

## **June 2012 Guidance on Opportunities: Fundraising for YOUR League**

Fundraising is another key component to the League's growth and sustainability. Thankfully, fundraising for the League isn't much different than recruiting members to the League.

*Fundraising is all about making a personal connection between the potential donor and the League and making that all-important ASK in a welcoming, inviting way that speaks to the interests and passions of your potential donor.* Below is information about effective fundraising, which was created by the LWVUS Development Department. The techniques listed can be adapted to fit the needs of any League and any community. Encourage local League coordinators to share this information with their local League boards to begin considering HOW, WHEN, and WHY to ask for money to help Make Democracy Work.

### **Build a case for support.**

#### **1. The Need**

What are the needs in the community that your League fills? What is the relevance of the League's work for the community? What is going on in the state/region that set the tone/context for your work? What are the state/regional issues that you are addressing? (The need is NOT the Leagues' fundraising/ financial needs.)

#### **2. The Solution**

Explain your work. What is the League's approach to filling the need (outlined above)? Why is it/will it be effective? What are your top initiatives or goals for this year? What is your League going to do that is different, expanded or new to meet the needs the community this year? How will these activities address/ respond to the community's needs?

#### **3. The Beneficiaries**

Who are the beneficiaries of the League's work—the neighborhood, the community, the state, the nation? How will your work make a difference to the community, the state, etc.?

#### **4. Self Interest**

What is in it for the donor? Help them see how important their gift will be; how their life/community will be different because of the League's work and their generous support of it?

#### **5. Your Capacity**

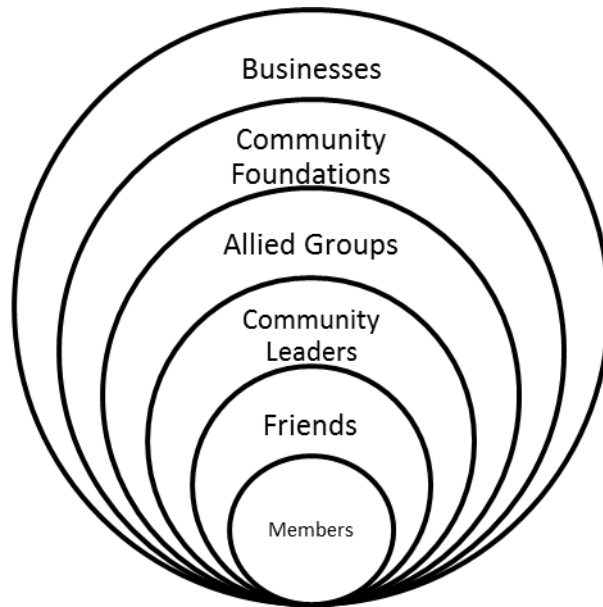
Let the world know about your successes; showcase your League's ability to provide the solution that meets the need. How have your past successes positioned you to take on new challenges, meet the needs?

#### **6. The Ask**

What resources does the League need to make the solutions to the problems possible? Explain the importance of/impact of a gift to your ability to serve the community. Why should the donor support you? What will their gifts enable you to do that you cannot presently accomplish? ASK for support, providing specific appropriate options for the level of donation you are requesting.

## **Build a list of donor prospects.**

Starting with members and working out to businesses, brainstorm names of individuals/organizations in each category that you can ask for support. We start with members because they are closest to you, understand your mission, and are already invested in your success. As you move further out, it may become more challenging to raise money.



## **Make the ask!**

As part of the MLD program, you've heard many times about how we need to explain to potential members why and how to join us. The same goes for asking potential donors for money!

Remember your tone is extremely important when asking for funds. Posing the ask as a desperate plea will not work. Show your potential donor how the League can help them create change and make an impact on the community and the larger democracy.

### **Resources Available to You:**

**Letter Template** created by the LWWUS Development Department. (Available on Yahoo! Group for State Coaches) This template can be customized by the local League and disseminated to potential donors. You can also use this template to develop language to use conversationally to ask potential donors to give money to help the League Make Democracy Work.

**Making the Ask** worksheet in the Tools You Can Use section or Chapter 5 of the manual can be used to help you generate stories to ask people for funding.

**Fundraising Chair Information on [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org).** For more information, go to the Members section of the LWWUS website, Leadership Roles and Development, Fundraising/Development Chair. There, you'll find the [10 Laws of Fundraising](#), [Development Tips](#), and [Web Resources](#) for the Savvy Fundraiser.