

## The Role of the Coach

Since 2006, the LWVUS has worked in partnership with state and local Leagues to recruit grassroots members into the League, and the results have been very positive. The most concrete measure of success has been net membership growth in many of the participating Leagues. In addition, all participating local Leagues have reported other measures of success: increased visibility; improved relationships with the media and other community organizations; focused, strategic planning for organizational growth; and renewed ties with the state League.

In 2010, LWVUS started a national coaching team, the Ruth S. Shur Fellows. These national coaches provide personal support and training to the state coaches. Leadership Development was added at the same time as it is vital for the League to inspire new leaders to help make the organization stronger.

The League successes can be attributed to several factors, including training and building outreach into League activities, but perhaps one of the most important factors is having an effective, dynamic state League coaching team in place.

To help the membership recruitment, leadership development, and outreach best practices take root and continue to be second-nature, each participating League needs to have coach who is in regular communication with them – someone with whom they can build a relationship. Someone they can count on to listen, to applaud their successes and to support them when they have challenges.

The #1 role of the state coach is to BUILD a  
RELATIONSHIP  
with each local League they coach.



### 4 Distinct Roles of the Coach:

The role of the coach is multi-faceted; however, it can be broken down into four distinct roles.

- **Mentor** – When talking with the local League coordinator or team each month, coaches will provide a framework for the work of the local League team from the Guidance on Opportunities provided by the National coach and should inquire about their progress, help them to solve challenges, and talk about successes. Coaches can refer Leagues back to the training materials, share ideas/successes from other Leagues, and provide general support. Very simply, coaches listen and advise.

- **Cheerleader** – Coaches need to help Leagues to “see” their successes and applaud them. With the many responsibilities placed on League leaders, they do not often stop to recognize and celebrate where they have succeeded. Instead, leaders tend to focus on what might have been done differently and what still might be left to do. Coaches need to help League leaders to stop and appreciate their successes and to appreciate the importance of recognizing successes in general. Success breeds other success; it is invigorating and provides an opportunity to shower praise and encouragement.
- 
- **Accountability Coach** – One of the most valuable roles that the coach plays is keeping Leagues on track with their work. Again, knowing how busy League leaders are, it is easy to slip into old patterns of operation and ignore the organizational growth and membership and leadership development opportunities. This is not a PUNATIVE role. It is a COACHING role – the coach helps the Leagues stay on track with their plans and develop new patterns of operating where outreach is built into their activities. By talking with League leaders monthly, coaches can check on progress, see where challenges have occurred, and generally get a feel for whether a League will make its goal. Without this monthly check-in, Leagues are likely to slip back into established patterns of not prioritizing outreach and visibility efforts, which leads to failure, not success.
  - **Communicator** – Coaches serve as a communication bridge between the levels of League. Coaches will report back to the state League and LWVUS coach on the activities and health of the local Leagues, as well as pass information from the state League and LWVUS to the local Leagues. In other words, the coaches serve as the main communication vehicles with the local Leagues. Coaches are encouraged to build relationships with the local Leagues -- speak with League leaders via phone and when possible, attend at least one local League event or meeting.

**Mechanics of Coaching**

Communication among the levels of League is a cornerstone to the success of growing the organization. It is vitally important that the national and state coaches hear about successes and challenges, progress and concerns.

**Phone Call Basics**

Like so much of this membership and leadership development work, there is not an absolute “one-size-fits-all” approach. But, there are common components for all state coaches:

**1. State coaches will have a phone call with each local League once each month.** A phone conversation is the most effective communication mechanism (short of a face-to-face visit). An email message is likely not to be as effective a communications tool. The National coach will provide “Opportunity for Guidance” Talking Points to use in the sample agenda for the calls. In addition, there are some suggested questions or conversation starters listed below.



Coaches are encouraged to establish a regular time to talk with their Leagues (such as the first Thursday of every month). With that said, coaches also are encouraged to allow local Leagues to contact them at other times as well (in times of crisis or success) to allow for immediate response – problem solving or praise.

**2. State coaches will have a phone call with their national coach (Ruth S. Shur Fellow) and the other coaches each month.** A monthly conference call, along with survey reporting (explained on next page) enables the national coach to see a complete picture of how local Leagues are performing, identify common challenges, and celebrate local League successes.

