

League of Women Voters of the Kalamazoo Area 2015-2017 STRATEGIC PLAN

Revised
Feb. 2015

Vision: The League of Women Voters of the Kalamazoo Area will be the premier catalyst to invigorate the democratic process, advocating for open and responsive government which is accountable to all and acts with responsibility to the future.

CANDIDATE DIVERSITY

Goal: Increase the number and diversity of people who run for office

Objectives:

- Offer opportunities for prospective candidates to learn about campaigning and build skills, e.g., event planning, fundraising, volunteer recruitment, issue advocacy
- Facilitate mentoring by elected officials and/or candidates (current or former)
- Focus on women and other under-represented demographic groups

Objectives	Strategies & Actions	Targets / Indicators of Success
Year 1		
Develop community "buy-in" to increase the number and diversity of candidates	Identify partnering organizations - ensuring balanced political partisanship - and convene a conversation about diversity in candidates for public office <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use all available means: polling LWVKA members, publicity, approach organizations, etc. • Organization examples: Neighborhood groups with diverse populations Higher education and vocational schools Political parties Service clubs Religious groups (Northside Ministerial Alliance, ISAAC) Ethnic (e.g., Hispanic American Council) Social justice (e.g., Michigan United, ARCUS Institute, YWCA) Unions Special interest (e.g., environment, rail passengers, PEAK) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alignment with LWVKA membership, leader development (MLD) strategies provided by the LWVMI (Hartsough, Clack and Wylie provide info by April 2015) including all members demonstrated • A few partners that will adopt common or complementary tactics identified
Establish baseline and targets for increasing number and diversity of candidates for local and state offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research the number by gender and racial diversity of those who ran and those who were elected to local and state offices in the past 20 yrs • Research gender and racial diversity of political party members and how candidates are recruited • Bring to light past work of Ruth, Fran and Sabrina 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targets set for years 2 and 3

Objectives	Strategies & Actions	Targets / Indicators of Success
Year 2		
Identify characteristics needed for successfully running for and holding elected office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research past studies, conduct surveys, interview elected officials and candidates past and present • Partner with youth/faculty in government classes to help build current job descriptions and conduct interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job descriptions for local partisan and non-partisan elected offices completed
Identify ways to attract more and more diverse candidates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using the discussion group developed in year 1, investigate barriers to running for public office • Work with service clubs and other leadership development organizations to define strategies for recruiting, educating and supporting candidates for office 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan developed that builds on builds on MLD strategies
Promote initiative in the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Year 3		
Develop a cyclical training "program" for current, new and potential candidates for elected office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish the level of need for training through survey/individual interviews with current and previous office holders as well as new and potential candidates • Research trainings offered by local partisan and non-partisan groups • Through the discussion/task group developed in year 1, identify "essential" aspects of training. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer training programs

ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

Goal: In concert with LWVUS priorities, support full participation in our elections by all eligible citizens and oppose efforts to create new barriers to voting

Objectives	Strategies & Actions	Targets / Indicators of Success
Year 1		
Support clerks' efforts to ensure that there are enough well-trained poll workers and adequate space at polls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review objectives and activities from 2007-10 plan • Interview Clerks at the County, cities of Kalamazoo and Portage, and townships of Oshtemo and Kalamazoo <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~ Discuss issues that may have interfered with the election process, e.g., lengthy lines, turn-aways or indications that the resources were inadequate; include considerations for 2012 Presidential election ~ Identify suitable conditions for polling sites (e.g., religious neutrality, heightened security in school buildings, etc.) ~ Learn about poll captian responsibilities and how other poll workers can assist them • Identify and engage other community partners, especially youth - e.g., high school and post-secondary - to help with the research and recommendations that result 	Results of research are documented and changes to address issues/problems are identified
Learn about the processes for obtaining and counting ballots	<p>Through interviews with Clerks and if possible, poll workers and poll watchers, as well as other sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine if the mechanics of voting (machines, etc) are working properly in all instances, and what procedure exists to correct any problems • Identify issues that may occur in applying for a ballot at the polls • Research how/when ballots are counted and reported to the media • Determine whether observers are allowed during vote counting and if so, who and how are they selected. Ask how challenges to vote counting are made 	
Identify issues that may occur in absentee balloting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document process for submitting and counting absentee ballots • Determine how an individual absentee voter can assure that his/her ballot has been counted • Determine if observers are allowed during the absentee ballot count and how observers are chosen 	

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Plan for communication with the public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a media strategy related to the information gained through the research above • Publish results of this research through a variety of outlets, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~ Handouts that include information that informed voters should have about issues such as voting without picture ID. (These publications may already exist or could be easily edited to include any additional information we obtain) ~ PSAs to be used by radio and TV outlets ~ Brief explanatory videos to appear on Youtube (cgpgrey), and direct potential viewers to the site ~ LWVKA website ~ Offer LWVKA speakers for radio and TV interviews (e.g., Lori Moore's TV show) 	Media strategy ready for execution, including publication of handouts and other products
Year 2		
Ensure that information gathered through these activities is obvious and available to the public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement media/public information strategy devised in 2015 prior to the 2016 primary and fall elections • Identify League members as well as other organizations and individuals, especially youth, with expertise in these areas to help with implementation of this strategy, (e.g., Dhera Strauss) 	Media strategy executed
Test interest for LWVMI advocacy regarding election administration	<p>Contact LWVMI leadership to discuss opportunities for legislative action, e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registration rules – e.g., same day • Elections – e.g., early voting, weekends, no picture ID, no reason absentee, reduce poll worker age requirement, electronic voting • Government structure – e.g., eliminate townships 	
Year 3		

