does not do all of these things; the president sees that they get done.

Some Leagues use the president-elect model to help develop leadership within the organization. In this model, the president-elect learns while observing and assisting the president. The president-elect assists the president for one term and then assumes the presidency for the following term. This method has proved effective regardless of term length. This model also can be used to invite other potential leaders to learn about various League activities/roles, such as “shadowing” the voter services chair. What would it look like if we had other people learning from our current leadership? How could that help to build our next generation of League leaders?

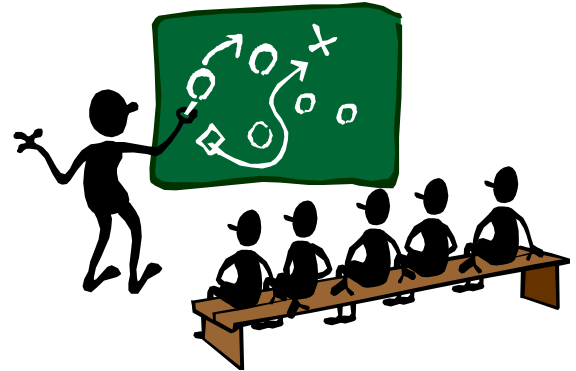
The **Traditional Board**, as a whole, sets priorities and goals for the organization, carries out overall planning and decision-making, supports membership, development and visibility activities, represents and promotes the League in the community, and safeguards the League’s reputation for nonpartisanship.

**The President:**

- Leads the League.
- Speaks for the League.
- Empowers and trains League leaders.
- Organizes and delegates League tasks.
- Convenes and presides over meetings.

**Other board members:**

- Attend and participate in all board meetings.
- Identify and mentor new leaders.
- Promote growth and diversity in membership.
- Support and attend League activities.
- Become knowledgeable about League positions and practices.
- Explain and promote the League in the community.
- Understand and abide by the League's nonpartisan policy.
- Assist in fundraising activities.
- Make personal financial contributions, in addition to dues.
- Attend state and regional League meetings.
- Carry out individual assignments.

**Division of Work**

Because division of work is very personal and dependent on interests, expertise, time, and personality, the participants of both the Shared Presidency and the Management Team models should collectively determine and be clear together about the allocation of these shared duties. Flexibility is necessary. Outlining duties of a specific structure in the bylaws or having someone outside the shared presidency, such as the Nominating Committee, make these decisions can sometimes be too inflexible.



**This page left intentionally blank.**

## Leadership Training and Transitions

In a strong League, training is ongoing, just as it is in the corporate world. Board members should learn all they can about the League itself. They should have ongoing training about their job as board member. They should learn about marketing the League, as well as how to manage League policies. They should fulfill their roles as “frontline ambassadors” for the organization, inviting people to join, creating a welcoming presence for new members and a dynamic organization that attracts new leaders. There are additional areas where training is helpful to board members, such as understanding League positions, understanding the organization’s finances, and other best practices in board governance areas.

### Develop an Annual Orientation for the Incoming Board

Each year, the board of directors should participate in an orientation. Both newly-elected and incumbent directors should attend. Leadership staff (if there are any) is also invited. The Nominating Committee, in conjunction with the new president or management team, can help outline the orientation. A good orientation sets the tone for the year's activities. Key elements include a discussion of board roles and League’s purpose and programs.

### Establish Intentional Learning Opportunities for Board Members

Is there an outside speaker that could participate in a board meeting to provide League leaders with insight on a given topic, such as marketing or new technologies? Is there a webinar that the board can view together and discuss? Is there a book that a League leader can preview and share with the leadership team? In other words, how can we provide some “brain stretching” time for our League leaders? How do we help to ensure that they feel satisfied in the role they have -- that there is some opportunity for personal growth or evolution?



### Set Up Mentors

We don’t often use this term in League. However, when asked why members enjoy their time in League, consistently one of the top reasons is: “Because of the smart individuals in the League.” And, another common response is “Because I learn so much in League.” Most Leagues don’t have formal mentoring programs established, but it does happen to a certain extent informally. But, what if this were more formalized? What if Leagues intentionally mentored individuals to be new leaders?

Instead by association or happenstance, League leaders can seek out individuals to “shadow” them. They can provide a meaningful and challenging experience for individuals who want to learn more about the League, learn some specific skills, and gain new confidence as a leader.



## Transitions in Leadership

To ensure a smooth transition from leader to leader, it is critical that a structured process is in place. Once a new leader has been identified, the current League leader should schedule a meeting to review the core components of their role and provide a report on the League's specific successes and challenges in their given area/portfolio. The overall goal of this meeting is to provide the new leader with as much detail as possible about the efforts made to date.



It's also useful to create a small transition packet, which will provide a new leader with the comprehensive overview of the current board's goals and their progress toward achieving them. This packet might include an evaluative piece by the current board (or the individual member). How did their tenure go? Were they personally satisfied? Does it feel like the organization is on track? What are the challenges or unfinished business items that need immediate attention?

The meeting or conversation between the outgoing and incoming members might include some of the following discussion topics:

- What are the priorities of the incoming board? How do these relate to those of the outgoing board?
- How do these goals support organizational growth? Will they help to build membership? Will they continue to support leadership development?
- Did the current board make key contacts or build relationships with media and allied organizations? If so, how can these be fostered?
- Do you have any advice for building teams with the League?
- How can we continue/build stronger ties with the community?

While these suggestions about transitioning leadership may sound very obvious, these intentional one-on-one meetings between leaders don't automatically happen. We often don't find a structured way to value the experiences of our past leaders, and their knowledge is invaluable to the health and vitality of the League.

In some cases, there are personality challenges. Or, in other instances, a leader may just feel so "burned out" that they don't want to make this final effort of leadership transition. But, it is an important part of a leader's legacy and it can help to ensure that new leaders get off to a strong start. It helps to ensure that the League moves forward in a positive way. If these types of conversations are difficult to have, leaders can look to a third-party (such as another board member or their coach) to help facilitate.



### THE LEAGUE WAY OLD VS. NEW

As the organization continues to evolve (e.g., embracing new technologies, adopting new ways of doing business), it is sometimes difficult for longtime League leaders to embrace these changes. It is critically important that we value their experiences in the League, AND at the same time, we need to be more nimble to ensure that we continue to have a strong impact in our communities.

With some notable exceptions regarding areas such as nonpartisanship, there are few absolutes on how we MUST do things in League. Guidance on streamlining League operations are on the LWVUS website.

One of the important parts of being a leader is being able to listen and appreciate different perspectives and points of view. Leaders need to balance what has worked in the past and embrace what may work better in the future – all while not sacrificing our core mission.

Some Leagues have intentionally set up “wisdom councils” or other vehicles for past leaders to continue to share their knowledge and experiences. Others have asked these former leaders to mentor new members, serve on off-board committees, or even take on whole new portfolios (if they want more learning).

Our history as an organization is one of our greatest assets and also one of our greatest challenges. Current leaders need to be forward-thinking while not sacrificing the efforts, reputation and trust that the League has established in its 90 years. There is no easy or quick answer to finding this balance, but it provides opportunities for learning, mentoring and building an even stronger organization if acknowledged and intentionally addressed.



**This page left intentionally blank.**

## Building Your Team

The notion that a League leader can “do it all” or “go it alone” is false. In order for individuals to be fulfilled and for the League to build itself for the future, we must work in groups or teams. To date, one of the keys to the successful implementation of the Membership Leadership Development program has been the establishment of League teams at the local, state and national levels. These individuals are brought together around a common goal, they have a variety of skills, and they share the workload.

As we move further into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the League will need to better accommodate the ever-busier volunteers by expecting less from each individual and more out of the team effort. That is why it is so crucial for League leaders to understand how to effectively work as a team.



### Lessons Learned about Teams

Significant performance challenges energize teams regardless of where they are in an organization. No team arises without a performance challenge that is meaningful to those involved. A common set of demanding performance goals, that a group considers important to achieve, will lead, most of the time, to both performance and team. Performance, however, is the primary objective while a team remains the means, not the end.

Organizational leaders can foster team performance best by building a strong performance ethic rather than by establishing a team-promoting environment alone.

Real teams always find ways for each individual to contribute and thereby gain distinction. Indeed, when harnessed to a common team purpose and goals, our need to distinguish ourselves as individuals becomes a powerful engine for team performance.

Discipline-both within the team and across the organization-creates the conditions for team performance. For organizational leaders, this entails making clear and consistent demands that reflect the needs of customers, shareholders, and employees, and then holding themselves and the organization relentlessly accountable.\*

### Team Basics

While teams will vary from League to League, all teams have certain qualities.

- Teams should be small enough in number, so they can convene and communicate easily and frequently. Discussions should be open and interactive for all members. Each member understands the other's roles and skills.
- The team's purpose constitutes a broader, deeper aspiration than just near term goals. All team members understand and articulate the purpose the same way. Members



define the purpose in discussion with outsiders. The purpose contains themes that are particularly meaningful and memorable. Members feel the purpose is important, if not exciting.

- There are team goals versus broader organizational goals versus just one individual's goals. Goals are clear, simple, and measurable. If they are not measurable, can their achievement be determined? Goals are realistic as well as ambitious.
- The approach is concrete, clear, and really understood and agreed to by everybody. It requires all members to contribute equivalent amounts of real work. It provides for open interaction, fact-based problem solving, and result-based evaluation. The approach provides for modification and improvement over time. Fresh input and perspective is systematically sought and added, for example, through information and analysis, new members, and sponsors.
- There is a sense of mutual accountability.\*

### **Six Things Necessary to Good Team Leadership**

**1. Keep the purpose, goals, and approach relevant and meaningful.** All teams must shape their own common purpose, performance goals and approach. While a leader must be a full working member of the team who can and should contribute to these, he or she also stands apart from the team by virtue of his or her selection as leader. Teams expect their leaders to use that perspective and distance to help the teams clarify and commit to their mission, goals, and approach.

**2. Build commitment and confidence.** Team leaders should work to build the commitment and confidence of each individual as well as the team as a whole.

**3. Strengthen the mix and level of skills.** Effective team leaders are vigilant about skills. Their goal is clear: ultimately, the flexible and top-performing teams consist of people with all the technical, functional, problem-solving, decision-making, interpersonal, and teamwork skills the team needs to perform. To get there, team leaders encourage people to take the risks needed for growth and development. They also continually challenge team members by shifting assignments and role patterns.

**4. Manage relationships with outsiders, including removing obstacles.** Team leaders are expected, by people outside as well as inside the team to manage much of the team's contacts and relationships with the rest of the organization. This calls on team leaders to communicate effectively the team's purpose, goals, and approach to anyone who might help or hinder it. They also must have the courage to intercede on the team's behalf when obstacles that might cripple or demoralize the team get placed in their way.

**5. Create opportunities for others.** Team performance is not possible if the leader grabs all the best opportunities, assignments, and credit. Indeed, the crux of the leader's challenge is to provide performance opportunities to the team and the people on it.