**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.)

## Conference Call Etiquette

The following is a list of helpful tips to make your conference calls with local League teams (or even just a local League coordinator) more effective and less time-consuming.

**Find a quiet place.** Background noise can be very distracting. If it is not possible to be away from the noise (noisy dog, sirens, etc.), mute your phone whenever you are not talking.

**Be on time for the call.** Don't get on the call late and expect someone to catch you up with what is going on while everyone else waits. It is rude and disrespectful to the other participants to not be on time. It gives them the impression that your time is more important than theirs.

**Avoid distractions.** Stay focused on listening to the participants on the call.

**Be Polite.** Do not try to talk over another person on the call even if you feel you have a very important point to cover. It is in bad taste to do so and will result in everyone else on the call not being able to understand what you or the other person is saying. Be patient; wait until the other person has finished; and then talk.

**Don't Use The Hold Button.** Do not put the conference call on hold if your phone has hold music or those annoying beeps that sound every few seconds. To say it is a huge interruption and distraction for everyone else on the call is an understatement. I was once on a conference call for training on a new software product our company was introducing. Someone else put the call on hold for nearly 20 minutes and we ended up listening to her hold music for the entire time. If you have to leave a conference call for any period of time, hang up the phone and call back in when you are ready to rejoin.

**Be Cautious With Cordless Phones.** If you are joining a conference call from a cordless phone make sure the phone does not have a lot of static background noise. Usually static background noise starts when you start to get out of range of the phone base or is you get near another device that interferes with phone such as some small electric appliances and answering machines.

**Avoid Shuffling Papers.** One very annoying thing that some people do on a conference call is shuffle papers. It sounds very loud on the phone. Other small potentially noisy habits to avoid are : continually clearing your throat, tapping your pencil, drumming your fingers on the desk, etc.

**Be Aware Of Whether Or Not Your Phone Is On Mute.** If you do put your phone on mute while on a conference call, and it is always a good idea to do so whenever you are not talking, remember to take it back off mute when you talk. Likewise remember to put it back on mute when you are finished. Nearly everyone who has been on conference calls regularly can recount at least one memory of someone forgetting to put their phone back on mute and then saying something that was definitely not intended for the ears of the other conference call participants, such as a negative remark about something relating to the call or another person on the call.

## Using FreeConferenceCall to obtain a Conference Call Number

This is a no-cost service through which we recommend you use to conduct conference calls. Once you sign in, the website will randomly generate a toll phone number and passcode for your use. This number can be wired through anywhere in the United States, meaning you may get a number in Iowa even if you are based in Maine.

You will be charged (or not charged) for any call made using this number as you would for calling any long distance number. If you have an unlimited long-distance plan on your cell phone or home line, you can use this service anytime without any charge. Remember you can also plan calls for nights and weekends to save costs if you (or your state coaches) have free minutes at those times through their cell phone plan.



You can sign up for a conference call number by clicking here:  
<http://www.freeconferencecall.com/signin.asp>.

Once you create a number, it can be used over and over again. You DO NOT need to create a new number each month. *Freeconferencecall.com* has a comprehensive instruction sheet available. There also is a page of frequently asked questions. These include:

### How do I setup a conference call?

Notify your participants of the date and time for your conference call. Provide them with the conference dial-in number and participant access code. At the scheduled time of the conference call, everyone dials in and once connected the conference call begins.

### Do I need to reserve a time for the conference call?

No, there are no reservations required for this service and service is available to you 24/7.

### What are the costs involved in a having a FreeConferenceCall® account?

Only normal long distance charges by each caller's carrier apply. There will be no bill or charges from FreeConferenceCall.com for this service.

### Is there a limit on how many conference calls I can make?

No, you may make an unlimited number of conference calls.

### How many callers can be in a single conference call?

The maximum is 96 callers and there is no required minimum number of callers.

### Is there a limit on the length of a conference call?

6 hours per conference call, including recording, and there is no limit on how many hours you wish to conference each month.

## Skype Video Conferencing

Another great tool for staying in contact with your state coaching teams is [www.skype.com](http://www.skype.com). *Skype* offers free video calls between two different computers. You are able to conference in one additional party (3 on a call). There is group video calling available for a fee. You can have up to 10 people on a group video call.



