

## May 2014 Guidance on Opportunities: Gaining Visibility through Social Media

### ICEBREAKER

Compare these two quotes:

*When email first emerged, people thought it was a waste of time and effort. Why can't we just call someone on the telephone?*

*We don't have a choice on whether we DO social media; the question is how well we DO it.*

- How do these quotes resonate with your League?
- What ways does your League engage with the public online?
- How social media savvy is your League?
- What interesting materials does your League already have that could be shared via social media?

### GUIDANCE

#### **WHY USE SOCIAL MEDIA**

Social media is a critical tool to help build organizational capacity. What is social media? Any technology that people use to share content including: news, experiences, insights, opinions/perspectives and other media.

Social media is especially useful to share our positions, work, and events with our larger communities. While some Leagues might view adding a social media as “another thing to do,” there are two critical elements to keep in mind:

- A. Social media can utilize the same content as other visibility channels. In other words, it shouldn't be a lot of extra work. Repurpose things you write. For example, if your League is issuing a press statement, or issuing a report, then post it on your League's website, post it on Facebook, and Tweet it. In short, make your visibility outreach a “multi-channel” process.
- B. Social media users are “hot prospects.” Social media users are considerably more likely than non-users to have:
  - Volunteered for a community organization (69% versus 49%);
  - Participated in a group related to a community issue (57% versus 43%);
  - Donated money to a charitable cause (89% versus 81%).

**HERE'S THE HEART OF THE  
MATTER: THE ESSENCE OF  
SOCIAL MEDIA IS KNOWING YOUR  
AUDIENCES AND ENGAGING THEM  
IN SOMETHING THEY LOVE.**

#### **HOW TO USE LEAGUE SOCIAL MEDIA**

1. **Pick the right social networks.** There is no reason to join every social network until you know what works best for your League. Facebook and Twitter accounts are easy to set up and use. Experiment with different platforms until you find the right fit for your needs and goals.

2. **Be Transparent, and Be Yourself.** Always remember that you represent the League and its members, but don't be afraid to use your own words or let a bit of personality come through—especially if you're writing as the League President. When you write about a League event or campaign, redirect readers back to the League's position, or briefly state why the issue or event is important to your readers. Hyperlinks back to the local, state or national Leagues' websites are useful.

3. **Post frequently... but not too frequently.** Social networking shouldn't take a lot of time, but don't go on vacation and leave followers wondering if you're ever coming back. Likewise, don't post updates five times a day unless you have something new or useful to say. Respect your readers by providing content that is relevant and useful.

4. **Activate your network.** Make sure to ask your supporters to show their support from time to time, whether it's contacting their elected officials, signing a petition, becoming a member, or donating to your League. Be specific

in your ask and they will be more likely to participate again. Within reason, answer questions and respond to concerns, especially from League members or supporters. You can also thank people for their support or readership, and ask for feedback.

5. **Be external** (go beyond the League). Link to articles, events or other information from League partners, relevant media or other blogs. Not every tweet, Facebook post or blog has to be 100% about the League (although it should make sense to your readers why you're sharing the info).



**LWV** League of Women Voters of New Jersey Television host Steve Adubato Jr. interviewed the three candidates on his show "On the Line: Decision 2009" [http://www.nj.com/news/index.ssf/2009/10/nj\\_gubernatorial\\_candidates\\_go.html](http://www.nj.com/news/index.ssf/2009/10/nj_gubernatorial_candidates_go.html)

**N.J. gubernatorial candidates Gov. Corzine, Daggett, Christie spar in TV forum | New Jersey Real-Tim**  
Source: [www.nj.com](http://www.nj.com)  
Saed Hindash/The Star-Ledger New Jersey Gov. Jon S. Corzine, left, greets Republican challenger Chris Christie as Independent candidate Chris Daggett, center, looks on before their first debate in Trenton.

3 minutes ago · Comment · Like · Share

## WHAT TO SHARE ON SOCIAL MEDIA

A great stat from a recent factsheet. An article on an issue you're working on (or better yet, quoted in). Your president or another LWV representative is attending a noteworthy event. Your new press statement.

All of these are great fodder for Twitter and Facebook! Find a sentence or quote that encapsulates what you're sharing and use it as a teaser alongside a link to the resource and some relevant hashtags. Try to keep your tweets under the 140 character limit. By using 100-120 characters, you'll leave room for others to retweet you and add thoughts of their own. Facebook posts can be longer but its best to keep them to a few sentences.

You can also retweet or share content that you like. This is a great way to acknowledge your members, partner organizations, journalists, bloggers, etc. And, they've already done the work for you! This is a good place to start when you're new to social media.



**LWV** LWV of the US  
League of Women Voters @LWV our handle

STATEMENT: Right to Vote Under Attack  
short URL, we used bit.ly [bit.ly/Jz6nFe](http://bit.ly/Jz6nFe) #voters #election #voterID #votingrights #photoID  
hashtags - 5 total in this tweet

Reply Delete Favorite



**LWV** LWV of the US  
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TAKE ACTION - Join the million other voices in asking @EPAGov to adopt strong carbon standards! [bit.ly/IoOhG2](http://bit.ly/IoOhG2) #cleanair4kids  
mention - we've "tagged" another user by using their handle

Reply Delete Favorite

## RESOURCES

- There are online and social media guidelines, as well as two PowerPoint presentations, available in the Visibility area of the "Manage Your League" section of the members' area of the LWVUS website. Visit here: <http://forum.lwv.org/category/member-resources/manage-your-league/online-communication-website-social-media>
- There is a closed Facebook group for social media users in the League – an area to share tips and resources. To join, please visit: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/114269905330219/>
- View this 2012 [webinar](#) to learn more about "Social Media 101."
- Review Chapter 3 of the MLD binder, which discusses outreach techniques. All binder contents are available in the online [Forums](#).