

LWV Data Collection Toolkit

Introduction

Welcome to the Data Collection Toolkit, your comprehensive guide to elevating your data collection practices. In our mission-driven work, the significance of data cannot be overstated. Accurate and timely data collection serves as the bedrock of our advocacy, outreach, and organizational endeavors. It empowers us with the insights we need to understand the needs of our communities, advocate for change effectively, and foster engagement among our members and constituents.

At the heart of our data collection journey are the evaluation questions that drive our methods. These questions are the compass guiding us toward a deeper understanding of the impact of our actions, the effectiveness of our initiatives, and the changing needs of those we serve. However, we understand that the world of data can often appear complex and overwhelming, leading many of us to grapple with challenges in collecting, tracking, and presenting data consistently and efficiently.

This toolkit is here to simplify that process, providing you with the tools and knowledge needed to streamline your data collection efforts. Within this resource, you will discover a wealth of information, practical guidance, and resources aimed at making data collection not only manageable but also profoundly impactful.

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Where to start

If you have an upcoming event, try out a few of the methods mentioned below! We recommend electronic data collection to enable easier data tracking, evaluate changes over time, and create informative infographics. If you are ready to dive into electronic data collection, an easy platform to start on is Google Forms. Before creating your own, be sure to review this 5-minutes [Google Form How To Video](#), and consult the comprehensive [checklist](#).

Create a Google Form starting with a dropdown list of event options. Add any events you know about that are coming up, so you do not have to update the Form as soon. Be specific with the events you add to the dropdown list, such as “9/22/23 Texas State University Fall Festival” or “3/12/23 Denver City Park Farmers Market”. Always add an “Other” option for events that are not added to the Form in time. Do not delete these events from the list unless you have fully downloaded your data to a CSV or Excel document, we recommend doing this once or twice a year.

Subsequent questions in the form are up to you. If this is a volunteer form, you can ask for name, number of hours volunteered, if the experience was good, and always ask for open-ended feedback!

If this is a voter registration form, you can simply ask for the event title and whether they registered to vote at the event! You can always add optional contact information fields asking if new voters are interested in joining the League (recruitment and registration in one!)

You can create a QR code with the survey link, or have a laptop or iPad set up for registrants to use. If you do not have either, you can open the survey link on your phone and read the survey questions to registrants and fill out the survey for them. If this is a form for volunteers, you can send them the link during or after the event using email, text, or League in Action.

Viewing the Collected Data

We recommend having a pattern for how often you review the data in the spreadsheet, especially if you are using the data to reach out to potential new members. In the How To video above, you'll see how you can view your responses as graphs in Google Forms, or as data in a pre-populated Google Sheet. You can look at the data to determine which events were the most successful in registering voters, getting volunteers involved, or recruiting new members!

Data Collection Methods

Collecting Data at In-Person Events: Collecting data at in-person events is crucial for understanding your League's impact on the ground. Here is how to do it effectively:

1. **Define Your Data Collection Goals:** Determine what specific data you want to collect at the event. For example, you might be interested in gathering attendee demographics, feedback, or new volunteer sign-ups. Quantitative data comprises numerical values, like the count of volunteer hours. On the other hand, qualitative data consists of descriptive, written responses that address questions like, "What aspects of the event did you find most appealing?"
2. **Prepare Data Collection Materials:** Create data collection forms or sheets tailored to the event's objectives. This could include sign-up sheets, feedback forms, or surveys.
3. **Train Data Collectors:** If you have a team of volunteers or staff assisting with data collection, provide training on how to approach attendees, explain the purpose of data collection, and gather information accurately and respectfully.
4. **Engage Attendees:** During the event, engage with attendees and encourage their participation in data collection. Explain how their information will be used and the benefits to your League's initiatives.
5. **Collect Data Actively:** Use the prepared forms or sheets to record data diligently. Double-check for accuracy before moving on to the next attendee.

Tracking Social Media Engagement

1. **Select Social Media Platforms:** Determine which social media platforms your League is active on and focus your data collection efforts accordingly.
2. **Define Key Metrics:** Identify the specific metrics you want to track, such as likes, shares, comments, and follower growth. Also, consider tracking relevant hashtags or keywords related to your League.
3. **Use Analytics Tools:** Utilize built-in analytics tools provided by social media platforms (e.g., Facebook Insights, Twitter Analytics, Instagram Insights, Hootsuite, or Buffer) to gather data on your League's social media performance.