To use *Skype*, you will need your own webcam and microphone connected to your computer. You can purchase webcams from [www.skype.com](http://www.skype.com) or other vendors at a relatively low cost (about \$20 each), and many newer laptops come with a built-in camera and microphone

To use *Skype*, you must download the software from *Skype*'s homepage. There is NO charge for the software. Once you have downloaded *Skype*, you must create a *Skype* account to use it. The individual with whom you would like to video chat must also download the software and create a *Skype* account. The free version of *Skype* will work for speaking one-on-one with an individual you're coaching or for speaking with a team that can gather in one place. It may be worthwhile to have the coach purchase the group video calling service if there will be more than 3 people on the call.

*Video calling allows you to have face-to-face contact with the League members you coach, even if you cannot make the trip to meet with them in person.*

Thankfully, *Skype* now offers group video calls which has the ability to conference in individuals who do not have *Skype*, too! Group video calling is a GREAT way to get teams together.

To be able to conference in multiple callers via group video calling, one individual (the host) must have *Skype Premium* which can be purchased and downloaded at [www.skype.com](http://www.skype.com). This software costs \$4.99 per month (if purchased for one year) or \$9.99 per month (if purchased for one month). *Skype Premium* allows the host to conference in up to 10 individuals at one time.

*Skype Premium* will work well for conference calls

See what features you get with Skype Premium

	Free	Skype Premium
Skype-to-Skype video and audio calls	✓	✓
Low rates to landlines and mobiles	✓	✓
Instant messaging	✓	✓
Conference calls	✓	✓
Group video calling	×	✓
Group screen sharing	×	✓
No partner advertising <sup>2</sup>	×	✓
Live chat customer support	×	✓
Unlimited <sup>1</sup> calling to a country of your choice <a href="#">View countries</a>	×	Select a country ▾

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**\$4.99/month**

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of teams (such as when all of the state coaches check in monthly with the national coach or when a state coach would like to speak with a local League team comprised of individuals at different locations.) Remember, only the host of the video conference call needs to purchase *Skype Premium*. All other participants just need Skype or can be called on their regular phone.

### **Using Surveys to Report Progress**

*Reporting through the use of surveys helps to provide a forum to problem solve and celebrate successes, supplies feedback about the integration of the best practices, which in the short-term, can be shared with other participating Leagues and, in the long-term, can help to illuminate where adjustments may be needed in the overall effort and to ensure a level of accountability.*

LWVUS staff members communicate with all of the national and state League coaches to receive updates on local League and state progress each month. The survey included on the following pages is an actual survey sent to the state coaches in February 2011.

State coaches are asked to complete a separate survey report on each of the local Leagues they coach each month. National coaches (Ruth S. Shur Fellows) complete a similar survey report on each of the state coaching teams they coach each month.

Please note that while these reporting forms are a useful tool, they are not a substitute for one-on-one communication. The National coach speaks with all of the state League coaches on a regular basis, as the state coaches will communicate with the local teams.

The underlying goal with all communications is to make them effective and efficient. Information is requested judiciously with respect for the wealth of demands placed on League leaders' time. Leagues that have participated in the initiative in past years have come to appreciate and rely upon their interactions with their state coaches; it has not been seen as burdensome.

A sample survey is available on the next page.

### **Following Local League Communications**

**Coaches should receive and review the local League's communications.** Coaches should ask to receive the local League *Voter*, check the local League's web site for new content, and ask to be included on any email distribution lists. This will help coaches to not only know about specific events and activities but also help to understand the kind of outreach mechanisms that are being used.



## Sample Monthly Survey

Below are screenshots from an actual LWVUS State Coaches Survey, completed by state coaches in February 2011. Surveys are accessed via a link sent out by LWVUS staff directly to state coaches. Along with the link, LWVUS staff will send you the questions in advance.

February 2011: State Coaches Survey

Thank you for completing this monthly survey report for FOR EACH LOCAL LEAGUE you coach. If you have any questions, please contact Sara Richman at srichman@lww.org.

**Basic Information**  
\*

Your Name:

Your State:

Local League You Are Assessing:

**Who did you speak with on your monthly coaching call? (Please check all that apply.)**

Local League membership team  
 Local League contact ONLY  
 Local League President ONLY  
 Other League member ONLY  
 I have not held a call this month, but I plan to.  
 I have not held a call this month and do not plan to.

