Digital Primer Overview

The COVID-19 pandemic is impacting not only our lives, our health and our economies, but also our ability to socialize, communicate and live in community. It becomes also more important than ever to continue to grow and defend our democracy, to make sure that everyone has a voice in our collective decision making and our future.

How do we achieve this? How do we continue to build community, engage and organize, advocate for our communities and our families, while taking care of one another during this national crisis? As the League has demonstrated over a 100 years, we do it together. With the help of new technologies and innovative organizing practices, we can continue to grow community online, educate and support one another, and organize and advocate to make sure that everyone that can vote has access to voting in 2020 and beyond.

Key Definitions

Organizing: Organizing is bringing the talents, resources, and skills of people in the community together to increase their collective power to transform themselves and their community and work for change.

Base building: Growing the number of connected individuals and organization that support your issue.

Relational Organizing: The process by which campaigns, groups, or individuals harness their personal relationships to effect community change.

Digital: Content or activity that occurs online, regardless of the device (computer, smart, phone, tablet, etc.) that aims to engage our online community and amplify messaging and activity.

Digital Strategy: Rooted in the question, "how do we want our online community to engage with this?" and focused on meeting people where they are by delivering information in a way that will resonate with them.

Engagement: Online actions and interactions with digital content (i.e. opening emails, re-sharing posts, commenting, etc.)

Online community (audience): A specific group of people you want to engage with. This should be defined strategically.

Campaign: A collection of digital tactics (email, social media, texting with shared goals and topics. Combined, these tactics are the strategic vehicle for organizing and advocacy in the digital world.

#Hashtag: A way to group online conversations around a specific topic. Can also help track engagement.

Influencer: A trusted messenger who can effect decision making of followers because of their authority, knowledge, position, or relationship with audience.

Effective Strategies for Online Organizing

Keep in mind that, even in the digital space, you are speaking with other people! You can use digital tools and activities to create interactive spaces, build community and conversation, and build knowledge and trust. Effective strategies to grow your following and support online include:

- ✓ Use 'influencers': Think about who you want to reach and who already exists in your following. By building relationships with influencers and having them share your content, your content is reaching a new group of people. You can do this by working with partner organizations and by building relationships with key individuals in your communities.
- ✓ Organizational Integration: With whatever you are doing on digital channels, make it clear how it ties to the organization's values, mission, and work. This helps create a clear and consistent image for the public on who we are and what are messages are.
- ✓ Targeted engagement: Messaging is not a 'one-size fits all' game. Think about, what you want to say, who you want to say it to, what is the most effective way to say it, and what you want them to do.
- ✓ It's ok to experiment! This is a space to have fun, be creative, and show a personality. Many analytics (such as click rates, share rates, comments) let you know how successful posts are.

Digital Power Building Activities

There are many ways to engage people through digital communication and to use digital means to build your networks of power. Digital organizing and power building activities are the tools and tactics you can use to implement your strategy. Activities serve a different purpose, so you should think through which is the best activity(ies) to achieve your goal. Some examples include:

- Email information + Actions
- SMS/text campaigns
- Social media posting + engagement
- Online Discussion groups such as Facebook, listserv, Slack, WhatsApp
- Video content such as Facebook live, Instagram, Youtube

The organizing team will continue to produce trainings to address needs going forward. We understand that not all individuals and not all Leagues have the same level of comfort, knowledge, or familiarity with digital organizing strategy, tools, or techniques. So please reach out to us at organizing@lwv.org with your recommendations and needs and expertise! We know that there is immense knowledge in the field and want to make sure we draw on that as well.