4. **Regularly Monitor Data:** Regularly check the analytics dashboards to monitor data related to your chosen metrics. Observe trends, spikes in engagement, or changes in follower demographics.
5. **Analyze and Adjust:** Analyze the collected data to understand what content resonates with your audience and what strategies are effective. Use this information to adjust your social media content strategy to better align with your League's goals.

Tracking the Number of Volunteers and Voters Registered

1. **Establish Data Collection Procedures:** Develop standardized procedures for recording and tracking the number of volunteers and voters registered at League events or through your initiatives.
2. **Use Digital Tools (Optional):** Consider using digital tools or databases to streamline data collection. This can include customized forms or spreadsheets.
3. **Design Sign-Up Forms:** Create sign-up forms for volunteers and voter registration that capture essential information such as names, contact details, and relevant preferences. If you host numerous events, have a drop-down list of all events so volunteers can choose which one they participated in.
4. **Promote Sign-Up Opportunities:** Actively promote sign-up opportunities at League events, on your website, through [League in Action](#), and through social media channels. Clearly communicate the benefits of participation.
5. **Train Data Collectors:** If you have volunteers assisting with data collection, provide them with training on how to collect and record sign-up information accurately.
6. **Collect and Record Data:** Actively collect sign-up data during events and activities. Ensure that the data is complete and legible.
7. **Engage with Volunteers and Voters:** Engage with volunteers and registered voters by providing relevant information, updates, and opportunities for involvement. Top of Form

Data Tracking

Creating a Data Tracker ([linked here is an example](#))

Before you embark on creating your own data tracker, make sure to explore a [data tracker sample](#) and watch a [tutorial video](#) on how to use it.

1. Launch Your Spreadsheet Software
2. **Labels:** The top row serves as placeholders for specific information, forming your columns. Take a moment to label them with clear, descriptive headers that

represent the types of data you intend to collect. For instance, if you're tracking voter registration data, you might consider columns such as "Name," "Address," "Date of Registration," and so forth.

3. **Format and Style:** Format and style your headers as needed?
4. Save Your Spreadsheet.

Data Entry and Collection

1. **Manually Enter Data:** You can start by manually entering data into the spreadsheet. For instance, if you're tracking voter registration, input voter names, addresses, and registration dates one by one into the respective columns.
2. **Import Data:** If you have data from other sources, you can import it into your spreadsheet. Most spreadsheet software allows you to import data from CSV files, text files, or other spreadsheet files. This is particularly helpful for larger datasets.
3. **Use Data Collection Forms:** To streamline data entry, consider using data collection forms linked to your spreadsheet. Forms can be created using your spreadsheet software or online survey tools. Data entered through these forms will automatically populate your spreadsheet, reducing the risk of manual errors.
4. **Regular Updates:** As the activities progress, continue to update the spreadsheet with new data. Whether it's voter registration, event attendance, or membership details, ensure that your data remains current and accurate.

Data Validation and Formatting

1. **Data Validation Rules:** Implement data validation rules to minimize errors. For example, you can set up rules that only allow specific types of data in certain columns. This prevents the entry of invalid or nonsensical data.
2. **Dropdown Lists:** Consider using dropdown lists for fields with predefined options. This not only ensures data consistency but also speeds up data entry by providing a list of choices for respondents.
3. **Date and Number Formats:** Pay attention to date formats (e.g., MM/DD/YYYY or DD/MM/YYYY) and ensure they are consistent throughout the spreadsheet. Similarly, maintain a uniform format for numbers, such as currency symbols or decimal places.
4. **Text Capitalization:** If applicable, standardize text capitalization. Decide whether you want data in uppercase, lowercase, or title case and apply this consistently.
5. **Color Coding (Optional):** Use conditional formatting or color coding to visually highlight specific data points or trends. This can make it easier to spot valuable information at a glance.