**How would you rate the call?**

Very positive  Positive  Neutral  Negative  Very negative  Not Applicable

**In general, how would you rate the performance of this League on employing the best practices of Membership Recruitment Initiative/leadership development over the past month?**

Excellent  
 Good  
 Fair  
 Poor  
 Don't know

**What was this League's most successful event this month? Did they incorporate best practices to attract new members, develop new leaders, and become visible in the community?**

**What is this League's greatest challenge in the past month (i.e. having a hard time finding new leaders, board not being receptive to best practices, members not making the ASK)?**

**Has this League created a Workplan?**

- Yes, for one entire year
- Yes, for part of a year
- No, they have not created a Workplan yet.

**Is the League following the Workplan they created?**

- Yes, they are following the Workplan.
- No, they have a Workplan but aren't following it.
- No, they do not have a Workplan yet.
- Don't know

**Is the local board involved and supportive of employing the best practices of the Membership Recruitment Initiative/leadership development?**

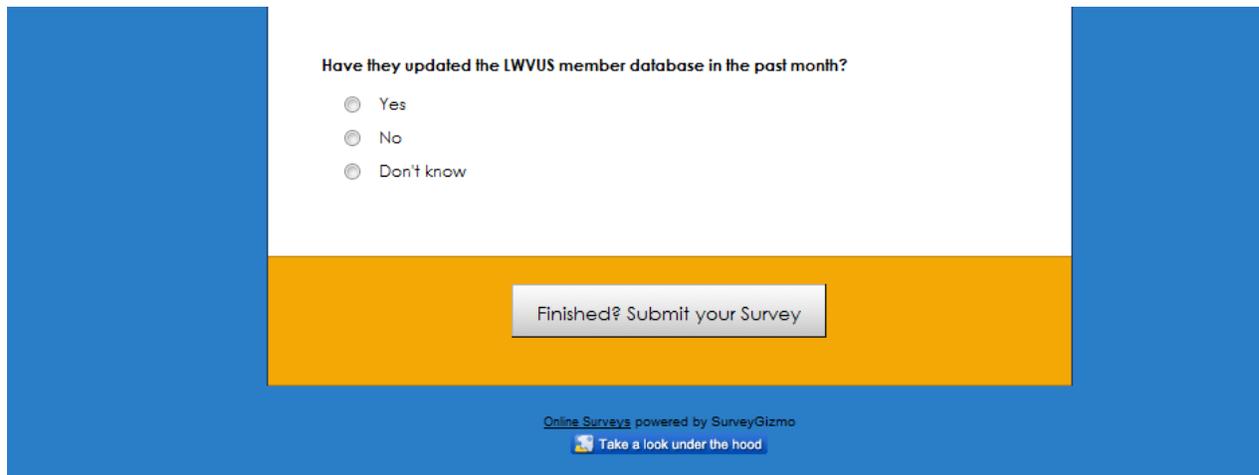
- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**How would you rate this local League's incorporation/ understanding of the best practices of the program?**

Pursuing visibility opportunities	<input type="text" value="-- Please Select --"/>
Partnering with allied organizations	<input type="text" value="-- Please Select --"/>
Including join messages and "the Ask" into activities (voter's guides, candidates forums, etc.)	<input type="text" value="-- Please Select --"/>
Sharing personal stories and including them in the Storybank	<input type="text" value="-- Please Select --"/>
Identifying emerging leaders	<input type="text" value="-- Please Select --"/>
Fostering and mentoring new leaders	<input type="text" value="-- Please Select --"/>

**Has anyone joined this League in the past month?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know



Have they updated the LWVUS member database in the past month?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Finished? Submit your Survey

Online Surveys powered by SurveyGizmo  
[Take a look under the hood](#)

Once completed, the state coach just needs to click the large button on the bottom of the screen that says “Finished? Submit your Survey”. The report is saved online, where the state coach’s Ruth S. Shur Fellow can access the results.

## Surveys: FAQs for State Coaches

### **What program will we be using?**

All of our surveys for the MRI will be created and completed on [www.surveygizmo.com](http://www.surveygizmo.com). This is an online resource, which LWVUS pays to use.

### **How will I be using surveys as a state coach?**

State coaches will report back to LWVUS and the Shur Fellows (National Coaching Team) each month by completing one survey for each of the local Leagues they coach. Both LWVUS and the Shur Fellows will have access to view your completed surveys electronically at [www.surveygizmo.com](http://www.surveygizmo.com).

