

## SUMMARY FROM CONSULTING FIRM ON MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT INITIATIVE [MRI]

### How many of these beliefs do you see at work in your League?

1. Some people are just not “joiners.”
2. If people want to join the League they know where to find us.
3. We tried some outreach techniques but they didn’t get results.
4. Our newsletter’s only purpose is to communicate with members.
5. Men are uncomfortable in an organization with “women” in its name.
6. There are no urgent issues in our community.
7. We work on projects that our members are interested in.
8. People don’t like to go to meetings.
9. People don’t have enough time to take on projects.
10. In coalitions it’s important for us to keep control to see that the work is done right.
11. It’s easier to keep the same chairs than to train new people to do the work.
12. The board does most of the work of the League.
13. We don’t know what issues appeal to “minorities” in our community.
14. Local politicians and single interest people may join, but they don’t contribute to League work.
15. New members will pick up the way we do things if they participate.
16. League members tend to share the same political views.
17. We don’t need name tags at meetings because we all know one another.
18. It’s hard to get publicity for things we do.
19. We don’t have enough money for frequent mailings to members.
20. We don’t use email because not all our members have it.
21. Members aren’t interested in state and national projects.
22. Inactive members just cost us money in PMPs.
23. Dues are just too high for some potential members.

### *WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT MEMBERSHIP GROWTH THAT WORKS*

“Member recruitment is not merely an internal matter, something that consumes energy that would be better spent on the “real” work of the League. ***Recruiting members is the real work of the League*** – not all of it, but the core of it. Every recruited member is someone whose citizenship is enhanced...”

### *RECRUITMENT*

*Identify potential League members, new groups and individuals  
and contact them*

- “The League’s essential problem in recruiting members seems to be a lack of interest in doing so. While lip service is paid to the need to attract new blood, in fact most of the local Leagues seem to operate as clubs...that is, organizations for whom there is some benefit in remaining small.” *Kleiman Report to LWVIL*

- The second most important reason for NOT being more involved is lack of recruitment (haven't been asked or don't feel part of community) or knowledge (don't know how to get involved or don't know the issues). *Illinois Civic Engagement Project*
- "Reaching out to groups which have historically been underrepresented in the political process ought to be at the very forefront of the work the League does." *Kleiman Report*

#### *TAKE ON PROJECTS YOUR COMMUNITY CARES ABOUT*

- "Recruiting is nothing more than the process of making people interested in what you do, and in a world in which (people) have many competing demands on their time, organizations that don't bother to **create interest** in their work will find that no such interest exists."
- "(Identify) projects that are of significant importance to the wider community, even if they haven't traditionally been the subject of the League's attentions."
- "If the League...feels unable to decide what issues will appeal to particular groups, find representatives of those groups and ask them." *Kleiman Report*

#### *THE TOP 6 REASONS FOR BEING INVOLVED IN YOUR COMMUNITY (Illinois Civic Engagement Project)*

1. Chance to make the community a better place 93%
2. Be with people you enjoy 82%
3. Work with people who share your ideals 74%
4. Belief that everyone should be involved 65%
5. Wanted to learn more about the community 51%
6. Chance to influence governmental policy 50%

#### *OFFER PEOPLE SOME PERSONAL BENEFIT FOR MEMBERSHIP*

Citizen Power      Skill Building      Networking

"New members don't join because "we need you"; they join because they need something the League can provide." *Kleiman Report*

"Find ways to involve youth. Not only do they need to be involved, you are giving them valuable skills for the future." *Illinois Civic Engagement Project*

#### *BENEFITS OF LWV MEMBERSHIP INCLUDE BELONGING TO AN ORGANIZATION THAT:*

- is making a difference on vitally important issues
- provides flexibility and different ways to be involved
- encourages networking and building community contacts
- provides an opportunity to keep abreast of current political activities and weigh in on issues
- allows members to learn new leadership skills
- offers opportunities for building relationships and enjoyable interaction

- respects individual contributions, experiences, and available time
- has a record of success and a positive reputation
- is active and welcomes new members
- fulfills a desire to make the community a better place and to influence public policy

### *RETENTION*

1. Personal Contact Inclusion
  - “(A Recruitment Campaign) means bringing in a number of new people at once – enough new people so that each new person doesn’t feel isolated and out of it and the only one who doesn’t know what’s going on.” *Kleiman Report*
  - “What factors are most influential in nonrenewal of membership? The sense of being unwelcome, the only stranger in a group of old friends...” *Kleiman Report*
2. Active Program Showing Results
  - “The sense that the League is busy but not accomplishing anything...” *Kleiman Report*

**The data...shows that potential volunteers want to believe that their effort – no matter how big or small – is making a difference. *Illinois Civic Engagement Project***

### *VISIBILITY AND COMMUNICATION...PUBLICIZE EFFORTS... USE NEWSLETTERS EFFECTIVELY*

- “Highlight “local heroes” (small and large scale) in your newsletter.”
- “No significant difference is found across the five urban/rural regions in their levels of ... political activity and discussion of current events and public affairs (but) rural residents...reported the lowest level of news exposure, while those in urban areas reported the highest level.”

### *DIFFERENT WAYS TO PARTICIPATE*

- “Offering prospective volunteers small projects, with limited time commitments, and mentoring them to make them feel comfortable and capable may help to ease apprehension and, over time, lead to more involvement.”
- Create a personal comfort zone for volunteers: allow them to say “no” to any given volunteer opportunity; encourage them to be involved on different levels; educate them on the usefulness of their contribution and the “ripple effect.” *Illinois Civic Engagement Project*

### *APPLYING WHAT WE KNOW TO YOUR LEAGUE*

Membership Objective: Achieve a set percentage of net membership growth

1. Develop a Plan for Growth
  - ✓ Identify diverse populations in your community and develop an outreach plan for each
  - ✓ Adopt a diversity policy for your League

2. Identify a membership team for new member recruitment and member retention
3. Identify a time period for a membership campaign
  - ✓ Develop a timeline for membership activities throughout the League year
  - ✓ Update your Board monthly on progress toward goal
4. Determine what your community responds to (voter services, local action, issue/educational forums)
5. Develop a PR/Visibility plan to highlight local League activities
  - ✓ Develop a League web site
6. Other tactics to achieve growth:
  - ✓ Consider meeting in a public venue, not a home
  - ✓ Customize the LWVNYS membership brochure for your League and CARRY BROCHURES WITH YOU
  - ✓ Write a monthly column for your local newspaper on local issues
  - ✓ Order a LWV banner for use at every League event

*WHAT IS AVAILABLE AT STATE LEVEL  
TO SUPPORT LOCAL EFFORTS?*

- Website Link to State and National Membership sites
- “Welcome to the League” Membership Brochure with local information capacity
- Special Projects to encourage involvement
- Voter Service Materials
- State and National Communications & Listserves
- Issue Specialists on State & National Positions
- Supporting Liaisons to Local Leagues from State Membership Team
- Staff assistance with administrative tasks: data base maintenance, etc.
- On line and emailed State Board Reports