

Guidance on Election Opportunities July 2016

APPRECIATIVE ICEBREAKER

Answer the following questions about your League:

- What are we known for?
- What is our greatest asset as an organization?
- Who benefits from our work?
- What part of our mission-fulfilling work has the greatest impact on the community?

GUIDANCE

As we start this new League year, it is a great time to think about what our goals are as we work in the MLD framework. We want to strengthen our organizational capacity as we do the work that fulfills our mission and strengthens our democracy for all.

How do we do this? We focus on some key concepts:

- **Outreach:** This can mean reaching out to and engaging individuals or other community organizations/institutions.
- **Visibility:** This is sharing our efforts widely through media – traditional and online/social media.
- **Leadership Development:** This is using each aspect of our work as an opportunity to build the organization's capacity by expanding those who are helping us to meet our mission-driven goals.



While all of our work can (and should!) focus on these areas, there is one area that is ready-made to incorporate all of these best practices: **Election 2016**.

What are your League's goals around Election 2016? How can your League have the most impact? What would that impact mean to your community? What holidays, events or opportunities do you have to make the visible link to the League's service to the voters in 2016?

Just as our election systems are different in each jurisdiction, our work to support their functioning right and well also will look different in each League. However, there are great models and resources that Leagues can adopt to help make their efforts as effective as possible at each stage of the election process.

This guidance focuses on three specific projects/efforts that empowering Leagues across the country to strengthen our democracy while strengthening the organization.

National Voter Registration Day

The League is partnering with allied organizations across the country to participate in National Voter Registration Day on September 27. Consider planning a voter registration event on this day to be part of something big! The League has been the largest "on-the-ground" group for this event for the past several years with hundreds of Leagues participating. Watch forum.lwv.org for tools and resources around: media content and outreach, organizing best practices and available resources.

VOTE411

The League's premier one-stop shop for election information is www.vote411.org. This site gets millions of views! Beyond candidate information, it is the perfect resource for critical information about when and where to vote along with what's needed to be successful on Election Day.

Election Observer Program

The newest in the LWV's election-related resources, this guide provides Leagues with all they need to start this great program. Election observing is an important part of the political process, and every election year non-profits, political campaigns, candidates and government agencies alike send volunteer election observers to observe polls across the country. For the League of Women Voters, election observing presents a unique opportunity to observe the election process first hand to ensure that all eligible voters can exercise their right to vote and gather information about what's working and what's not so the process can be improved. It's also a great opportunity to engage our larger communities.

All of these efforts can be made more successful using MLD tools, such as the **Event/Activity Planning Checklist**. It helps Leagues to incorporate direct, media, and allied outreach, as well as leadership development into every activity. It helps to plan for and evaluate how Leagues can follow up on this great work, too.

Remember that outreach is simply taking the message and mission of LWV out to where there are points of community engagement. This is the time when the public expects to see the League and what we offer in service to voters - so no time could be more ripe with opportunity for our message and mission than this election season!

RESOURCES

[Election Observer Toolkit](#)

[Poll Observer Program: Useful Tools and Documents](#)

[Event Activity Planning Checklist](#)