**6. Do real work.** Everyone on a real team, including the leader, does real work in roughly equivalent amounts. Team leaders do have a certain distance from the team by virtue of their position, but they do not use that distance "just to sit back and make decision." Team leaders must contribute in whatever way the team needs, just like any other member. Moreover, team leaders do not delegate the nasty jobs to others. Where personal risks are high or "dirty work" is required, the team leader should step forward.\*

*\*From J. Katzenbach & D. Smith "The Wisdom of Teams" Harvard Business School Press, 1993.*

## **Getting a Team off to a Good Start**

There are some key elements to setting up and starting out a team well – on a path to success. These include:

**Find the right people.** It is critically important that we get the right number and mix (in terms of skill sets) on a team. If we aren't tooled to reach our goals, we never will.

**Set clear goals.** If a team doesn't understand its purpose, then how can it succeed? Team members need to understand what they are being asked to do and how it fits with the broader goals of the organization. This will not only help them delineate what needs to be done, but it will provide them with the motivation to join the team and do the work.

**Develop ground rules.** What are the common expectations among team members? How will we communicate? How will we work through conflict? How will we share the workload? Without these norms, team members can grow frustrated with the process and goals may not be met.

## **Building a Team**

It is important to build bonds between members of a team. This may occur naturally as team members work together, or it can be "facilitated" through team building exercises. Simple activities that help take your board/team beyond your usual conversations to strengthen your personal bonds can assist in the overall goal of building and strengthening your League team for successful work together. Below are some sample exercises that can be used when a team is first forming or as a "refresher" to help "kick start" or further a team's goals/work.



*Check out the "Tools You Can Use" section at the back of the manual for team building exercises to use with your League board or committees!*



**This page left intentionally blank.**

## Managing Conflict

Communities are groups of people who may not know each other and have had different life experiences, but who live in proximity to each other or who have interests in common. Our vision of the world and how it operates is influenced by our culture, our parents, our age, our personality, and a range of other factors.

This module addresses one inevitable fact of life: Individuals do not always agree. And when they don't agree, the result for group work can be either positive or negative, but it is rarely neutral. The challenge and opportunity for a community leader is to learn how to manage conflict and to channel its energy in a positive way.

### Types of Conflict

According to *Leadership Plenty*, a multi-part series created by the Pew Partnership for Civic Change, there are four different types of conflict, each with different techniques and strategies to manage and resolve. Understanding the type of conflict you are dealing with as a team will help you best tackle the issue and continue working effectively.

The Four Types of Conflict:

- **Personal conflict** is directed at and between individuals.
- **Subject or issue conflict** is related to a group's work and goals.
- **Procedural conflict** emerges from work methods and strategies.
- **Competitive conflict** occurs when individuals or groups must compete for the same financial or human resources.

If two individuals are clearly in disagreement over the procedures of the group, one remedy is for the group to determine by what norms it will operate. Alternately, when there is conflict in a group for whatever reason, the group members must be clear on their roles. Will individuals take sides? Is the protocol to let conflicting parties work it out alone or will certain group members help to mediate? Finally, the group must decide how it will react and act to prevent conflict from eroding meeting time and derailing the mission of the group.

### Reasons for Conflict

While every League has its own issues to manage and resolve, there are several common reasons a conflict would arise.

- **Limited Resources:** Conflict often results when a number of groups are competing for limited resources.
- **Communication Problems:** As groups evolve, they tend to become concerned only with their own issues and also to develop their own vocabulary around those issues.



Communication problems may develop when the receiver of information does not understand the particular vocabulary or communication style or group.

- **Different Interests and Goals:** One individual or group feels its issues are ignored or are more important than another individual or group's issues, and there is a lack of agreement concerning the direction of group activity.
- **Different Perceptions and Attitudes:** Just as individuals perceive things differently, the groups to which they belong also have different perceptions. Groups, as well as individuals, tend to evaluate issues according to their backgrounds, norms, and experiences. This may be a problem, for instance, when there is a difference in performance expectations of members of the group or between groups.
- **Lack of Clarity:** Lack of clarity about the task to be accomplished and who is responsible for specific tasks is a frequent cause of conflict.

### Resolving Conflict

Conflict often results in people giving up, disbanding the group, compromising, or having a winner-takes-all outcome. Obviously, on issues of great importance, the hope is that the conflict can be resolved in a beneficial manner.

There are four ways that conflicts are resolved. Some create more positive outcomes than others, but all are part of the range of actions that can be taken.

#### The Four Ways to Resolve Conflict:

- **Avoidance** is a typical response to conflict. "If we ignore it, it will go away." People who endorse this view think that time will take care of the conflict. This sometimes happens in the short run, but rarely over the long run. Problems and disagreements that are intense enough to be called "conflict" have little chance of resolving themselves without positive effort. Conflicts don't evaporate. Pushing conflicts below the surface and pretending that they don't exist creates tension and holds groups and individuals back.
- **Surrendering** is another way groups attempt to resolve conflict. People who cannot tolerate dissension and conflict often just give up and let the dominant people or groups have their way. It eases the conflict for the moment but it may not be the best thing for the community or organization or for the individual. Maybe the person waving the white flag was actually right and the others were wrong. What damage could be done to an organization or to a cause as a result? Because conflicts rarely have an absolutely right or an absolutely wrong conclusion, the ability to hear people out and sort through the issues in an impersonal, non-threatening way helps





the understanding and eventual resolution of the issue and allows groups to move forward.

- **Verbal attacks** are another way groups grapple with conflict. Some people just want to fight it out verbally. They will use any tactic to coerce others into conforming to their views. The only way to prevent or stop this behavior is for group norms and procedures to refuse to accept that type of negative behavior. This is not to say that individuals should not have strong views and opinions, but to say that using insults or superior force to defeat opposition is not acceptable.
- **Negotiation** is the process by which the different parties to the conflict offer their views of the dispute, describe their positions, and ultimately put their suggestions on the table for resolution. This process involves give-and-take for both parties and can result in a win-win outcome if there is compromise on both sides and a willingness to look for creative solutions. A well-known example is one where both parties want an orange. The only solution appears at first-glance to be to half the orange. Only after both sides clarify their interests and needs does it become clear that one side wants the pulp and the other side wants the peel. Clarifying interests, not locking into a particular position, and listening to the needs of the other side help in this approach.



*Check out the “Tools You Can Use” section at the back of the manual for the True Colors, Leadership Compass, and conflict resolution activities to help your League Board recognize their differences and work effectively together!*

### **Conflict as an Opportunity for Growth**

How groups learn to handle conflict sets the stage for everything they do together. Research has shown that conflict resolution can spiral up or down. If there is a history of intimidation and argument, the level of trust within the community can be permanently damaged. If, on the other hand, conflicts are handled by cooperation, negotiation, and a win-win approach, it enhances the group’s ability to work on issues despite their obvious disagreements.

Conflict is not easy to deal with at any level. As human beings we may wish that our relations with other people would always be smooth and cordial.

*Conflict, if it is handled well, can generate new alternatives, present different perspectives, and allow the group and its members to clarify their own thoughts and ideas.*

### **Stages of Group Development**

There are four predictable stages that groups go through as they grow. Each has its own “risk level” for conflict:



## Chapter 9: Leading Together

1. **Forming-** The Orientation stage. Marked by confusion over goals and roles of group members, polite communication, strong leadership, and submissive membership. [Output (or work accomplished) is fairly low.]
2. **Storming-** The Conflict stage. Marked by struggles to set the group's goals and members' roles, criticism of ideas, poor attendance, polarization, and forming of alliances. [Output is still low.]
3. **Norming-** The Structure stage. Marked by organization and solidarity, honest communication, and reduced tension. [Moderate to high output is possible.]
4. **Performing-** The Work stage. Marked by productivity, clear goals and roles, harmony, and resolution. [Very high output is likely.]

### Making Group Decisions

There are four main ways that decisions can be made by a group. The process used may contribute to the level of conflict in the organization.

**Autocratic:** One person decides for the whole group.

**The Few:** The few decide for the whole group. Usually it is assumed that the few are experts and can make the decision for the group.

**Majority Rule:** The group votes and the proposal or decision with the most votes win.

**Consensus Building:** Conflicting individuals or groups work together to identify common concerns and develop solutions that will be mutually beneficial. Based on communication and compromise.

#### **Additional Notes on Making Decisions by Consensus**

*As one of the League's hallmarks is a strong consensus-based approach to decision making, we wanted to provide these additional points on consensus.*

Consensus is about collaboration. It is "us" versus some problem/issue. We should be seeking a common, positive outcome (i.e., looking for the "greater good" for the organization).

Consensus is achieved when the leaders involved can honestly state, "The decision reached was not my first choice, but I am committed to it. I will support it."

Consensus means that individual leaders involved give up their right to continuously question or revisit the decision.

©Chart Resource Group, Inc.

*\*Except where noted, the following is taken from a larger curriculum on leadership development, Leadership Plenty. It is a multi-part series created by the Pew Partnership for Civic Change. Please credit any references to this material accordingly.*

## How to Run a Board Meeting

Why hold board meetings? Board meetings are the means to optimize collective and collaborative decision-making to plan, direct, and evaluate the work of the League as directed by the grassroots membership. Full board member participation garners a plethora of ideas and divides up the work. In streamlining local board meetings, the following best practices lead to efficient, effective decision-making. The result: simplifying the roles of local League leaders. This helps the League to more efficiently achieve its goals, and it can help to make leadership roles more appealing to future leaders.

### Best Practices to Run a Board Meeting:

- Meet on a regular schedule (monthly or bi-monthly) and often enough to address any crisis situation that may emerge. Have the work of the meeting be meaningful, so precious time is well spent.
- Include a fun or social element before or after (or even a working meal) the meeting to increase satisfaction and participation.
- Meet at the same day, time, and place each month to encourage attendance.
- Send an agenda, previous meeting minutes, financial and committee reports (with recommendations and background) by email, snail mail, or a website post prior to meeting. An agenda allots time logically and helps board members prepare for board meetings.
  - Sample agenda items include: announcements; previous minutes; treasurer's report; president's report; office report; and committee reports.
  - Include time allotments to each agenda item and the decisions that need to be made. Be sure to allow more time for discussion about needed decisions and schedule these items first.
  - Rotate topics and presenters.
- Make sure that the roles and expectation of board members are set and that they will come prepared to accomplish planned business. Absent and unprepared attendees guarantee longer meetings that often end without concluding the business. An absent board member may have just the piece of information needed to help others make an important decision.
- Begin and end on time with the full complement of board members. Punctual board members dread board meetings that start late and go beyond allotted time.
- Have committees report clearly to the board without replicating previously distributed information and answer questions about reports and recommendations. Reports not requiring board decisions, or without consideration of board decisions, can be included in the next meeting agenda and should not prolong the current meeting. Remember- Committee reports can double as newsletter/web site articles.
- Base collective decisions on orderly, business-like (parliamentary) discussion. Inattentiveness and side conversations hinder a board from being productive.





## Chapter 9: Leading Together

- Keeps discussion focused and stick to the agenda. This should be done by the President or team leader. Employ a “Parking Lot” to capture non-agenda items thereby tracking a potentially great idea. (Parking lot is a term for recording unrelated business on a white board or a sheet of paper for use by the president or team in crafting future agendas.)
- Summarize discussions/ votes/ recommended actions before moving to the next agenda item. This should be done by the President or team leader.
- Postpone decision-making when information is inadequate and send it back to committee rather than functioning as that committee.
- Take full minutes, including a list of attending and absent board members, to provide a record for future reference for future boards.