Frequency and Timing

"How often do I track data?" is a crucial question when it comes to effective data collection and management. In the dynamic landscape of advocacy, community engagement, and voter outreach, the answer is clear: regularly. Maintaining up-to-date data is the lifeblood of informed decision-making, and data should be tracked at least monthly. Whether you're monitoring event attendance, volunteer sign-ups, voter registrations, or social media engagement, frequent data tracking ensures that your League stays agile and responsive to the evolving needs of your community. By consistently tracking data, you not only measure the impact of your initiatives but also adapt and refine your strategies in real-time.

Roles and Responsibilities

Determining who should be responsible for tracking data within your League can vary depending on the size and structure of your organization. Ideally, it's beneficial to have a designated individual or a small team responsible for data management to ensure consistency and accuracy. However, in cases where it's not feasible to assign a single person, consider adopting a "divide and conquer" approach. Delegate data tracking responsibilities among different League members based on their areas of expertise or specific tasks. This collaborative effort can distribute the workload effectively and ensure that various aspects of your League's activities are well-documented, providing a comprehensive view of your organization's progress. It's essential to establish clear roles and responsibilities and maintain open communication among team members to make this approach successful.

Data Presentation

Offering guidelines on creating data presentations using charts, graphs, and tables is an essential aspect of our data collection toolkit. Data, when presented effectively, can illuminate insights and drive meaningful conversations. In this section, we provide you with the tools and strategies needed to transform raw data into compelling visuals. Whether you're crafting reports for League members, stakeholders, or the wider community, these guidelines will help you communicate your data findings clearly and persuasively. Learn to choose the right visual representation for your data, tailor your presentations to your audience, and harness the power of storytelling through numbers.

With these skills, you can amplify the impact of your League's work and advocate for change with confidence.

Data Presentation Examples:

1. **Bar Chart:** Use a bar chart to compare the performance of your League over a season. This visual representation can make it easy for your audience to see which team had the highest number of wins.
2. **Line Graph:** Create a line graph to show the trend in attendance at League events over the past few years. This can help you identify patterns and make informed decisions about event scheduling and marketing.
3. **Pie Chart:** Use a pie chart to display the distribution of League members by age group. This can help your League tailor its programs and events to the demographics of its members.
4. **Table:** Present a table that lists the top sponsors of your League, along with the monetary contributions they've made. This can be useful for recognizing sponsors and tracking financial support.

[Data Presentation Example](#)



Storytelling with Data

Crafting compelling narratives using the collected data is a cornerstone of our data collection toolkit. Beyond gathering facts and figures, it is vital to translate data into stories that resonate with your League's mission and engage your audience. In this section, we guide you through the art of weaving narratives from data points, making your insights relatable and impactful. We also provide invaluable tips on visual storytelling, helping you use charts, graphs, and other visuals to illustrate your message effectively. With these skills, you can empower your League's advocacy efforts by presenting data-driven narratives that inspire action and drive positive change in your community. [The Annual Reports of the League of Women Voters](#) serve as excellent illustrations of data-driven storytelling. Ready to narrate your League's journey through the data you gather? Utilize our [Canva Template](#)! You can find [instructions here](#)!

Storytelling with Data Examples

1. **Impact Stories:** Share stories of League members whose lives have been positively affected by participating in League activities. Use data to support these stories, such as statistics increased community engagement.
2. **Before-and-After Comparisons:** Tell a compelling story about how your League's initiatives have made a difference. Show data on number of voters registered in a previous and current election cycle.
3. **Progress Over Time:** Create a narrative around the growth of your League. Use data to show how membership numbers have increased over the years and how the League's influence has expanded within the community.
4. **Success Stories:** Highlight successful League events or projects and use data to showcase their outcomes. For instance, if your League organized a charity run, share data on the amount of money raised and how it was used to benefit a local cause.
5. **Comparative Analysis:** Compare your League's performance or impact with similar organizations or Leagues in other regions. Use data to illustrate where your League excels and where there may be opportunities for improvement.

Remember that the key to effective data presentation and storytelling is to keep your audience in mind and tailor your visuals and narratives to resonate with them. Use these examples as a starting point and adapt them to the specific goals and context of your League.

Resource Appendix

[Google Form How to Video](#)

[Building A Google Forms Checklist](#)

[League in Action](#)

[Data Tracker example](#)

[Data Tracker example tutorial video](#)

[Data Presentation Example](#)

[The Annual Reports of the League of Women Voters](#)

[Storytelling Canva Template & instructions](#)