

## Working with Allied Groups

### What Work Best Lends Itself to Collaboration?

Many aspects of the League's work is best accomplished in partnership; for Election 2016, LWVUS encourages Leagues to specifically think about which partners can best help us reach our target audience, underrepresented/unregistered voters, in time for Election Day. Partners can help us:

- Tap into large communities of potential new voters to **register to vote**. Work with organizations who have access to large numbers of:
  - o Young people
  - o New citizens
  - o Minority/low income communities
  - o Potential short-term volunteers who want to help at registration events
- Ensure our **voter education materials** reach voters who need them. Think about collaborating with:
  - o Partners with large networks of potential voters, who are willing to share information about League candidate events, voter guides, etc.
  - o Partners with large social media/online reach
  - o Partners with potential language translation or other technical ability
  - o Partners with whom you've already worked to do voter registration
  - o Partners who share an interest in combatting any voter suppression or confusion in the lead-up to Election Day.

### Why Work in Partnership?

Coalitions or partnerships are created to bring about collective action at the national, state or local level. Leagues have worked with other organizations/groups on a broad range of issues for years; often serving in the role of chief "convener" or spokesperson.

These joint efforts can help maximize the League's effectiveness on many issues by:

- Empowering organizations to pool resources and brainpower to foster more strategic and effective action
- Enabling better communication and collaboration between like-minded organizations
- Increasing diversity by bringing together new or alternative voices
- Bringing about a greater impact than organizations could make on their own

### How Do We Get Started? Recruit Allies

LWVUS recommends forging partnerships with organizations such as the following:

- Civic/Democracy groups
- Civil rights leaders, including members of the disability community
- Academics
- Reform or transparency-minded state/local officials

**Who is a Good Partner?**

This will depend on your League and your community. Use the chart below to map out the strengths and challenges associated with your current and prospective allies. As you identify potential new partners, keep in mind that nontraditional alliances or highly visible bipartisan efforts often gain attention and respect from the public, the media, and key stakeholders. Remember that our mission encompasses the whole community and it can be good to get out of our “traditional” or “comfort” zone. This chart can help you brainstorm and then narrow who you want to work and where you’ll have the greatest impact.

Who shares the League’s goals?	What strengths do they bring to the table?	What function can they best serve in the partnership (e.g. funding, media)	What are their weaknesses?	Other Info?

**What Can We Do Together?**



Now that you have identified your best allies, pull everyone together to build a plan for success!

- **Step One: Set Group Goals.** What are the top things you want to achieve? What will “success” look like for the work of this partnership? Agreeing upon and articulating these goals are a critical first step toward establishing a successful relationship that succeeds in having impact.



Goal 1	•
Goal 2	•
Goal 3	•

- **Step Two: Identify assets and needs.** What does the group have or need to achieve its goals? Perhaps partnership members have great political connections, but lack tools for reaching out to key media. Use this chart to take stock of resources:

 What do you have?	 What do you need?
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- **Step Three: Identify tasks and share the work.** Be as specific as possible and remember that working with partner organizations can create a myriad of “bite-size” leadership development opportunities.
- **Evaluate your partnership and celebrate your accomplishments.** What is working? What isn’t? Where should the partnership re-focus its energy moving forward? Make sure the media, the public, and state officials know what you’ve done to help improve democracy in your community. While you’re at it, make sure all partners—including the League!—are properly credited for their contributions.