*Check out the “Tools You Can Use” section at the back of the manual for a Focusing Grid worksheet to help your League Board focus their efforts!*

## Meetings

Whether you're the one who organizes and controls the meeting or an attendee, you can make the process more productive.

"Meetings that were poorly planned and consequently meandered and took much more of my time than I needed or wanted to spend, wasted my time more than anything else."

"Many meetings are held without key players. Questions are raised but no one has the authority to make a decision. Middle management ends up having to relay the question to the correct parties. Issues seem to lose their urgency in the process."

Here are the 10 Commandments of Meetings:

1. Ask yourself: is a meeting the best way to achieve the goal? Invite only decision makers, information providers and those who need to know.
  - a. Be sure all essential participants (decision makers) can and will attend
  - b. All meetings must have a clear objective, with an understood desired outcome
  - c. The agenda must include the objective
2. Use a consent agenda\*, which requires only that the chair of the meeting ask if all attendees accept it. If no attendee wants to discuss the items on the consent agenda, it is automatically accepted, and the meeting proceeds to items that need discussion.
3. Announce the meeting and agenda in advance, leaving sufficient notice for all participants to read background materials and otherwise prepare. The agenda must include:
  - a. The meeting's objective or purpose
  - b. Time allotted to discuss each topic
  - c. Speakers responsible for each topic
  - d. Background information and any preparatory material
4. Start on time. This shows respect for those who are punctual, and encourages a culture of prompt, efficient meetings.
5. Participants must:
  - a. Arrive on time
  - b. Be prepared - read and understand the background documents or issues
  - c. Stay on topic
  - d. Participate in a positive manner
  - e. Avoid side conversations
6. The meeting leader must:
  - a. Keep attendees on topic (move important items not on the agenda to a "parking lot" for future action)
  - b. Encourage participation from all attendees
  - c. Discourage dominators
  - d. Keep to the schedule
  - e. Direct conversations that apply only to a small subgroup of attendees to be handled outside the meeting.

7. End with action points based on decisions made at the meeting. Each action point must have:
  - a. A clear description of the goal
  - b. A specific person or persons who are accountable for accomplishing it
  - c. A specific completion date
8. Ask for an evaluation of the meeting:
  - a. What went well
  - b. What needs to be changed for future meetings
9. End on time.
10. The meeting's leader is responsible for follow-up on the action points generated.

*\*A **consent agenda** contains issues that need only a perfunctory acceptance, and thus can be handled in advance of the meeting. These include minutes of the last meeting and reports previously circulated for comment and requiring only an acceptance vote. Any attendee may ask to have an item removed from the consent agenda. It is then placed in the regular agenda for discussion and vote. If no attendee requests removal the consent agenda, items are automatically accepted.*

## **Making better meetings:**

- If you're the boss, follow the 10 Commandments above.
  - Don't call meetings without good reason
  - Be sure that the meeting results in action
  - Be on time
- If you're an attendee and a victim of pointless meetings:
  - Follow your part of the 10 Commandments
  - Publish the 10 Commandments
    - Get brownie points by presenting them to your boss as a recommendation to save time in the future
    - Ask your peers to follow them for the benefit of all
  - Don't attend meetings that don't meet the commandments (if you have that option)
  - Don't attend meetings that aren't relevant to your priorities - avoid "socializing" or attending just to "stay in the loop"
  - If the meeting leader isn't controlling the meeting, help facilitate it in a diplomatic manner (e.g., "I like Joe's point - let's put it on the agenda for the next meeting. Now, on the point we're trying to decide . . .")
  - If the meeting is about to end without concrete action, demand a firm decision



# 1. Event/Activity Planning Checklist

League Name: LWV of \_\_\_\_\_

Event/Activity Goals: 1. Promoting LWV membership/leadership development

League Event/Activity: \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_

	Direct Outreach	Allied Outreach	Media Outreach	Leadership Development
<b>Before the event</b>				
<b>At the event</b>				
<b>After the event</b>				

	Direct Outreach	Allied Outreach	Media Outreach	Leadership Development
<b>Before the event</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have members personally invited friends/colleagues to attend?</li> <li>Have membership ambassadors been identified and trained?</li> <li>Do you have a kit of membership materials prepared (e.g., a totebag with brochures, sign-in sheets, etc that can go each event)?</li> <li>Have you utilized the League's vehicles to promote the event (e.g., website, email list, Voter)?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can we build on someone else's efforts (e.g., a standing event)?</li> <li>Who would be a good partner to cosponsor with us?</li> <li>Who can advertise our event through their networks?</li> <li>Who else would be interested? Who do we know that can make this happen?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have you identified who would be the "right" fit (e.g., the reporter who is on this beat) to cover the event?</li> <li>Have you identified the right approach to engage the reporter (e.g., deskside chat, phone call, fax)?</li> <li>What alternative media options are there?</li> <li>Did we get the event listed in the "community calendar" section?</li> <li>Are there non-print media opportunities?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Who can you engage in planning this event?</li> <li>Is there someone who can "shadow" the organizers?</li> <li>Are there some small tasks to engage some potential future leaders?</li> </ul>
<b>At the event</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the sign-in sheet out?</li> <li>Is there some "take away" item (e.g., flier about next event, copies of the Voter)?</li> <li>Is the moderator prepared with an "ask"?</li> <li>Are the membership ambassadors mingling?</li> <li>Is there League "signage"?</li> <li>Are League members wearing pins?</li> <li>Are there membership materials and/or "give and take" cards?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is LWV visible (if we are cosponsoring on another group's event)?</li> <li>Have we made a membership pitch (from podium or through materials) that speaks to what the audience cares about?</li> <li>Did we offer ways for them to be in relationship with LWV (e.g., membership, next event)?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Did you talk to any press present? (Help develop relationships by welcoming them too)</li> <li>Was LWV a true part of the focus of the event so that it "has to" get covered by press?</li> <li>Do you have stories/quotes ready?</li> <li>Did you take photos of the event?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can you highlight the personal value in being a League leader – e.g., showcase opportunities, fun, etc?</li> <li>How can you acknowledge and value League volunteers/leaders publicly?</li> <li>Is there someone who can "shadow" those in charge of the event?</li> <li>Did you note what League members were present (and interested in the issue/topic/event)?</li> <li>Who else can you invite to this event – i.e. what potential leader?</li> </ul>
<b>After the event</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have you followed up with the names on the sign-in sheet?</li> <li>Have you thanked volunteers?</li> <li>Are the membership materials restocked for next event?</li> <li>Did you evaluate how it went – i.e., did we meet the goals above?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do we follow up with the allied organization to strengthen our relationship with them?</li> <li>Did we ask key members of the org to join?</li> <li>Can we advertise our next event through them?</li> <li>Did we evaluate how it went?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Did you send out a follow up press release or letter to the editor?</li> <li>Did you send thank you note to media that attended? (Again building good relationships).</li> <li>Did you invite media to next event?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Did you thank League leaders?</li> <li>Did you ask the organizers what else they needed – e.g, training, resources, volunteers?</li> <li>Did you send on the list of attendees to the Nominating Committee?</li> <li>Did you observe an area for training, mentoring or other areas of organizational growth?</li> <li>Are there notes/records in place for the next leader about this event?</li> <li>Did you follow up with anyone that you invited?</li> </ul>



## 2. Local Board Activity: Asset Survey

This form is a tool to help local League Boards and membership/leadership teams identify and evaluate opportunities in their community. It is designed to be a short exercise – not a lengthy research project. Discussing and answering these questions together will help Leagues better identify opportunities for outreach and recruitment. It will help Leagues assess who to reach out to and how best to reach them, as well as assist in overall planning.

Complete this form with input from the whole Board to ensure that all aspects of League work and activities are represented and that all segments of the Board have a role in initiating this important recruitment campaign.

\*\*\*\*\*

League Name: \_\_\_\_\_

With what community organizations does the League have relationships? What is the nature of each relationship?

Have you worked with any businesses in your community? In what capacity?

Does your local League have an existing media list(s) that they use? If so, is it current? Does it include non-traditional media?

Who are your current spokespeople? How do they usually describe the League? Do they regularly ask people to join?

What specific activities do you have planned for the upcoming year – membership and organizational?

Do you have any existing membership materials? If so, what specifically do you have and how often are they used?

What methods have you used to recruit or attract new members? How effective have they been?

Do you participate or exhibit at any annual conferences or meetings? Are there any in the community at which the League could have an exhibit/participate?

Have you or any other organizations conducted any surveys of women in your community – e.g., speaking to general interests, background, lifestyle, career, etc.? If so, how might that information be used to help shape outreach plans?

Does your League orient and welcome new members? If so, how is this done and how often?

Does your League board engage and mentor rising League leaders in any way?



### 3. Sign-In Sheet

Name	Email Address	Phone Number

## 4. Evaluate an Opportunity for Allied Outreach

Who are the possible partners?

What would we ask an allied organization?

What specific opportunities can we pursue to talk about the value of League membership (i.e. a linked Web site, a brochure distributed at an event, co-hosting an event)?

What is the size of an event? If the request is to cosponsor an event, are there likely other benefits (e.g. media coverage)?

How many members does the organization have that League might reach?

Is there a turn-key opportunity to ally with an organization?

Does this opportunity fit with our larger goals?

Are there opportunities outside of a specific event that might be pursued?

What are our connections to this organization?

What's in it for us? For them?

How do we prioritize among opportunities?

## 5. Interview Planning Worksheet

This is a planning sheet to help you prepare for an interview. Use this worksheet to jot down notes, ideas, and message points. Remember practice makes perfect!

### **Prepare for an Interview: Key Points**

Use this space to jot down the one or two key points that you will use in your interview. One of these should be a message about the value of membership in the League.

KEY POINT #1:

KEY POINT #2:

### **Prepare for an Interview: Anticipate Questions**

Use this space to brainstorm questions that you might be asked (especially difficult or inappropriate ones). Then practice responding by staying calm and on message.

Question #1:

Response #1:

Question #2:

Response #2:

## 6. Three Steps of Messaging Worksheet

Before *any outreach*, it is good practice to go through these three steps to ensure you are sending the right message. Use this form when you are moderating a candidates' forum to help craft a strong membership message, when you are contacting another organization about an upcoming event, when preparing a press statement or when preparing for any other opportunity to talk about the League. These prompts will help you to craft a strong and consistent message.

### Step 1 - What is my Goal?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Step 2 - Who is my Audience?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Step 3 - What is my Message?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## 7. Sample “Join Us” Web page Template

### Join the League of Women Voters of (LEAGUE NAME)

The League of Women Voters is the organization where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement. Join the League of Women Voters, a respected national grassroots organization, where individuals like you are actively engaged in creating positive change on the local, state, and national levels. Become a member and serve as a leader in your community, and work to shape the important issues that keep our communities strong.

Join us in:

- *Acting as a force to create positive, lasting change in our communities*
- *Empowering millions of voters to protect their right to vote and to have that vote count.*
- *Bridging the partisan divide by fostering civil discourse on topics of community interest.*
- *Educating citizens and fostering dialogue on important issues - from healthcare and climate change to immigration and affordable housing.*
- *Advocating for positive change at the local, state and national levels on issues that impact all of us, such as land use, education reform and government transparency and accountability. [CUSTOMIZE TO INCLUDE THE PRIORITY ISSUES FOR YOUR LEAGUE]*

We believe that sensible, responsible civil discourse and action based on substance rather than partisanship is essential for civic improvement. We believe that with leaders like you, we can make democracy work.

