

## **Membership Development: Recruitment**

Recruitment must be an ongoing priority—a membership-driven, nonprofit organization depends on constantly bringing in new members to be successful. Although Leagues may make special efforts during a specific membership drive each year, recruitment is more than a one-time project.

Research conducted by Independent Sector in 1996 and reconfirmed in League research conducted in 1996 and 1999, indicates that by far, the most effective recruitment technique is personally asking someone to join (or donate or volunteer)! Don't wait for new people to come to you—go to them.

### ***Identify and publicize at every opportunity the benefits of League membership.***

- Effective recruitment depends on knowing your community and identifying community concerns. Is the League working on issues potential members consider crucial?
- It is also critical to know your own League well and identify the benefits the League offers prospective members. Develop talking points and materials that clearly indicate why someone should join the League instead of another organization.
- When talking with prospective members, ask what community issues they are deeply concerned with. After listening carefully, mention how getting involved with the League can help the individual make a difference.
- Find creative ways to get the word out about the League throughout the community.

### ***Everyone—not just the president, membership chair or League board—can help recruit new members of diverse racial and ethnic groups.***

- When someone new attends an event, go over and talk with them—if they leave without being warmly greeted, they are less likely to come back. Always have membership material available.
- Don't leave it just to people of color to recruit other people of color! The League as a whole must indicate commitment to diversity through the issues it works on and activism throughout the community. Many white people have friends and contacts of different racial and ethnic groups at work or in other civic organizations. Ask those contacts what they are concerned about in the community. Invite them to join and ask for referrals to other potential members.
- Encourage League member to make it a point to never miss an opportunity to mention the League, post a flyer or give someone a League brochure.

### ***Develop a variety of ways to respond to the time pressures in member's lives. Remember, people today have more options and less time than ever before.***

- To be attractive to more working people, try holding meetings after 5:00 p.m., and meet in easily accessible locations.
- Although people expect meetings to be well run, generally they are not interested in strict parliamentary procedure and a lot of inflexible rules.

*Compiled from the LWVUS Diversity Toolkit*

# Membership Development: Recruitment Worksheet

## ASSESS

### Know your community:

1. How do others perceive the League in the community?
2. What are the most pressing issues among diverse segments of the community?
3. Identify the League's strengths
4. What benefits might potential members find attractive about the League?
5. What does the League do more effectively than other groups?
6. What is especially enjoyable and fun about being a League member? Consider how we currently recruit new members:
7. What current or past methods have been successful in recruiting new members?
8. Do we leave recruitment to only a few members or conduct recruitment at only certain times in the year?
9. How well do League publications and events demonstrate the benefits of joining the League? How well do League publications show respect for racial and ethnic diversity? (for example, are all graphics and photos of white people?)
10. When members talk to others in the community, do we present the benefits of joining the League?
11. What recruitment efforts do we do in diverse communities? How are we addressing their needs as indicated in our Know Your Community research?

## PLAN

### Set challenging goals for the League's recruitment efforts for the next two years:

1. Based on your understanding of the diverse groups in your community, brainstorm new or improved ways to recruit members. Remember, during brainstorming, promote creativity by not criticizing ideas right away. Even "wild" ideas may lead to new, practical methods.
2. Choose which methods you will use. Develop an action plan that includes a timeline and specific responsibilities (who will do what by when). Include a mixture of one-time events or campaigns as well as year-round ways to help out.
3. Determine whether member's need additional training or educational materials on communication skills, assertiveness skills, diversity awareness, what other experts say about recruitment and other issues.
4. Select measures now that will help you monitor progress on your goals (not just the number of new members, but also how many people of different racial/ethnic groups attend League events; how many publications serving diverse groups featured articles about the League, etc.).

## ACT

1. Carry out your action plan. Be sure to keep careful records to monitor progress toward the goals.
2. Celebrate successes and share praise with everyone that helps. *Compiled from the LWVUS Diversity Toolkit*