

**Guidance on Opportunities:
Creative Calendaring
August 2017**

For many Leagues, summer is when plans are made for the League year. As such, it is a great opportunity for boards to think about –

- a. What they want to accomplish (i.e., set goals)
- b. What will be needed to accomplish their goals
- c. Who else can help to accomplish their goals

Calendars allow Leagues to set priorities and goals for the year while consciously remembering to plan these events with **visibility, engagement, action, and leadership development opportunities built in.**



Planning with focus

Everything we do should come back to mission impact. The Campaign for Making Democracy Work™ is a great focal point. With that said, Leagues can “flare” with their work on local and state issues too. (See “Focus and Flare” guidance issued in December 2016.)

Goals:

What do we want to accomplish this year? What programs, events and outreach will help us achieve our goal? How will we know if we succeeded?

Interest:

How can we frame/share/market our events so that they appeal to our wider community? What lessons can we learn from previously successful events about what make them interesting? What do we know about our prospective audience? What’s important to them?

Strengths & Assets:

What do we do already that is successful? How can we expand upon that success? What’s the role for our new engagers/activists?

Impact:

What is our impact on our community? What are our measures of success?

New ideas for your calendar

“Because we’ve always done it that way.” This is a common refrain, but not necessarily a healthy one. While our ultimate impact goal may stay fairly constant, how we achieve it needs to stay fresh to keep members and supporters engaged, the community interested, and visibility high. New approaches might include:

Public calendars and administrative calendars are not the same thing. Public calendars are a way to get members and supporters invested in what the League is doing in your community. These should be posted in a number of places, such as the League website and community calendars.

Administrative calendars, on the other hand, are primarily for League leaders. These can be much more detailed and hold the internal deadlines of the League.

- Utilizing **more casual settings or formats**, such as a casual coffee event and discussion, an art-based or creative event (like poster or sign making), or “sips & civility” happy hour conversations.
- **Community-building events**, such as picnics or game nights.

The key is to create events that are social, audience-focused, engaging, and free-flowing. Get people in the door, then come to them with volunteer and impact opportunities!

Social media presence

Not all “events” need to be attended in person to be engaging. Utilize social media in different ways to bring your events and programs to a larger audience. For example,

- Utilize free resources like [Canva](#) to quickly create eye-catching images with event information;
- Use social media scheduling tools such as [Hootsuite](#) or [TweetDeck](#) to maintain a consistent presence on social media;
- Utilize Twitter!
 - Choose your own hashtag for an event or an issue
 - Host a twitter party
 - Live tweet an event
 - Use twitter etiquette: follow people back, like and retweet other peoples’ content, and credit any pictures or graphics you take from other sources or accounts;
- Keep in mind that different [demographics](#) utilize different platforms -- 20s more likely to use Twitter, while mid-30s-40s primarily engage on Facebook;
- Facebook live your events/presentations/lectures
- Familiarize yourself with the most effective [post formats](#):
 - Facebook: images and videos
 - Twitter: infographics and images

How to make events more visible on social media

- ✓ Use a photographer or enlist the services of a member with a nice camera
- ✓ Use a backdrop or photo booth
- ✓ Use a whiteboard where people can express why an issue is important to them

Remember that people LOVE seeing pictures of themselves on your Facebook page and will share them—which means free publicity!

Success Story

- LWV Maine Facebook page
 - Has over 1600 Followers (<https://www.facebook.com/LWVME>)
 - Posts frequently about their impact
 - Shares LWVUS posts as well as pertinent news articles
 - Has many engaging photos of action and impact!