

Opportunity for Guidance: Leadership Development

February 2015

Appreciative Inquiry

Review the following quotes from League members:

"The League focused my life and at the same time magnified it; it took my small talents and increased their impact."

"My work in the League has provided me with the skills to take an active, productive part in my community."

Now, consider the following questions:

- ✓ How do these quotes relate to your experiences as a League leader?
- ✓ What do you value about being a League leader?
- ✓ How can the League be marketed as a place for leadership development?
- ✓ How can you foster new League leaders?

Guidance

Think back to when you were new to the League. Were you given tasks and projects that were engaging to you and made you feel like your skills were useful? Did members ask you about what types of work you were passionate about? Creating positive initial experiences for members who are looking for leadership opportunities is crucial to the success of the League.

HEALTHY ORGANIZATION LIFE CYCLE: MEMBERS → LEADERS

A member's early experiences with the League will determine whether they will stay a member and whether they will feel empowered to take on a leadership role in the organization. Ensuring that members are engaged with the League in ways that they find interesting and exciting will lead to better events, happier members, and a more positive League. Being welcoming and engaging should be a priority for every League before, during and at each event. Use the "Direct Outreach" and "Leadership Development" columns of the Event Planning Checklist to ensure that your League is building in opportunities for members to take on leadership roles. In short, we want to move them from "me" to "we" – to get them to feel ownership of the organization, its mission and its future; we want them to step onto the leadership ladder.

The Leadership Ladder

Leadership development is critical to the League's future and should be an integral part of the local MLD team's work and goals. One way for League's to meet their leadership development goals is to adopt and implement a leadership development path and process, such as the Leadership Ladder. MLD teams are encouraged to review this ladder and set a leadership development goal with their state coach.

➤ STEP ONE: Assess Your League's Membership

With your board, discuss the following questions to assess your League's current needs:

- What are your League's top priorities? Do you have enough League leaders to be successful at each priority?
- Who else can you cultivate to be a part of achieving these priorities?
- What else would you like to do (e.g., share League activities on your Facebook page, begin an Observer Corps) that you haven't been able to do yet because of a lack of leadership?
- What skill sets (e.g., social media expertise, forum moderating) are missing from your board?
- How can you start to engage new leaders from within League? *Outside* of League?
- How do you set up others to succeed?
- Where do you need leadership so that your League can be one of the most active organizations in your community?

➤ STEP TWO: Focus on a Couple of Potential Leaders

- Make a list of potential leaders. (Who have you seen at a recent meeting? Who has expressed interest in a given topic or demonstrated a given talent?)
- Pick a few emerging leaders and make a personal contact with potential leaders to find out what they would like to do (e.g. phone call or survey).
- Brainstorm with the individual about topics/projects with which they can get involved.
- Create a specific plan for the individual, assigning him/her simple tasks (that relates to their interests) for an upcoming event or program.

➤ STEP THREE: Select Mentors Who Can Guide Emerging Leaders

- Find a mentor for each individual -- someone who can answer their questions and help them. Mentors can be current or past leaders. Match them up according to their interests and skills.
- Encourage mentors to build a relationship with their mentee with frequent contact and support.

➤ STEP FOUR: Identify Activities where New Leaders can become Engaged

- Invite emerging leaders to partner with a current leader to learn a specific job or role.
- Respect the availability and interests of the emerging leader.

➤ STEP FIVE: Train Emerging Leaders

- Keep it simple: ask past leaders to share what they know in an informal setting, let them shadow a leader doing a specific job or meet with a leader who has special expertise.
- Remember that the training might give someone a new skill or just enhance an existing one.

Additional Resources

-One-pager on steps to [Leadership Development](#)

-Chapters 7, 8 and 10 of the [MLD Handbook](#)