ISSUE STUDY & ADVOCACY

Goal: Advocate on key issues

Objectives	Strategies & Actions	Targets / Indicators of Success
Year 1		
<p>With leadership of point persons, take immediate, short-term action on local issues</p>	<p>Continue to participate in national (LWVUS) and state (LWVMI) studies. Recruit point persons to hold portfolios in:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Social Policy (Housing, Education) 2. Natural Resources (Land Use Planning, Parks & Recreation, Management of the Kalamazoo River, Preservation of Natural Areas) 3. Government (Providing Government Services in Kalamazoo County, Library Services and Governance, Financing Local Government Services, Local Government Election Process) <p>Point persons engage LWVKA members to take immediate action on at least one prominent current issue in their portfolios. Actions may include such activities as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter to the editor • Informational forum with speaker or panel • Education of elected officials <p>For sustained advocacy, point persons check existing local, state and national positions--including those relevant to economic justice, environmental justice, restorative justice, health equity, and education equity--to identify local issues that fit these guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent with vision and mission • Have long-term local importance • Fit members' interests and have local interest; likely to draw participation • Likelihood of success or making a difference • Linked to state and national efforts • Tied to resources for pursuit of the issue (resources include expertise in neighboring Leagues) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studies completed • Point persons recruited by June 2015 • One action taken in each of the three portfolio areas, including at least one public event from one portfolio by Dec. 2015 • One issue for sustained advocacy in each portfolio area is identified by Dec. 2015

Objectives	Strategies & Actions	Targets / Indicators of Success
Year 2		
Build strong basis for sustained advocacy	<p>Continue to participate in national (LWVUS) and state (LWVMI) studies. Point persons engage LWVKA members to take immediate action on at least one prominent current issue in their portfolios.</p> <p>Point persons lead assessment of the feasibility of sustained advocacy on one or more of the identified local issues across the 3 portfolio areas, considering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at least 2 LWVKA member champions are willing to coordinate an advocacy team • other organizations working on the issue are willing to partner with LWVKA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studies completed • One action in each portfolio area including one public event • Feasibility assessed
Years 3–5		
Engage in both short-term and sustained advocacy	<p>Continue to participate in national (LWVUS) and state (LWVMI) studies. Point persons engage LWVKA members to take immediate action on at least one prominent current issue in their portfolios.</p> <p>Advocacy team coordinators lead sustained advocacy in partnership with other organizations working on the vetted issue(s)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studies completed • One action in each portfolio area including one public event • More than one action per year on the vetted issue(s)

VOTER OUTREACH & EDUCATION

Goal: Increase voter registration and improve turnout of informed voters

Objectives	Strategies & Actions	Targets / Indicators of Success
<p>Encourage community conversations on the importance of voting. Make voting an assumed and expected part of community living</p>	<p>Partner with other organizations to sponsor speakers, both local and state/national, to address the importance of voting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential organizations: Kalamazoo Community Foundation, NAACP, Ladies Library, Hispanic Council, environmental organizations, students • Recruit local speakers such as Bobby Hopewell <p>Provide opportunities to register at Importance of Voting event.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • League sponsors/ co-sponsor speakers addressing importance of voting. • Increased voter registration and voting
<p>Expand voter registration strategy with special focus on youth and underserved</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sponsor school programs and others, such as DHS & MI Works • Expand registration circuit with “mobile registration” to include sites that will give LWV most visibility and reach the most people, e.g., <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Precincts • Department of Mental and Community Health • Secretary of State mobile unit • Libraries • Fitness centers • Social events • Senior centers & senior apartments • Fitness facilities (YMCA, Borgess and Bronson) • Entertainment venues • Churches • Recruit others to help even if not League members, e.g., student groups and seniors • Make registration available at HS mock election and pre-election education sessions • Communicate with targeted groups using their preferred method of communication, including text, email and Vote411 	<p>Research opportunities and identify ___ sites by end of June; start new registration efforts in July</p>

Objectives	Strategies & Actions	Targets / Indicators of Success
Improve diversity in the people who assist in voter registration, outreach and education	Recruit more minority, young and male individuals to assist with voter registration, including LWV members or others, e.g., <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students, including sorority and fraternity members • Community leaders • Members of neighborhood organizations and service clubs 	<u>ex of success:</u> Minority students assist with voter registration on their campus
Organize training for Voter Registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with other organizations who register voters • Organize voter registration training with City Clerk to do mass trainings 	Conduct training
Strategy for youth: Seek involvement of college and university government classes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and meet with academic contacts to determine opportunities for student involvement • Offer honorary memberships or credit for community service requirements to students 	<u>ex of success:</u> youth help register voters and get people to poles
Organize effort to get-out-the-vote, with emphasis on precinct(s) where there is typically low turnout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with other organizations • Study research on why people don't vote and create strategies in these areas • Respond to personal connections to encourage voting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring someone to the polls "Voting Buddy" campaign Offer rides to polls 	
Do more before the "snow birds" leave and before absentee voting begins		