

**Opportunity for Guidance
March 2017
Engagement for Impact**

Campaign for Making Democracy Work®

A message from LWVUS President Chris Carson:

Our campaign for Making Democracy Work™ will be continue to be a long, hard fight on many fronts. The League is up for the challenge.

Grassroots action and public outcry work. From voting rights to clean air, health care to money in politics, the League's core issues will be at the forefront of battles in state houses and in Washington.

Here's where we need your help --

****Hint: these are GREAT jobs for the new folks who've approached your League to get involved since the election!****

1. Watch out for emails from LWVUS as pressing issues come up. Be sure to share this information and/or calls for action with your contacts – members and non-members.
2. Bring together a group of League volunteers and allies who will attend your Member of Congress's town hall meetings, listening sessions and public events. Persistence pays off, and remember—even if your representatives have opposed the League on one issue, they may be our best ally on others. If you have specific questions about the key issue(s) to raise when meeting with your members, contact advocacy@lwv.org.
3. Follow your state League's direction on priority issues at your state legislature. What the avenues for engagement and impact?

Thank you for your efforts to engage for impact!

IMPACT (im'pakt) *verb*

To have a strong effect on someone or something

After the 2016 election, we took stock in our impact. Thanks to the hard work at all levels of League – and the reporting of what we did at all levels, the League's impact was great!

- 423** Leagues participating in survey representing 49 states + DC
- 9,238** Total election-related events hosted by reporting Leagues
- 160,000** Volunteer hours leveraged to carry out Leagues' core election activities in 2016
- 4+ Million** Utilized VOTE411.org; most often-cited place where Leagues produced their voters' guides
- 1,750,000+** Printed League voters' guides distributed locally

While there is much to celebrate, the 2016 election is just one piece in the larger Campaign For Making Democracy Work®, which was voted upon at the LWVUS Convention. We now need to work to engage individuals to continue this impact.

In her book [*365 Ways to Motivate and Reward your Nonprofit Volunteers Every Day*](#), **Melissa Sequeira** writes, "Asking for volunteers but not responding to them immediately or not having a method to immediately place them in your program is like advertising a

product you don't really have, which can cause hard feelings about your agency on the part of potential supporters." She adds, "This is not simply a matter of common courtesy. Enthusiasm tends to wane with time, and the longer you wait to respond, the more you risk losing your potential volunteers, or at least losing some of their trust. Your delay in responding could be interpreted as indifference or a sign of ineptness."

While we all know this, there is the reality: We are busy. Calendars are planned. Projects and plans are underway. So, what are some very practical ways to make engaging individuals more easy?

- Set up an auto-response on your League email directing individuals to your website or social media channels.
- Build an email "list." Send out regular communications with updates, announcements of future events/activities, and opportunities.
- Repurpose LWVUS and state League emails or updates and send them out as points of engagement. (See links below.)
- Leverage your social media channels and keep your website up to date.
- Look for short-term or discrete opportunities to be engaged where it suits their needs, skills and time. These may be virtual actions, monetary donations or in-person activities.
- Demonstrate the impact of their actions. Thank them for their efforts.

Resources:

Waiting but not idle: How to keep potential volunteers engaged with your organization
https://charityvillage.com/Content.aspx?topic=Waiting_but_not_idle_How_to_keep_potential_volunteers_engaged_with_your_organization#.WHy_21wW4XA

10 Ways to Lose a Volunteer

http://www.getconnectederie.org/blog/display/10-ways-to-lose-a-volunteer/?blog_id=7856

Leveraging Post-Election Volunteer Interest

<http://forum.lwv.org/document/leveraging-post-election-volunteer-interest>

10 Ways You Can Help Defend Our Democracy

<http://lwv.org/blog/10-ways-you-can-help-defend-our-democracy>

Get Involved (LWVUS)

<http://lwv.org/get-involved>