### **How often will I be expected to complete a survey?**

As a state coach, you will be expected to complete one survey for each local League you coach every month in advance of your monthly call with your national coach.

### **How long will the survey take?**

Each survey you complete will take about 10-15 minutes.

### **Why is it important for me to take the survey?**

The surveys will not only help LWVUS keep a better record of the progress of the membership recruitment and leadership development program, it will also allow us to see trends within participating local Leagues and better serve you in the process. We believe that by aggregating this information in advance of the calls it will help to make your coaching calls more efficient and allow for more discussion (instead of reporting).

### **How do I access the survey each month?**

Each month you will receive an email reminder from LWVUS with a special link to the survey. Use this link to complete a survey for each of your local Leagues.

### **When can I expect to receive the link for the monthly survey from LWVUS?**

You can expect to receive the link within the first week of every month.

### **When should I complete the survey after receiving it?**

Each month you should be calling your each of your local Leagues separately to cheer on their progress and help them work through challenges. We recommend that you complete the survey after each monthly discussion you have with each of your local Leagues.

### **Do I need to complete multiple surveys each month?**

You will be expected to complete ONE survey for each local League you coach. (If you coach two local Leagues, you will complete the survey twice. If you coach three Leagues, you will complete the survey three times.)

### **How do I complete the survey multiple times?**

The surveys are set up to allow you to complete the survey multiple times from one computer. However, to ensure a smooth transition from one survey to the next, we recommend that after you finish each survey, you completely close out of your internet browser and start the process over again using the same link.

### **What if I have trouble logging in or have more questions?**

If you're having any problems using [www.surveygizmo.com](http://www.surveygizmo.com), please contact the MLD Support Team. You also can take a tutorial online at: <http://www.surveygizmo.com/survey-support/tutorials/>.

**Coaching Tips**

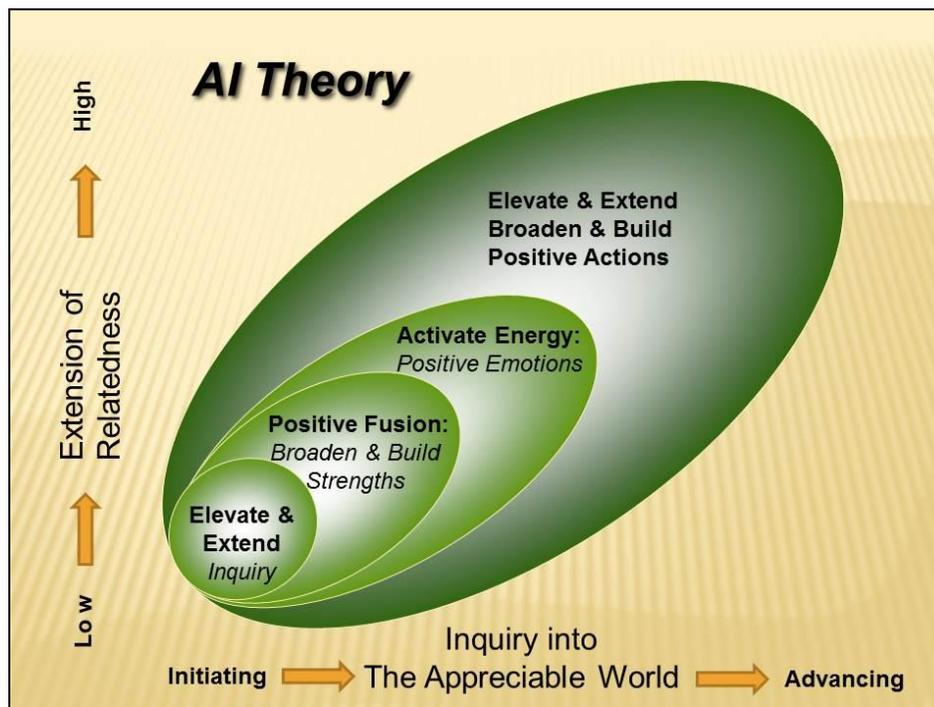
**Appreciative Inquiry and Coaching**

**Appreciative Inquiry**

Appreciative inquiry searches for "what works" through the many individual success stories within the organization that are embedded with excitement, creativity, and pride. Once discovered, these stories are shared throughout the organization. Individuals are recognized and affirmed as contributing and successful members of the organization. Confidence and commitment to more success begin to permeate the individual and organizational belief systems. What is "wrong," "inadequate" and/or "not good enough" moves out of awareness as the organization taps into the river of positive possibilities. It becomes clear that the future can be built on the successes of the past.