Currently LWV of (LEAGUE NAME) is working on -

- *(INSERT LOCAL ISSUE OR STUDY)*
- *(INSERT LOCAL ISSUE OR STUDY)*
- *(INSERT LOCAL ISSUE OR STUDY)*

Membership is open to men and women 18 years or older. Annual dues are \$(SINGLE PERSON RATE) per person, \$(HOUSEHOLD RATE) for two people in the same household, and \$(ANY OTHER MEMBERSHIP TYPE - ASSOCIATE, STUDENT, ETC.). Membership in the League of Women Voters of (LEAGUE NAME) includes membership in the LWV United States and LWV (STATE). Dues are not tax-deductible.

Join us (LINK TO LEAGUE MEMBERSHIP FORM) and be part of the solution! Our community needs leaders like you to help ensure that our community is a strong, safe and vibrant place to live. Become a member and start receiving benefits today. Contact (NAME) at (PHONE NUMBER) or (E-MAIL ADDRESS) for more information about League membership.



## 8. The LWV “Making Democracy Work” Award: Work plan

### Establish an Award Committee and Timeline

Leagues should form a committee and select a group of League members to sit on that committee. They can be emerging leaders, a new member, or even past board members. Committee members will be responsible for drafting the specific award application guidelines and reviewing the applications. The committee will also be responsible for selecting the award winner. To preserve the League’s ownership of the award, we recommend that the award committee members should all be existing League members.



A recommended timeline of activities which will surround the Making Democracy Work Award application process and event is included.

### Nomination Process

Each League will need to actively solicit nominations for this award from non-members within the community. Opportunities for soliciting nominations include:

- Announcing the call for nominations in a press release to the local media – newspaper, TV and radio;
- Announcing the award in League publications (and encouraging members to do outreach to non-members);
- Posting the call for nominations on your League’s web site;
- Reaching out to organizations in your community who share similar missions/values as the League and encouraging them to nominate candidates;
- Promoting the award through personal contacts; and
- Request that area employers, libraries and community centers post a request for nominations at their place of business.

A sample press release calling for nominations, a sample letter to community leaders, and PSA script are included in this manual.

### Sample Guidelines and Application Questions

*The award is a way to generate visibility for LWV. As such, it is important that it appeal to your League’s target recruitment audience. These sample guidelines and questions were written with LWVUS’ recommended target audience (women between the ages of 50 and 65) in mind. They can and should be amended to reflect the needs of your League.*

The general guidelines of the award should state that any woman between the ages of 50 and 65 who is/has been part of the work force and contributed to the community in a meaningful way is eligible for the award.

Below you will find sample application questions you may wish to use when drafting your MDW Award application.

### **Screener Questions**

These questions are simply designed to collect the information necessary to determine an applicant's/nominee's eligibility:

- 1) Name:
- 2) DOB/Year of birth:
- 3) Address:
- 4) Profession (current/previous):
- 5) How long has this individual been active in her community?

### **About the Nominee**

Applications can be completed by the nominee or by another nominator.

- 1) In one sentence, tell us why you would like to be considered for the Making Democracy Work award or why you are nominating an individual for the award.
- 2) The League of Women Voters celebrates community leaders: individuals who have envisioned a way to improve the community and have mobilized others to work with them to effect a change that has benefited the broader community.

How do you/does the nominee exemplify leadership?

- 3) Please describe in detail what impact this individual has had on our community? What population/organization/event has benefited from her efforts?
- 4) How does this individual stand out from other leaders in the community?
- 5) Do you/does the nominee exhibit leadership qualities in her career, at home, and in her community? Please provide examples of all three.

### **Nominators Only**

- 6) What is your relationship to/with the nominee?

### **Community Outreach - Pre-selection**

*It is vitally important that Leagues do community outreach.* Incorporating the membership messages in all outreach materials and activities around the MDW award is critical to the success of this venture.

There are press opportunities at every stage of the program. This is especially true as you solicit nominations. (State Leagues can work with local Leagues to maximize media coverage.)

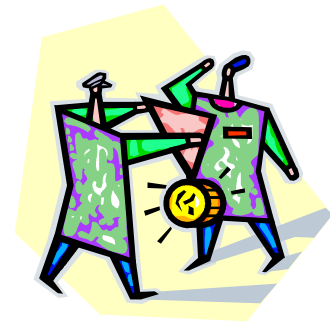
Outreach efforts to members of the press should include specific pitches to reporters covering community affairs. Press releases should go out to the complete media list that each League has already developed through the asset survey and Leagues should follow up with pitch calls to the major media outlets in the area.

Besides engaging the media, Leagues should explore other types of community outreach. This is a great way to involve allied organizations—ask them who they would nominate. This outreach will not only assure that there is a vibrant pool of nominees but it will introduce League to more potential members. Even if individuals do not apply for the award, they will have a better understanding of the organization and its members. They will understand the value of membership, and when asked, hopefully will join the organization.

## Presenting the Award

As was noted earlier, the MDW Award can be presented in a variety of settings -- at a true “event” (e.g. luncheon) or by creating a more intimate “photo-op” (e.g. presentation of the award by a local elected official). Regardless, Leagues should publicize the fact that an award winner has been selected. Whatever is done, this is a media opportunity.

If Leagues do choose to host an event, it is recommended that the presentation of the award be scheduled to take place at an event hosted by the LWV that provides a forum for highlighting the exceptional work accomplished by both the League and the winner of the MDW Award. Because this event is intended to highlight the value of membership in the League, we do not recommend partnering or co-sponsoring the event with another organization.



The recipient of the award will be invited to speak at the event and will receive both the public acknowledgement of her work, an award/certificate of some kind and an invitation to work with the League for one year to leverage their work being accomplished in the community.

To improve media outreach on the local level, Leagues should conduct work with the award winner to schedule and prepare for media interviews by drafting sample talking points, which should include general League information, and allowing the winner to ask any questions that she may have in advance. In addition, the League should consider inviting broadcast media to the award event/presentation and ensuring that the venue can support video and audio equipment.

Alternatively, if Leagues choose to present the MDW award privately, we recommend promoting the award to the local media via a press release. Leagues should provide the press with information about the award and the recipient, and make follow-up calls to selected contacts. The recipient of the award would serve as the spokesperson, in addition to League spokespeople, and both can be pitched to the media for potential interviews.

As an additional method to get visibility, the League also may consider having a local governing body (e.g. city council) issue a proclamation about the award. Sample proclamations are available in this section.

## **Post-presentation follow up**

After the award is presented, there are still opportunities for your League to do outreach. Most immediately, Leagues are encouraged to follow up with the award nominees and potentially their nominators. This follow up should restate the values of League membership and include an invitation to join LWV.

League also may want to consider sending a similar letter that announces the winner to the leaders of community organizations that were contacted during the nominating process. Ask them if they want to join LWV to come work along side your newest League member/leader, your awardee. Sample letters are provided.

If the awardee is part of another organization, ask about a “second” presentation at their home organization. Again, this gets the League before a new pool of potential new members.

Leagues also will need to do follow up with their awardee. League leaders will want to establish some ways that you can work together over the year. As these efforts unfold, you may wish to reengage the local media to let them see how this relationship is blooming, what work the awardee is undertaking, your joint successes, etc.

## **Timeline of Activities**

This is a *suggested* timeline, and should be adjusted based on each local League’s current calendar, as well as other external factors.

Questions? Need additional resources about the award? Contact you coach or LWVUS.

<b>Task</b>	<b>Recommended Timing</b>
Select members who will sit on the Making Democracy Work Award application, drafting and review committee.	At least three months prior (earlier if possible)
Draft application for Making Democracy Work Award.	At least three months prior (earlier if possible)
Issue Making Democracy Work Award application to League members (post on the Web site) and distribute to allied organizations, local businesses and post around the community.	Three months prior
Draft and issue a media release announcing the award and call for applications to members of the local press.	Three months prior
Choose and secure location of event (community center, steps of city hall, private venue, etc.).	At least two months prior
Application Deadline.	Two to one month prior
Select Finalists.	One month prior
Select and inform the winner.	One month prior
Draft and produce award ceremony materials (program, finalist profiles, and winner profile).	Month of event
Work with the winner to prep for, conduct and set up press. Interviews after the award.	Weeks before event
Draft and issue media alert about the event and invite local members of the press.	Week of event
Conduct media outreach around the event and schedule interviews with the award winner.	Week of event
Host event and present award.	
Follow up with membership invitations to all nominees and finalists.	Post event
Follow up with award winner to establish ways to work together over the year.	Post event
Conduct ongoing outreach to local media to highlight winner of the award and the League.	Post event

## 9. The LWV “Making Democracy Work” Award: Talking Points

This section contains recommendations for sample talking points to be used in press outreach efforts surrounding The Making Democracy Work Award. As with all talking points, these should not be read as a script, but instead be used as a guide when speaking publicly and with the press about the award.

When drafting these talking points, we had the following three goals in mind –

- ❖ **Position the League.** The talking points below aim to establish and position the League as a leader in the community, as well as a leader in the field of democracy.
- ❖ **Establish the connection.** The second goal of these talking points is to establish the connection between the Making Democracy Work Award recipient’s accomplishments and League’s ongoing work.
- ❖ **Ask.** As always, a critical component to include in all communications is the piece which asks others to join the League and provides them with information about where to learn more.

*We encourage Leagues to keep these same three goals in mind - and utilize talking points to support them - in all communications surrounding this effort.*

That said, we also encourage League spokespeople to review these talking points and to make adjustments, put them into their own words so that they are comfortable using them.

### Talking Points

#### Positioning the League

- The League of Women Voters is an organization dedicated to improving our systems of government; it is *the* organization where leaders volunteer to make democracy work.
- The League of Women Voters of [INSERT CITY] is where smart, active leaders volunteer to make democracy work and create positive change in the community.
- All of the nominees for the Making Democracy Work Award are smart leaders who are creating change in our community. As one of the most trusted organizations in [INSERT CITY], the League of Women Voters is proud to be part of a community with such dynamic citizens and is honored to present this award.

#### Establish the connection

- [NAME’s] dedication, commitment and shared passion to improving our community represents all that the League stands for and supports in [INSERT CITY], and we’re



thrilled to be able to publicly recognize [NAME's] efforts here today.

- [INSERT CITY] needs everyone to participate in order to be a strong, safe, and vibrant place to live. This is why the League of Women Voters of [INSERT CITY] has selected [NAME] as this year's Making Democracy Work Award winner out of many nominees from the community.
- The League of Women Voters celebrates community leaders like [NAME], who are safeguarding democracy in our community. Without active leaders, [INSERT CITY] would not be the strong, vibrant, and fair place it is today.
- League members are passionate about making democracy work in [INSERT CITY] – the LWV Making Democracy Work Award is a chance to honor and celebrate a member of our community that expresses the same passion for democracy.
- The League of Women Voters is dedicated to safeguarding democracy and creating positive change; The Making Democracy Work Award is an ideal occasion to celebrate an individual who exemplifies this in our community.

