

Strategy Screen
Guidance on Opportunities
February 2018

We are in a moment of renewed political activism and, as we noted in the last guidance, we are seeing more and more groups and events working in the democracy space. While partnering with other organizations is good in principle, determining what opportunities are most beneficial and most impactful in achieving our mission may not always be easy.

Below is a simple tool that the LWVUS board brainstormed to help guide their decision making around evaluating opportunities – new and ongoing – to ensure that we remain focused on our mission and impact. It is similar to the criteria developed and shared with Leagues around participation in marches and rallies earlier this year.

Strategy Screen

A strategy screen is a valuable tool to challenge thinking, weigh choices, and facilitate decision-making. Rather than a checklist, a strategy screen should guide discussion of new opportunities or be used to evaluate ongoing work. It is also useful in the context of a network to ensure that the League, at all levels, is making decisions aligned to the same criteria. The following criteria have been developed to consider how strategies within our mantle of being “Defenders of Democracy” will be selected and regularly evaluated.

Is this opportunity, initiative, or strategy:

- The best way to achieve our mission of Empowering Voters: Defending Democracy?
- Leveraging and/or supporting our competitive advantages: non-partisan, highly trusted, on-the-ground network?
- Achievable through human and financial resources we have or can obtain?
- Based on a clearly defined purpose and explicit about outcomes that can be measured?
- Financially sound? Does it leverage funds for greater impact? Does it contribute to financial sustainability?
- Consistent with the needs and expectations of those who are stakeholders in this effort (partners, the public, engagers, members)?
- Allow us to better live our values of diversity, equity, and inclusion?
- Better suited to be achieved through a strategic partnership?
- Achievable in a desired timeframe?
- Considerate of trade-offs?
- Clear on specific benefits (i.e. growth, fundraising, or visibility)?