Appreciative inquiry does not negate nor ignore problems. Rather, it shifts the lens and/or frame of reference that is used to define what is happening. Instead of looking for "what's wrong" or "needs fixed" the firm focuses on "what's right" or "what's working" and seeks to do more of it. In short, appreciative inquiry suggests that you can create change by paying attention to what you want rather than paying attention to problems. (Bushe, 2000, 99)

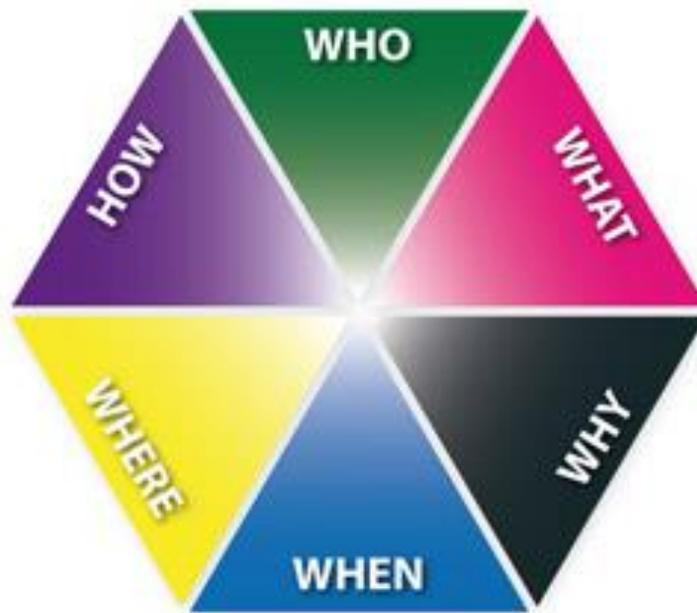
Building on the idea that "we see what we believe," appreciative inquiry seeks to change the belief building and reinforcing frame of reference. Instead of insufficiency, inadequacy, and incompetency, the focus moves toward wholeness, completeness, and skillfulness. As such, appreciative inquiry seeks to surface existing individual and collective images of what each individual and the entire organization has been and can be at its very best.



### Coaching with Appreciative Inquiry

LWVUS employs and trains with several coaching methodologies to assist the state coaches in their role. Coaches are encouraged to use the Appreciative Inquiry approach with all their contacts with local League teams. This approach has proven to be very effective with all aspects of the coaching role. Coaches will receive more detailed training on this approach to assist them in utilizing it for maximum benefit. The monthly “Opportunities for Guidance” offers an Appreciative Inquiry icebreaker to set the context of the guidance topic.

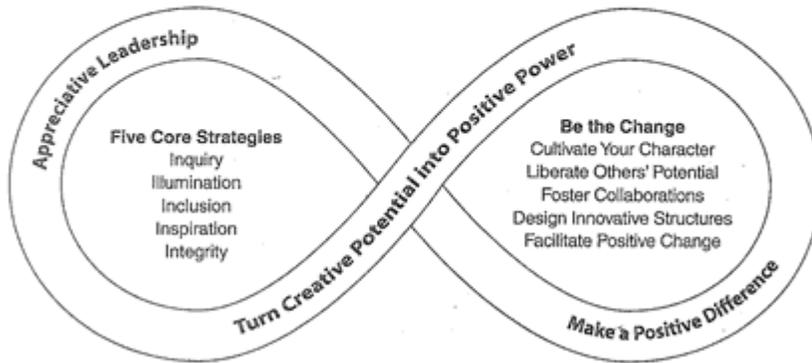
The technique of asking open-ended questions is important aspect of Appreciative Inquiry. It encourages local League team members to fully consider and develop a plan for implementing the best practices.



### Appreciative Leadership

There are 5 core strategies of Appreciative Leadership that has proven to be useful for coaches. They are a great roadmap for coaching. These are the kind of qualities that we want to foster in developing new leaders for the future of League. We know that there is no magic formula for leadership development – if there were, corporate America would have unveiled it long ago. Instead, we know that it is about relationships – engaging people, valuing their talents, bringing them into the conversation and helping them to succeed. It is a cycle that we can shape and influence as coaches.