### **Ask**

- We invite all those who want to affect change in our community to join the League of Women Voters. Contact [NAME] or visit [YOUR LEAGUE WEB SITE], for more information.
- We invite all those who want to join our efforts in making democracy work to learn more about the League of [INSERT CITY] and how we can affect change together. Contact [NAME] or visit [YOUR LEAGUE WEB SITE], for more information.
- Any member of the community can join our League and do the hands-on work to create lasting change in the community. Making democracy work is what the League of Women Voters is all about. We welcome more members of our community to join us and make an impact.
- Join the League, where community leaders are actively engaged in effecting change on the local, state and national level. Together, we can all make democracy work!

## 10. Practice Your Own League Story

The League's programmatic work covers a wide range of issues and activities, which can be overwhelming to individuals who are not familiar with them. To be welcoming to potential new members, each of us must act as a "membership ambassador" for the League, using straightforward language to describe what we do and why we love doing it. It's not about "dumbing down" the explanation of our work—it's about opening it up so that others can understand it, find it relevant and interesting, and join us.

We have heard consistently from Leagues that while making "The ASK" may be difficult at first, it becomes easier with practice. More importantly, Leagues have also reported that **IT WORKS!** It sounds very simplistic, but we need to ASK people to join to bring in new members.

The worksheets provided in this section give you an opportunity to practice your personal story as well as "The ASK." It will help you to speak in an intentional, focused and confident way about the value of being part of the League. We also encourage you to think about one of your own stories (such as Why did you join the League? What your League membership means to you? What impact have you had on your community through the League?) and how you can utilize it. Remember there is no marketing tool as powerful as your own personal passion for LWV!

### Helpful Tips to Create YOUR League Story:

**Keep it brief.** You should be able to say what you need to say in about a minute. Focus on what's most important and cut away the rest. **What does your audience value? What is important to them? Write these down and prioritize them.**

**Avoid jargon.** Nonprofits are notorious abusers of acronyms, buzzwords and "insider speak". Avoid these, or you'll see the listener's eye glaze over.

**Speak to Values.** What value does your organization provide? **What does your audience value, and how does your organization's values intersect with them?** Values can be tangible (i.e., people living longer, healthier lives) or emotional (i.e., making people feel good about providing opportunity). Don't just list your services or ideology—focus on outcomes, not process.

**Show Your Passion!** Perhaps the most important part of a good membership ask is the gusto, enthusiasm and commitment to the work it expresses. Don't be afraid to demonstrate the passion and drive you feel for the work.

**Get to the Action Point.** Remember to ask them to join or get involved.



Sharing your personal story about what the League means to YOU and the impact the League has had in your life and on your community is the best way to convey the value of membership in the League. Stories are:

- ✓ Relatable
- ✓ Memorable
- ✓ Passionate
- ✓ Compelling
- ✓ Motivational

**Very simply, when combined with an invitation to join the League, your story is your best direct outreach tool!**

We have heard consistently from Leagues that while making “The ASK” may be difficult at first, it becomes much easier with practice. More importantly, Leagues have also reported that **IT WORKS!** It sounds very simplistic, but we need to ASK people to join to bring in new members.

This worksheet gives you an opportunity to practice your personal story as well as “The ASK.” It will help you to speak in an intentional, focused and confident way about the value of being part of the League.

\*\*\*\*\*

## **Step 1: Choose a Practice Scenario.**

Choose one of the scenarios below to practice combining a personal League story with an ASK to join the League, come to a meeting, or donate money to the League.

- 1. At a candidates’ forum:** Imagine that you are a “membership ambassador” mingling with attendees. Engage an attendee in conversation and ask him/her to join.
- 2. At a candidates’ forum:** You are the moderator. Use the opportunity to issue an invitation to join the League to those gathered at the forum – as well as those who might be watching/listening to it remotely (such as on cable access, on a web site, or on the radio).
- 3. At a neighborhood social event:** Talk with a neighbor that has recently retired. Discuss your involvement with League and ask him/her to join.
- 4. At a city council meeting:** You are a member of your League’s observer corps. Issue an invitation to join to an individual that you regularly see at the city council meetings.
- 5. At a Sunshine Week event:** Your League is hosting a “viewing party” of a panel of national experts convened in Washington DC to discuss government transparency issues. Use this opportunity to invite those who are gathered locally to get involved and to join the League.
- 6. At a coalition meeting on affordable housing:** Talk with one or more of the representatives of the other groups present. Explain to them the unique value of membership in the League and ask them to join.
- 7. At a breakfast honoring retiring teachers:** Offer some remarks to thank them for their service to the community. Talk about the League’s mission and the value of League membership. Ask them to join.

8. **At a speaking engagement:** As part of your League’s speakers’ bureau, you are asked to provide an explanation of the upcoming ballot questions to an organization comprised of local women business owners. In addition to providing them with the necessary information about the election, ask them to join.
9. **A local radio interview about the county’s preparedness for an upcoming election:** Explain the League’s work in this area. Remind listeners that the League is a volunteer-lead, grassroots organization. Stress that membership is open to the public, and explain how citizens can be engaged in the “process” and League.
10. **Someone stops to ask you about the League pin on your jacket:** Explain what the League is and why being a member is important to you. Try to explain why the League would be of value to him/her. Assess the interest level and offer an action step, such as joining the League or coming to a meeting.

## Step 2: Tell your story.

Briefly and without using League jargon, relate a story that would be interesting and moving to the audience in your practice scenario

Consider one of the following topics:

- What motivated me to join the League of Women Voters?
- What does being a League of Women Voters member mean to me?
- How has my work with the League impacted my community?
- How has being a member given me skills and knowledge that has enhanced my career and life?

Remember that a personal story can be very powerful. You do not have to demonstrate some big achievement or “give your resume.” Instead, let your passion for League showcase itself!

### My Personal League Story:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



The many projects the League sponsors are something you can wrap yourself around. And, it gives me a chance to do something positive. So I guess you can say being an active League member is a win-win situation.  
~Maxine Anderson, LWV San Francisco, CA

### Step 3: Make the Ask.

After telling your story, you need to give your listener some follow-up action. In other words, you want to leave them with some way to get involved or engaged. How can he/she have the same kind of wonderful experience with the League? This might be asking them to join or some interim step leading to membership, such as coming with you to a meeting or helping out at a voter registration booth. **The key is to provide the opportunity.**

Pick one of the scenarios listed on the next page to craft an ASK you can use with your story. As you present your story and your follow-up opportunity, think about your audience. What do they care about? How does their story intersect with yours? What is the right next step *for them*?

**My League ASK:**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## 11. Story Solicitation Letter Template for Local Leagues

League logo

Date

Dear League member:

This year, the League of Women Voters of [YOUR TOWN] will be working hard to make a bigger impact on our community, and we need your help!

Our League is partnering with the state and national Leagues to recruit new members, develop new leaders, and become more visible in our community. Through this partnership, we've learned that there is no better way to explain the benefits of membership in the League to potential new members than to share our own stories about the League with them.

The League is building a Storybank to collect and share the wonderful stories of personal growth, friendship, and community impact from League members. We are seeking story submissions from members from across the country who are just like you – enthusiastic individuals who love the League and want more people to join us in making democracy work. We would love to hear your story about what the League means to you, how your League experience has mattered in your own life, and what your involvement in League has meant to our community.

Your story will help those thinking about joining the League to better understand the unique benefits of membership. It will illustrate for them what we all know: the League of Women Voters is *the* place where you can help make democracy work. Your story may be used in a variety of ways. It may be highlighted on our League's web site or the LWVUS web site, used in membership materials, or even shared with the media. Please submit your story online at [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org) today!

To make a bigger impact on our community, we need the support of all of our members to succeed – and submitting your story to the Storybank is a great way to become involved. To find out more ways you can help, contact [COORDINATOR].

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to reading your League story!

Sincerely,

President  
LWV of XXX

## 12. Sample Member Interest Surveys

(Sample 1)  
LWV OF XXX  
Member Profile

The LWV of XXX is so glad you have joined us to help make democracy work in our community and our country! We would love to learn more about you to make your time with the League the best it can be. Please complete and submit this form to let us know about your interests and what you would most like to get out of your League membership. We look forward to making a difference with you. Welcome!

Name:  
Address:  
Phone:  
Email:

Employed: Full Time \_\_\_\_ Part Time \_\_\_\_ Retired \_\_\_\_

First Joined League:

I would like to be considered: Active                      Inactive Member/Supporter

What are your special skills/talents/interests that you would like to share with League?

As a grassroots organization, the League depends upon the work of its members to carry on its program. We ask that active members volunteer at least a few hours per year in the ORGANIZATION, PROGRAM, or VOTER SERVICE activities of your choice.

*Please indicate your interest(s) below.*

### LEAGUE ORGANIZATION

Assisting with League Events/Meetings: One Time: \_\_\_\_ Ongoing: \_\_\_\_

Communications (Speaker, Moderator, Media Liaison): One Time: \_\_\_\_ Ongoing: \_\_\_\_

Finance/Development (Finance Drive, Special Fundraising Events):

Mailing Newsletter (Monthly): One Time: \_ Ongoing: \_ Membership: \_

Serving on the LWV YOUR LEAGUE Board (Officer/Director): \_

PROGRAM (ISSUES FOR STUDY/ACTION) AS DETERMINED BY MEMBERS  
(List Here)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.



**Guaranteeing Access to Health Care**

- Reproductive Rights\_
- Uninsured/Under-Served \_
- Health Promotion \_
- Insuring the Safety of Our Residents\_
- Domestic Violence\_
- Gun Control\_

**VOTER SERVICE**

- Special Voter Service Projects \_
- Candidate Forums/Debates/Meetings\_
- County Fair\_
- Farm Festival\_
- Publications\_
- Voter Registration Activities\_

Fold Here-----



**League of Women Voters of [TOWN]  
c/o [NAME]  
STREET  
CITY, STATE ZIPCODE**

**(Sample 2)**

*Please take a few minutes to fill out this form.*

Your participation will help to keep our League vital – and you'll find that League is more interesting when you're involved. As you see, time commitments can be brief, moderate, or lasting, so we hope you'll let us know what you would like to do.

**Name:**

**Street Address:**

**City, State, Zip:**

**Telephone (home):**

**Telephone (work):**

**Cell Phone:**

**E-Mail Address:**

**Please check the following ways you would be willing to participate in the League this year:**

Attend monthly meetings (League program presented)

Make telephone calls for meetings and other activities

Committee member (Circle ones of interest)

*Natural Resources Judicial Land Use*

*Government/Election Law International Issues Health Care*

*Social Policy Women's Issues*

Board member (position)

A participant in a study this year or next (topic/area)

Letter writing to our representatives and elected officials

Voters service

Refreshments for meetings

Donate home for meetings

May be available to help with a specific activity (For example, for voter registration drive, new member orientation, holiday party, annual meeting, fundraiser, etc.)

Mentor for new members

Recruit new members

Finance drive

**What special skills or experience can you bring to League?**

**Do you know someone (a friend, acquaintance, relative) who would like to join our League? Please include the individuals' name, phone number and email address.**

**Please return this completed form to Membership Chair  
NAME/ADDRESS**

## 13. Being a League Leader Activity

This is a great activity to reenergize your local League Board and to collectively rethink how the Board and the Nominating Committee can reach out to engage members in leading the League and taking on responsibilities to support the League's great work.

