

Key Tactics for Building Your League

Marketing and community engagement principles are the same today as they were 50 years ago. What has changed are some of the ways we implement these principles.

The tips below, gleaned from research conducted for the US League over the years, are still effective in helping to build grassroots membership.

One key takeaway from all this research indicates that THE most important way to build membership at the local level is to have **League members actively ASK others to join**. More than half of current LWV members indicated they joined because someone they knew ASKED them to join.

2000 Report on LWV Membership Recruitment

Research conducted by Kelly Kleiman for the LWV of Illinois – 2000

- Recruiting new Members = Fulfilling the LWV mission
- Membership recruitment is Top Priority for your League
- If you have the budget, hire a Membership Coordinator – who is a recruiter and helps others
- Set a 2-3 month membership drive with ambitious goals. Evaluate progress during the drive
- The drives allows you to bring in a GROUP of new people together and builds their comfort
- Membership is the work of the WHOLE team (not just President or Membership Chair)
- Watch for and break down those “club” like ways that intimidate or limit people from joining the activities of the LWV (e.g. meet at a public place rather than someone’s home... others)
- Invite non-members into the activities of the LWV

Working Together – Research on Community Engagement/Volunteering

Research conducted by Lake, Snell, Perry and the Tarrance Group for the LWVUS – 1999 (see section of report [here](#))

- Create flexible (time, place, responsibilities), bite sized, guilt-free opportunities for people to become involved in the LWV
- People are busy, have many options to spend their time – make sure to create impactful opportunities – how what they’re doing ties into the bigger picture of community change.
- Two groups will become involved – Very busy people (because they like to be involved) and people who have NEVER been asked. So don’t make assumptions ... Just ask them!
- People want to be most active where they can make an impact – that is at Community Level (The League is a trusted organization operating at the local community level)
- Create opportunities that are two-for-one, invite families (children get to learn about civic engagement, busy parents still spend time with family, they have a positive impact on a community issue)

Identifying Issues and Activities to Build the LWV (LWVUS Diversity Toolkit 2003)

Research conducted by Heather Bethrud and Bob Greene in 1997.

- Work on the hottest community issues – “Issues with Legs” (see “Attract the Community: Choose Issues with Legs [Excerpts from Diversity Toolkit],” [Recruiting Suggestions, In League](#))
- ID diverse partners with whom to work and build coalitions
- Practice “Active Listening”
- Assess, Plan, Act, Assess
- People will join a group that:
 - Makes a difference on issues community members consider vitally important;
 - Provides flexibility, including many different ways to get involved;
 - Encourages networking and building contacts in the community;
 - Allows members to learn new skills that will be useful in becoming community leaders or in advancing one's career;
 - Offers opportunities for having fun and building relationships;
 - Respects individual contributions, skills, experiences, working styles and available time.