FIGURE 2-1  
GETTING POSITIVE RESULTS WITH  
APPRECIATIVE LEADERSHIP



Overall, the positive energy and support that comes from using the Appreciative Inquiry approach on a regular basis helps advance the MLD with the local League teams.

## **Sample Conversation Starters**

Often the first couple of conversations between a coach and a local League can be a little tricky – even awkward, until relationships are built and communication is regularized. Each month, your national coach will provide you with monthly Guidance, including an Appreciative Inquiry icebreaker/warm-up.

In addition, we are including this list of sample questions and conversation starters that can be used as a guide during the initial calls with your Leagues.

### **Sample questions or conversation starters for calls with local Leagues:**

1. Overall, how are things going? How do you feel?
2. What successes and/or challenges do you want to share?
3. In reviewing your League's membership and leadership development plan [a method for creating a plan will be part of the in-state training] and calendar, I see that you are working on XX this month. How is that going? What are the opportunities with the media? With allied organizations? With leadership development?
4. Which of the outreach mechanisms feeling more natural to you? How about to the rest of your board?
5. How are individuals being asked to join?
6. How is your League building a welcoming environment for potential and new members and for potential and new leaders?
7. How are you engaging prospective and new members?
8. Thank you for sending me your League's *Voter*. I saw XX in it. [Provide some comment – reinforce successes or provide constructive feedback.]
9. Who else can your League mentor into a leadership role?
10. What is the smallest change that you might make that could have the biggest impact on your League?
11. What is your goal? What would success look like?
12. How do we build upon that success/strength/asset?

### Additional Coaching Tactics

Coaching involves a one-on-one conversation that coaches need to prepare for ahead of time. To prepare to “meet” with the individuals you coach, it is important to know how to frame the conversation, depending on the issue that has surfaced. Once an issue is brought to your attention by the local League representative or team, think about which of the following approaches you can use. If one approach does not work, try another!

Coaching Approach	Outcomes Sought
<p><b>Counseling:</b> The state coach describes the situation as he/she hears it from the local MLD League team member, prompts responses, asks questions, and focuses on listening to understand.</p>	<p>The goals are to define the problem, gain insight into the problem, enable the local League MLD team members to share strong feelings and gain self-insight, identify a plan of action, and encourage them to commit to the plan.</p>
<p><b>Mentoring:</b> The state coach describes his or her observations of the situation as described by the local League team member, and explores how their behavior is being interpreted in light of the organization’s structure, culture, or the biases, likes and dislikes of those involved.</p>	<p>The goal is to increase the local League team member’s savvy (awareness of land mines, sensitivity to how decisions are made and work gets done, skill in maneuvering through complex situations) and organizational agility (knowledge of how things function, how to get things through formal and informal channels within their League)</p>
<p><b>Training:</b> The state coach provides direct training or guidance on how to address the problem.</p>	<p>The goal is increased knowledge, know-how, and skill.</p>
<p><b>Feedback/Cheerleading:</b> The state coach gives objective reaction and positive reinforcement.</p>	<p>The goal is for the local League team to understand and accept another perspective and receive encouragement when needed.</p>

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## The Role of the State Coordinator

In states that have coaching teams that exceed three or four, the state League should have a designated state coordinator. This role is critical to the long term success of the expanding the membership and developing leaders within the League. He/she serves in a couple key roles, coordination of state coaching team and communication with the state Board and LWVUS. These two functions help ensure that the membership growth and leadership development program is institutionalized in the state. This document addresses the main responsibilities of the state coordinator.

State coordinators may serve as a coach and mentor Leagues. However, we recommend that the state coordinator take on a more limited coaching role (e.g., 1 local League).

### Supporting and Coordinating the Coaching Team

We ask that the state coordinator oversee the work of the state coaches and collaborates with state Board. The state coordinator working with the state Board helps recruit local Leagues to participate in the program. They also monitor progress and understand how these organizational growth efforts are being institutionalized within the state. However, just as state coaches should not see their role with local Leagues as punitive, the same applies in this situation. The state coordinator works in *partnership* with the state coaches to ensure that this work succeeds and the League grows.