### **PART 1:**

Individually, take a few minutes to answer each of the following questions. Write down your answers below without sharing with the rest of your Board members.

What did my League leadership position teach me?

Why do I love being a League leader?

What impact have we made in our community?

What's the best thing about being a League leader?

### **PART 2:**

As a team, discuss each question and your answers to them. If possible, have someone write the answers on a large easel pad paper. Can you brainstorm more ideas as you discuss?

### **PART 3:**

Brainstorm ways to incorporate using your responses to ASK individuals to take on responsibilities with the League, such as asking someone to shadow you as the debate moderator or asking someone to help with a study.

### **PART 4:**

Share your responses with the Nominating Committee so that they can use this information to reach out to potential Board members for the upcoming year.



## 14. Leadership Qualities & Skills Self-Assessment

Additional Leadership Development tools are available on the Yahoo! Group and from LWVUS.

*The purpose of the self-assessment is to help you or someone you are mentoring identify individual leadership development goals through work in the League. It is a tool to communicate about individual interests – it's not a quiz! It's good if you identify areas where you do not have much experience – we are here to work on exactly that. Ultimately, this helps us to understand what you are interested in learning and doing as part of our League, so that you are having the experience you want to have and growing into even more of the leader we know you are meant to be! After discussing this assessment, it should be clear what you are comfortable doing, what you are not comfortable doing, and what you want to learn how to do.*

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### 1. Which three leadership qualities do you consider your strengths? Why?

a. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Which two or three leadership qualities would you most like to work on strengthening over the next 18 months? Why?

a. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Rank your comfort level with the following skills and activities. Can you complete the activity...**

- E** = really easily
- C** = comfortably
- L** = it would be a learning experience
- D** = with discomfort, I don't feel ready for that challenge yet

**Leaders build and nurture community. Leaders have followers.**

- a. I can identify 1 person that I could ask to come to a League event \_\_\_\_\_
- b. I can identify 15 people that I could ask to come to a League event \_\_\_\_\_
- c. I can turn people out for a meeting or event and I understand "Organizers Math" (you always have to recruit more people than actually show up) \_\_\_\_\_
- d. I find I can be a good listener \_\_\_\_\_
- e. I can do a one-on-one relational organizing meeting with another volunteer \_\_\_\_\_
- f. I find that I can train and/or mentor other leaders \_\_\_\_\_

**Leaders are "unflappable" and relentlessly optimistic – they can hear "no" and keep asking!**

- a. I can ask and ask again – when I hear "no", I stay optimistic \_\_\_\_\_
- b. I am in it for the long haul – I am not easily discouraged \_\_\_\_\_
- c. I can handle setbacks and learn from mistakes \_\_\_\_\_

**Leaders help build their organization (people power *and* money power!).**

- a. I believe in the power of many – I care about bringing others along with me \_\_\_\_\_
- b. I can make reminder calls to turn people out for an event or meeting \_\_\_\_\_
- c. I can report back on a task or project at a group meeting \_\_\_\_\_
- d. I can facilitate a meeting \_\_\_\_\_
- e. I can chair a committee \_\_\_\_\_
- f. I can invite others to speak in a meeting \_\_\_\_\_
- g. I have served on a board \_\_\_\_\_
- h. I can host a meeting \_\_\_\_\_
- i. I can help to plan a League event \_\_\_\_\_
- j. I can raise money for a cause by helping to plan a fundraising event \_\_\_\_\_
- k. I can raise money for a cause by asking others for a contribution \_\_\_\_\_

**Leaders are able to do outreach about issues.**

- a. I can talk to people I know about issues I care about \_\_\_\_\_
- b. I can talk to people I *don't* know about issues I care about \_\_\_\_\_
- c. I can distribute literature about an issue I care about \_\_\_\_\_
- d. I can make a personal appeal to people about an issue I care about \_\_\_\_\_
- e. I can make phone calls to talk about an issue I care about \_\_\_\_\_
- f. I can ask others to do outreach around issues we both care about \_\_\_\_\_

**Leaders are personally organized and accountable – they do what they say they will.**

- a. When I say I will do something, I keep my word \_\_\_\_\_
- b. I have ways to keep track of my commitments \_\_\_\_\_
- c. I hold others accountable to their commitments \_\_\_\_\_
- d. I think about which activities I can delegate to others \_\_\_\_\_
- e. When I delegate to others, I follow up and support them \_\_\_\_\_
- l. I can evaluate my own role in events or activities \_\_\_\_\_
- m. I have helped evaluate an event or activity as part of a group \_\_\_\_\_
- f. I have helped an organization set clear goals and been part of evaluating progress towards meeting those goals over time \_\_\_\_\_

**Leaders communicate with the media and allies.**

- a. I can share my personal story \_\_\_\_\_
- b. I can write a letter \_\_\_\_\_
- c. I can invite and help others to write a letter \_\_\_\_\_
- d. I could make press turnout calls for a media event \_\_\_\_\_
- e. I can speak at a press event \_\_\_\_\_
- f. I can share my personal story at an event \_\_\_\_\_
- g. I can make presentation to a group about the League or an issue \_\_\_\_\_

**Leaders build relationships with and hold public figures accountable**

- a. I could talk to an elected official about an issue I care about \_\_\_\_\_
- b. I could testify at a public hearing on an issue I care about \_\_\_\_\_
- c. I can invite an elected official to a meeting \_\_\_\_\_
- d. I can invite others to a meeting with an elected official \_\_\_\_\_
- e. I have participated in an action effort \_\_\_\_\_
- f. I have helped plan an action effort \_\_\_\_\_
- g. I have shared my story at a public meeting \_\_\_\_\_

**Leaders help plan and carry out action efforts**

- a. I can implement tactics to win on an action effort \_\_\_\_\_
- b. I can brainstorm tactics as part of an action effort \_\_\_\_\_
- c. I understand the legislative process \_\_\_\_\_
- d. I understand the electoral process and how action campaigns work \_\_\_\_\_
- e. I can participate in a campaign strategy session \_\_\_\_\_
- f. I understand the relationships that impact work on issues \_\_\_\_\_
- g. I see the links between different issues and their connections to broader systemic problems \_\_\_\_\_

**Leaders understand and can help participate in coalitions.**

- a. I understand how coalitions work, and the benefits and tradeoffs of joining them \_\_\_\_\_
- b. I can participate in strategic decision-making around coalition participation \_\_\_\_\_
- c. I can network with other organizations and build relationships \_\_\_\_\_
- d. I can identify self-interest in other individuals and groups \_\_\_\_\_
- e. I would be able to prioritize groups to ask to join a coalition \_\_\_\_\_
- f. I have participated in a coalition \_\_\_\_\_
- g. I have been a leader in a coalition \_\_\_\_\_

**1. Which two or three leadership skills do you consider your strengths? Why?**

a. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**2. What two or three leadership skills would you most like to work on strengthening over the next 18 months? Why?**

a. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**With your mentor, brainstorm this part together:** These are the 2-3 activities I'm going to work on to build the skills we've talked about building over the next 18 months:

a. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## 15. Recognizing Leadership Traits Activity

What leadership qualities do you see in yourself?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

What is something you want to work on to become a better leader?

---

---

---

Can you think of someone else who possesses leadership qualities? Who? What qualities?

---

---

---

What specific activities can you invite a prospective leader to join you in doing, so they can learn how to lead these activities within the League too?

---

---

Remember that strengthening leadership skills within ourselves and others for the League and for the civic life in our communities is not a one-time event; it is an ongoing process. Within the League, it is not just “the President’s” or “Nominating Committee’s business,” it is everyone’s business. It’s about relationships, self-development and the development of others, and it includes a set of skills and abilities that can be learned.

## 16. Team Building Exercises

### Exercise 1 (15-20 minutes)

Get into groups of two and choose person “A” and person “B”. Person “A” starts out by taking 3 minutes to share an experience (non-League) that has been one of the most important experiences for them (something that has had a lasting impact on their lives and why). Person “B” listens. After three minutes, you switch and person “B” shares their experience.

In sharing back with the full group, without retelling the story, person “A” shares one key piece of what they heard from person “B”, and person “B” shares one key piece of what they heard from person “A”. In other words, they share what really struck them about what they heard and share that with the full group. Do this sharing with just a couple of sentences.

.....

### Exercise 2 (15-30 minutes)

Using name tent cards and markers – have each person write their name in the center of the card and then draw a small image of something that represents the following in each of the four corners of the name tent:

1. Upper left hand corner = Favorite Food
2. Upper right hand corner = Favorite Hobby
3. Lower left hand corner = Favorite Book
4. Lower right hand corner = Favorite Issue

Go around the room and have each person share name (especially if there are new people to the group) and for more established groups, what each of these images represents. This will help the group/team get to know things about the members of their team (other than what they discuss over regular business). It will help in finding new places for common bonds outside of League activities too, so you’re strengthening the social component of working together.

.....

**Exercise 3** (15-30 minutes)

You will need flipchart paper, markers and masking tape to do this exercise. Determine how many teams you will have and plan one piece of flipchart paper for every 5 people. This exercise is meant to help build teams and understand the value of focus on the importance of share goals and objectives.

Break the whole group into teams of five. The person leading the exercise assigns a specific topic for the sentences. Without talking to each other, the team members in turn write a sentence on the chart paper one word at a time. The first person writes one word and passes the marker to the next person, who will then write one word and pass the marker to the third person until each person has written one word. The last person writes the last word and punctuates the sentence.

It is important for the exercise, that:

- the team is not allowed to speak or communicate in any other way with each other while writing the sentence. Just write the word and quickly pass the marker along.
- the sentence make sense!

Ask participants if they have any questions before beginning the exercise. Have the teams write their sentence.

After the sentence is complete for each team, ask some questions of each team to help discuss this activity with the whole group:

- Read your sentence to the full group. What do you think of your sentence?
- How did you decide on what word to write first?
- How did you decide to what word would come next?
- How did you decide how to end the sentence?
- Was this easy or difficult to do? Explain why.
- How did you “communicate” without talking?
- Was anyone surprised that you achieved the goal?

You can finish this section by asking a final question of the whole group and posting their responses up on flipchart paper:

- What were some of the obstacles you had to overcome in order to achieve the goal?

As you close, you can observe that many of the obstacles they listed happen in everyday situations. What the activity shows us is that when we find a way to focus on a common objective, we can overcome many of the challenges we are facing. Even if the outcome is not perfect – like grammar in some of the sentences – we can still achieve some success by establishing an objective or common goal.

## 17. Library of Ice-Breakers

### 1. What's Your Purse-onality?

Instruction to group:

- Take two items (e.g., family pictures, credit cards, rabbits' feet) from their purses, wallets, or pockets.
- When introducing themselves to the group, they should use whatever they took out to help describe themselves in at least two ways (e.g., "I am superstitious"; "I'm such a tightwad that this is the first dollar I ever earned"). Allow 1 minute per person.
- Point out that there is always something new team members can learn about each other that will increase rapport and make the team members aware of each other's strengths and applicable experiences.

### 2. Costume Party

Instruction to group:

- You are invited to a fancy dress party which requires that your costume says something about you.
- What costume would you wear and why?
- Take two minutes to think of your answer.

### 3. Alliterative Adjectives

- Ask each person to state her name and attach an adjective that not only describes a dominant characteristic, but also starts with the first letter of their name.
- Examples: Creative Cathy, Mathematical Mary.

### 4. Jigsaw (Picture of jigsaw needed)

- List the ways in which the jigsaw is similar to the composition of our team.
- There are boundaries.
  - Each piece plays a specific role in the solution.
  - Pieces are highly interconnected when teamwork occurs.
  - The whole is more (better) than the sum of its parts.
  - Some pieces are central, some peripheral.
  - There are natural groupings.
  - Pieces need someone to move them.
  - Rapid solution is aided by someone with an overall vision.
- Discussion questions.
  - Are you surprised by the number of similarities?
  - What are the ways you can use this metaphor.



## 5. Team Building-Sentence Relay

- Divide the room in teams between 5 -10 people
- Without talking to each other, the team members in turn write a sentence one word at a time.
- Pass marker to person behind them.
- Last person writes punctuation mark at the end of the sentence.
- Sentences can be in any form: question, statement or exclamation.

(If a team finishes early they can write another sentence.)

- Ask the group:
  - What do you think of your sentence or paragraph?
  - How did you decide what word to write first?
- Continue the conversation using some of these questions:
  - How did you decide how or when to end the sentence?
  - Was this easy or difficult to do? Ask them to explain.
  - How did you communicate without talking? Or did you communicate? ~ Was anyone amazed that you achieved the goal?
  - Was it difficult to add to other teams' sentences?
- What were some of the obstacles you had to overcome in order to achieve the goal?
  - List their responses on the flip chart.

## 6. Make Your Own League Acronym

- We have probably all heard of amusing lifestyle acronyms such as DINKY (Double Income, No Kids Yet); ORCHID (One Recent Child, Heavily In Debt); and the more formal term NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training).
- What acronym can you devise (or suggest one you know already) that is particularly appropriate for League?

## 7. Drawing a House Together

Participants will work in pairs. With a pencil, pen, crayon or marker. Each person will hold on to the marker together so that they can write on the paper together.

Ask pairs to draw a house without talking to each other. It is important to ask them to figure out how. The goal is to work on the picture together.

Jot down some note that you observe:

- Which partner takes control?
- Does one dominate or do they take turns?
- How are they making decisions without talking?
- How do they correct problems?
- Do they start seriously and then loosen up?
- Does one partner “check out” or give up?
- If they stop drawing for while who starts again?

## ASK PARTICIPANTS TO HOLD UP THEIR DRAWINGS AND TALK ABOUT WHAT THEY DID.

Here are some questions you can ask:

- Is this the picture you had in mind when you started? If not, how did it end up the way it did?
- How did you decide what to draw?
- Who was in control of the marker?
- Was it easy to work with your partner?
- How did you communicate without talking?

## WHAT DID YOU LEARN?

- Say, “This activity caused a little conflict. What were some of the causes?”
- How did you resolve them?
- What are some things you could have done to reduce the amount of conflict?

## HOW DO YOU KEEP CONFLICTS FROM GETTING OUT OF HAND?

- Set goals before starting
- Maintain 2 way communication
- Recognize differences in style
- Listen to and acknowledge other person’s ideas
- Recognize own strengths and weaknesses
- Try to see the other point of view

## 18. Leadership Compass Exercise

*Can understanding the way you approach work and how it differs from other approaches help you practice effective leadership?*

**Topics:** Self-awareness, work styles, teamwork

**Summary:** The Leadership Compass provides participants a tool for understanding how they approach work and how it can differ from others'. One key to effective leadership is to be flexible in your work style and receptive to others whose styles differ from your own.

**Outcomes:**

Participants take away a deeper understanding and appreciation for each other's work styles and approaches.

Participants take away a deeper understanding of the need for a variety of work styles to make our organization function.

Participants take away a device and language to help work together better as a team and an organization.

Participants take away a deeper sense of team and teamwork.

**Duration:** 60 minutes

**Materials:** Posters of the directions of the Leadership Compass

Handouts 1–4

Newsprint or large sheets of paper

Markers

**Procedure:**

*Warm Up:*

Before starting, set up the room so that each corner represents a cardinal point (i.e., north, south, etc.). Small groups will gather in their specified corners. Introduce the Leadership Compass. Like a directional compass, the Leadership Compass has four directions, or ways in which people approach work. Many of us work in all of the directions at different times. Many of us have a resting place where we tend to be most comfortable. It is important for participants to know their preferred leadership style and to be able to communicate and work with people with other styles.



*The Activity:*

1. Give the participants an opportunity to read Handouts 1–4, which contain descriptions of the four leadership styles. (10 minutes)
2. Ask participants to think about the one that most applies to them. If someone has difficulty determining which style to choose, have them ask themselves these questions:
  - What seems most comfortable?
  - What is your tendency when under pressure?
  - What is your first inclination when you get a new project?
  - What feedback have you been given about yourself?
3. After participants have decided where they fit best, have them form small groups in the corners of the room based on their preferred approach.
4. Based on their work experiences, ask each group to answer the following questions on chart paper. Have the groups report out.  
What is really great about being your direction?  
What is really hard about being your direction?
5. Ask each direction to plan a vacation. Give them very few instructions except that they have 10 minutes to plan a vacation as a group. Give them chart paper to record the trip they are planning. Have each group present their vacation. Notice the differences in style.

*Wrap Up:*

1. Have each group answer the following question on chart paper:  
What are 10 tips that others can follow to work best with your direction?
2. Have participants choose a theme song for their direction. They will be asked to sing it as a group. (For example: West – Taking Care of Business, East – My Way)
3. Here are a few additional questions and topics you can ask the groups to address:  
What is your direction's greatest strength?  
What is your direction's greatest weakness?  
What is your direction's pet peeve?  
What pace does your direction keep?  
What animal best represents your direction?  
What would be your direction's mascot?

**Sources:**

- The Personality Compass* by Diane Turner and Thelma Greco, 1998.  
*The Medicine Way: A Shamanic Path to Self-Mastery*. Kenneth Meadows. Element, 1991.  
*The Medicine Wheel: Earth Astrology*. Sun Bear and Waburn. Simon and Schuster, 1980.

## **HANDOUT 1**

### **North: The “Get It Done” Person**

#### **Approach to Work**

Assertive, Active, Decisive

Likes to be in control and determine the course of events

Quick to act, expresses urgency for others to act quickly also

Enjoys challenging people and situations

Thinks in terms of the “bottom line”

Likes a quick pace and the fast track

Courageous, Ambitious, and Confident

Perseveres – Not stopped by “NO”

Goal-centered, ambitious

Hardworking leader who is comfortable being in front

Value Words – “Do it now!” “I’ll do it.”

#### **Best Ways to Work with a North**

Present your case quickly, clearly, and with enthusiasm and confidence

Let them know they will be involved – their payoff and their role

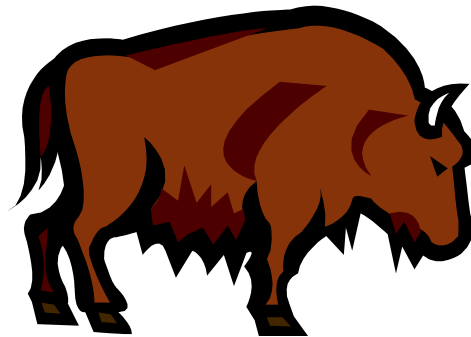
Focus on the “challenge” of the task.

Provide them with plenty of autonomy

Establish timelines and stick with them

Give them positive, public recognition

Use them to complete tasks that require motivation, persuasion, and initiative



## **HANDOUT 2**

### **South: The Nurturer**

#### **Approach to Work**

Friendly, Likeable team player

Allows others to feel important

Supportive, nurturing and caring towards colleagues

Willing to trust others' statements at face value

Peace-loving, sympathetic, and helpful

Feelings-based, trusts own emotions and intuition as truth

Able to focus on the present moment

Process-centered

Generous, non-competitive and likes to build on the ideas of others

Value Words: "Right" and "Fair"

#### **Best Ways to Work with a South**

Remember process, attention to what is happening with the relationship between you

Justify your decisions around values and ethics

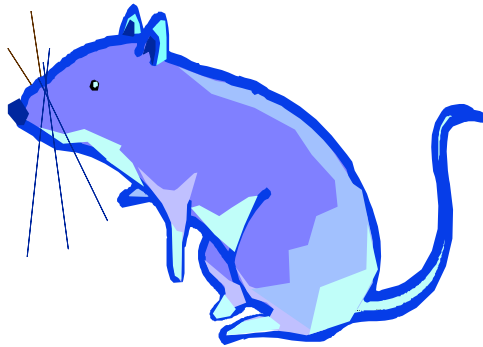
Appeal your relationship with this person and his or her other relationships

Listen hard and allow the expression of feelings and intuition in logical arguments

Be aware that this person may have a hard time saying "NO" and may be easily steamrolled

Provide plenty of positive reassurance and likeability

Let the personal know you like them and appreciate them



## **HANDOUT 3**

### **East: The Visionary**

#### **Approach to Work**

Innovative, Creative and sees the big picture  
Very idea oriented, focuses on future thought  
Risk-taker, adventurous, spontaneous  
Has insight into mission and purpose  
Looks for overarching themes and ideas  
Appreciates a lot of information  
Strong spiritual awareness, free spirited, unconventional  
Likes to experiment and explore  
Value words: “Option” “Possibility”

#### **Best Ways to Work with an East**

Show appreciation and enthusiasm for ideas  
Listen and be patient during idea generation  
Avoid criticizing or judging ideas  
Allow and support divergent thinking  
Provide a variety of tasks  
Provide help and supervision to support detail and project follow through



## HANDOUT 4

### West: The Analyst

#### Approach to Work

Seen as practical, dependable, and thorough

Provide planning and resources to others

Moves carefully, deliberately, and follows procedures and guidelines

Use data to make logical and analytical decisions

Weighs all sides of an issue, balanced

Introspective, self-analytical, focused, reserved

Careful, thoroughly examines people's needs in situations

Works well with existing resources – gets the most out of what has been done in the past

Skilled at finding the fatal flaw in an idea or a project

Value Words: "Objective," "Organized"

#### Best Ways to Work with a West

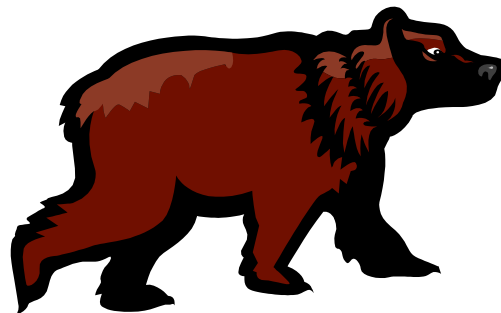
Allow plenty of time for decision-making

Provide data – objective facts and figures that a West can trust

Don't be put off by critical "NO" statements

Minimize the expression of emotion and use logic when possible

Appeal to tradition, a sense of history, and correct procedures



#### Sources:

*The Personality Compass* by Diane Turner and Thelma Greco, 1998.