The state coordinator serves as a resource to the state coaches. He/she can help to address challenges, recognize successes and provide general support. They also work closely with LWVUS, primarily their national coach, who is available to provide assistance to them at any time. State coordinators, because of their relationships with state coaches and the state Board, are likely to have a more intimate look at state challenges and opportunities. Because of this, they serve in that key facilitation role to ensure that state coaches are getting the support they need.

We have found that leaders at every level of League are often too humble to share successes for fear that it will be perceived as “bragging.” Success begets more success, so we try to share a success story via the Leader’s Update whenever possible. We ask that state coordinators share successes with both the LWVUS and other coaches whenever possible.

### Facilitating Communication

The state coordinator is the main point of contact between the state coaches and LWVUS. The state coordinator also helps to keep the state coaches in touch with each other and keeps the state board informed of the initiative’s progress. In this communication role, the state coordinator helps identify and share successes and challenges. This communication is vital to ensure that the program is well understood and it is creating growth and ongoing progress within the state.

- *At the state level*  
Establishing a successful coaching team is critical to the initiative’s success. As such, state coordinators are asked monitor the progress of relationship building between

coaches and local Leagues, particularly in the first months after the training. Ideally their relationships will build consistently each month, but until that time, state coordinators should continue to check in so that challenges may be addressed in a timely manner.

State coordinators help to facilitate communication among the state coaches – providing opportunities to share successes and challenges. They also share information and updates among the state team and with LWVUS.

Another extremely important role for state coordinators includes keeping the state Board fully informed about progress and genuinely engaged in its success. Reporting honestly about the experience, highlighting successes (such as “the ask” being made at events, stronger relationships with local Leagues, expanded coverage in the media, membership numbers growing), sharing stories from the state coaching teams and responding to Board questions at every Board meeting will help ensure state board engagement in the program and help ensure its long term success.

- ***At the national level***

Each month, the LWVUS through the national coaches, leads a conference call with each state to check on the progress of local Leagues, review the survey results, and help address challenges that coaches might be facing. Because schedules are often busy, we ask the state coordinators take a lead role in helping work with the state team to find common times to schedule these calls within the third week of each month and in ensuring that surveys are completed in a timely manner. State coordinators also will be asked to complete periodic surveys about the state League’s progress vis-à-vis the initiative. As the state coordinator gains more experience in their role, they may want to work more closely with the national coach to facilitate the monthly calls, e.g. suggest agenda items, share discussion topics of interest to state coaches, etc.

Periodically, state coordinators also may be asked to share information or updates from LWVUS with the coaches. In addition, from time to time, state coordinators may be asked to participate in LWVUS-sponsored calls or events with other coordinators/coaches from other states.

### **Modeling at the state level**

Implementing the basic concepts of the membership growth and leadership development program at the state level is a key responsibility of the state coordinator. Besides implementing the important outreach techniques when planning state League-sponsored events, there are many other best practices that can be implemented, such as:

- ***The state League’s website***

Often when searching for a local League, the state League website is the first point of contact for a potential new member. There should be something clearly visible on the homepage that indicates that the League is a grassroots membership organization, is open to everyone and how to join. (See tips on websites in Chapter 3 of this manual.) Including up to date stories about the impact the League is having at the state and community level is helpful in attracting new members. Additionally showcasing personal stories from members within your state (you can get these from LWV Storybank) adds

that personal face of the League to our information. This too is important in attracting new members and leaders.

- ***The state edition of the Voter***  
The state edition of the *Voter* is likely one of the most widely read and distributed publication for Leagues. Incorporating a “join us” message, using personal stories, and including a section to welcome new members are just a few of the best practices that are encouraged.
- ***“Little Things”***  
There are plenty of little things you can model and promote at the state level as well. These include encouraging state board members to have a “join us” message in the “signature” section of their email message, consistently having membership brochures on-hand at League-sponsored events, or adding the membership message to the League’s official letterhead and stationary. (For more examples of “Little Things,” please see Chapter 2 of this manual.)
- ***Storybank***  
Encourage all state board members to submit their stories to the LWV Storybank, and identify ways in which the stories can be used to help recruit members and invite members to take on more leadership roles within the organization.
- ***Celebrate Successes***  
Share success stories whenever possible! Use state events, liaison calls, and other opportunities to let Leagues know about our work together, how Leagues are growing, and how it is being institutionalized in the state. To sustain the program, it is very important to build a “buzz” about it in the state – among ALL Leagues (not just participating Leagues).