*The Medicine Way: A Shamanic Path to Self-Mastery*. Kenneth Meadows. Element, 1991.

*The Medicine Wheel: Earth Astrology*. Sun Bear and Waburn. Simon and Schuster, 1980.



## 19. True Colors Exercise

*An Exercise to Help Understand Your Leadership Style  
and The Leadership Styles of those Around You*

*With Appreciation to "Possibilities ... Neighbors In Action" For Use of this Exercise*

### What Is Your True Color?

**Describe Yourself.** Starting on ROW 1, go ACROSS and rank the group of words using a scale 1 to 4.

4 = Most like you

3 = A lot like you

2 = Somewhat like you

1 = Least like you

Repeat ranking on each row.

**Starting with Column 1, add up the numbers in Column 1 going from top to bottom, and enter the total in the box at the bottom of the column. Repeat totaling for each column.** Your highest score total indicates your primary or brightest color. The lowest score represents the color that is least like you.

	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4
<b>Row 1</b>	Active Opportunistic Spontaneous <input type="text"/>	Parental Tradition Responsible <input type="text"/>	Authentic Harmonious Compassionate <input type="text"/>	Versatile Inventive Competent <input type="text"/>
<b>Row 2</b>	Competitive Impetuous Impactful <input type="text"/>	Practical Sensible Dependable <input type="text"/>	Unique Empathetic Communication <input type="text"/>	Curious Conceptual Knowledge- able <input type="text"/>
<b>Row 3</b>	Realistic Open-minded Adventuresome <input type="text"/>	Loyal Conservative Organized <input type="text"/>	Devoted Warm Poetic <input type="text"/>	Theoretical Seeking Ingenious <input type="text"/>
<b>Row 4</b>	Daring Impulsive Fun <input type="text"/>	Concerned Procedural Cooperative <input type="text"/>	Tender Inspirational Dramatic <input type="text"/>	Determined Complex Composed <input type="text"/>
<b>Row 5</b>	Exciting Courageous Skillful <input type="text"/>	Orderly Conventional Caring <input type="text"/>	Vivacious Affectionate Sympathetic <input type="text"/>	Philosophical Principled Rational <input type="text"/>
	Total: <input type="text"/>	Total: <input type="text"/>	Total: <input type="text"/>	Total: <input type="text"/>

If your highest score is in:

Column 1, you are **Orange**

Column 2, you are **Gold**

Column 3, you are **Blue**

Column 4, you are **Green**

## If you are GOLD.....Your Strength Is Duty

If your brightest color is gold, you value order and cherish the traditions of home and family. You provide for and support the structure of society. Steadfast and loyalty are your trademarks. Generous and parental by nature, you show care by making everyone do the right thing. To disregard responsibility of any kind never occurs to you.

### *Your Keys to Personal Success*

- Generosity, The work Ethic, A parental Nature, Ceremony, a sense of History, Dignity and culture, perpetuating heritage, steadfastness, a value of order, predictability, home and family, establishing and organizing and institutions.



### *You Esteem Yourself By Behaving Responsibly*

*Be Prepared* is the motto of those with gold as their brightest color. They enjoy the status and security that being prepared represents. They have an instinct for keeping the product in production, for maintaining the structure, and for supporting the rules. They have a strong awareness of right and wrong, with respect for *shoulds* and the *should nots*. They are symbolized by the pillars of strength – the flag, the preservation of honored institutions, and the purity of home and family.

### **With Gold as Your Brightest Color, You Tend To:**

- Dream of: Assets, wealth, influence, status and security.
- Value: Dependability, accountability and responsibility.
- Regard: Service and dedication.
- Dislike: Disobedience, non-conformity and insubordination.
- Express: Concern, stability and purpose.
- Foster: Institutions and traditions.
- Respect: Loyalty
- Promote: Groups, ties, bonds, associations and organizations.

## If you are ORANGE.....Your Strength is Skillfulness

If your brightest color is orange, you need freedom to take immediate action! A zest for life and a desire to test the limits best express your nature. You take pride in being highly skilled in a variety of fields. You are a master negotiator. Adventure is your middle name. You prefer a hands-on approach to problem solving and a direct line of reasoning creates the excitement and immediate results that you admire.



### *Your Keys to Personal Success*

The impulse to really live, test the limits, the need for variation, excitement and light-heartedness, charged adventure, being a natural entertainer, spontaneous relationships, taking off for somewhere else, being able to act in a crisis, a love of tools, charm, wit, fun, taking defeats only temporarily and considering waiting as emotional death.

### *You Esteem Yourself By Being Adventurous*

People with orange as their brightest color see life as one big party to enjoy. They live in the here and now, for who know what tomorrow may bring? They are always ready for a business deal or a deal of any sort, loving competition and never missing an opportunity. Their impulsiveness drives everything they do. They are symbolized by the light of the eagle, the sensation of riding a motorcycle, the roaring of the rapids and the skillfulness of a virtuoso.

### **With Orange As Your Brightest Color, You Tend To:**

Dream of:	Being free, spontaneity and impetuoussness
Value:	Skills, grace, finesse and charisma
Regard:	Opportunities, options and competitions
Dislike:	Rigidness, authority and forcelessness
Express:	Optimism, impatience, eagerness and confidence
Foster:	Recreation, fun and enjoyment
Respect:	Skill and artistic expression
Promote:	Stimulation and risk

## If you are GREEN.....Your Strength is Knowledge

If your brightest color is green, you feel best about yourself when you are solving problems and when your ideas are recognized, especially when you feel ingenious. You seek to express yourself through your ability to be an expert in everything. Your idea of a great day is to use your know-how like a laser to create solutions, in that you are a complex individualist with great analytical ability. Although you do not express your emotions openly, you do experience deep feelings.



### **Chapter 4 Your Keys to Personal Success**

Developing Models, abstract thinking, analytical thinking, exploring ideas, a variety of interests, striving for competency, admiring intelligence, storing wisdom & intelligence, being a perfectionist, abhorring redundancy, utilizing precise language and handling complexity.

### **You Esteem Yourself By Utilizing Ingenuity**

People with green as their brightest color have curious minds. They explore every facet of a problem or an idea to control the realities of life. They are global by nature, always seeking universal truth. They acquire skills and perfect any product of systems on which they choose to focus. They are symbolized by the abstract thinker, the unknown challenge of outer space, the complexity and simplicity in design, and the symmetry of format.

### **With Green As Your Brightest Color You Tend To:**

Dream of:	Truth, perfection, accuracy
Value:	Answers, resolutions, intelligence
Regard:	Efficiency, increased output, reduced waste
Dislike:	Injustice and unfairness
Express:	Coolness, calm & collected reservation.
Foster:	Invention and technology
Respect:	Knowledge and capability
Promote:	Effectiveness, competence, and know-how

## If you are BLUE.....Your Strength is Authenticity

If your brightest color is blue, you seek to express the inner you. Authenticity and Honesty are valued above all other characteristics. You are sensitive to subtlety and -with great flair- you create roles in life's drama. You enjoy close relationships with those you love and you possess a strong spirituality in your nature. Making a difference in the world is easy for you because you cultivate the potential in yourself and others.



### Your Keys to Personal Success

Authenticity as a standard, seeking reality, devotion to relationships, cultivating others, assuming creative roles in life's drama, writing and speaking with poetic flair, self-searching, having a life of significance, spirituality, making a difference in the world and seeking harmony.

### You Esteem Yourself By Behaving Sincere and Sympathetic

People with blue in their character as their brightest color are persons of peace and love. They are the natural romantics in life, idealizing the perfect moment and gestures of love. They are most satisfied when nurturing the potential of others, bringing out the best in them. They are the facilitators of human potential. They are symbolized by the dove of peace, the romantic ballad, the drama of life, and the importance of a simple touch or handshake.

### With Blue As Your Brightest Color, You Tend To:

Dream of:	Love and affection, authenticity
Value:	Compassion, sympathy, rapport
Regard:	Meaning, significance, identity
Dislike:	Hypocrisy, deception insincerity
Express:	Vivacity, enthusiasm
Foster:	Potential growth in people, harmony
Respect:	Nurturing, empathy, sharing of feelings
Promote:	Growth and development in others

# Working With Your True Colors:



## GOLD

## GREEN

## ORANGE

## BLUE

<b>Esteemed By:</b>	Chapter 5 Being of Service	Insights	Recognition	Helping People
<b>Appreciated For:</b>	Accuracy and thoroughness	Their ideas	Creativity	Unique Contributions
<b>Validated By:</b>	Appreciation of service	Affirming their wisdom	Visible results	Personal Acceptance
<b>At Work They Are:</b>	Procedural	Pragmatic	Flexible	A Catalyst
<b>Their Specialty Is:</b>	Results	Strategy	Energy	Relationships
<b>Their Overall Mood:</b>	Concerned	Cool, Calm, Collected	Enthusiastic	Committed
<b>Key Characteristics:</b>	Responsibility	Ingenuity	Skillfulness	Authenticity

# *WHAT TO LOOK FOR WHEN YOU'RE OUT OF ESTEEM*

## **GREEN:**

Indecisiveness  
Refusal to comply or cooperate  
Extreme aloofness and withdrawal  
Snobbish, put-down remarks, and sarcasm  
Refusal to communicate; the silent treatment  
Perfectionism due to severe performance anxiety  
Highly critical attitudes towards yourself or others

## **BLUE:**

Attention-getting misbehavior  
Lying to save face  
Withdrawal  
Fantasy, day-dreaming, and trancing out  
Crying and depression  
Passive resistance  
Yelling and screaming

## **ORANGE:**

Rudeness and defiance  
Breaking the rules intentionally  
Running away and dropping out  
Use of stimulants  
Acting out boisterously  
Lying and cheating  
Physical aggressiveness

## **GOLD:**

Complaining and self-pity  
Anxiety and worry  
Depression and fatigue  
Psychosomatic problems  
Malicious judgments about yourself and others  
Herd mentality exhibited in blind following of leaders  
Authoritarianism and phobic reactions

## 20. Conflict Resolution Activity

### The Bomb

How do groups go about resolving their conflicts after an area of disagreement has been uncovered? There are four basic strategies for conflict resolution.

- Avoidance
- Defusion
- Power Intervention
- Negotiation



### The Activity

Think of a specific situation in your own community [or League] where you've become aware of conflict. Now visualize this disagreement as a bomb, ticking away in the middle of the meeting room. What strategy will you use to resolve this situation?

1. You could avoid the bomb altogether.
2. You could remove the fuse from the bomb, addressing the symptoms of the problem but leaving the bomb intact.
3. Someone in a powerful position could step in, declare the bomb out of order, and carry it out of the building.
4. You could negotiate.

### The Discussion

Apply each of the strategies described above to your situation and answer the following questions:

1. What are the advantages of this strategy?
2. What are the disadvantages?
3. What will be the impact on the community if this strategy is used?

List your decisions on a piece of paper.



## 21. Focusing Grid

League Priority	LWV Visibility or Media Opportunities?	Can we gain new members?	Groups to partner with for outreach and impact?	LWV person or small team willing to lead?	Core LWV issue/activity?	League leaders have knowledge?	Resources to do this now?
Example: Observer Corps	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Example: Voters Guide	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Example: Forum on Tax Structure	✓		✓			✓	✓