



# Membership Toolkit

LWVOR Council 2010

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## ***INTRODUCTION***

Dear League of Women Voters *Leader*:

I believe our highest priority for the coming decade should be, not only to MAINTAIN our League MEMBERSHIP, but to GROW our MEMBERSHIP to new heights in OREGON.

The League's STRENGTH comes from the active participation and financial contributions of its MEMBERS. Without MEMBERS, the excellent and important work of the League of Women Voters will cease to be accomplished.

Every member needs to be a MEMBERSHIP AMBASSADOR. Although every League designates a Board Member as MEMBERSHIP CHAIR, the roles of RECRUITING, MENTORING and RETAINING members must be shared by all Board members and non-Board members as well.

This MEMBERSHIP TOOLKIT has been assembled to assist with the work of recruiting and retention. The tools should provide helpful tips and reminders. Please keep this booklet handy. Use the TOOLS as you talk with friends, relatives and neighbors about the League. REACH OUT to MEN as well as WOMEN. REACH OUT to YOUNG PEOPLE and PEOPLE of MINORITY GROUPS.

Tell everyone why you are committed to League principles, policies and practices. Let them see your enthusiasm about AMERICAN DEMOCRACY. Let's rebuild our League MEMBERSHIP to new heights by the League's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2020!!!

Sandra Smith Gangle, LWVOR Membership Chair

May, 2010



# ABOUT THE LEAGUE

## WHAT IS THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS?

The League of Women Voters is a multifaceted organization dedicated to keeping our communities strong by giving every person a voice in government. We mobilize citizen action for a better America.



The League has more than 100,000 supporters – women and men in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, and in more than 1,140 communities around the country. We have been a partner in numerous global democracy initiatives.

## WHAT DOES THE LEAGUE DO?



The League of Women Voters is where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement. This means that the League works through the American political process and with the citizens of this country to bring about constructive change.

- **REGISTER** millions to vote
- **DEFEND** voting rights.
- **MONITOR** government activities from city councils and school boards to state legislatures and the U.S. Congress.
- **TEACH** citizens about their rights and responsibilities.
- **SPONSOR** candidate debates and public issue forums
- **INFORM** through our in-depth and balanced issues forums
- **TAKE ACTION, LOBBY, and TESTIFY** on the issues you care about.
- We help put **LAWS** on the books.

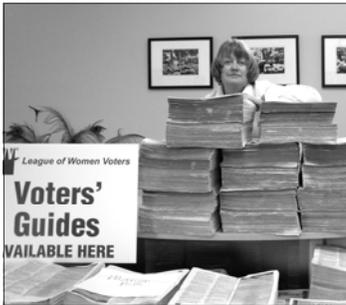


## DOES THE LEAGUE SUPPORT PARTIES OR CANDIDATES?

No. Never. The League is political, but strictly non-partisan. Our **members** decide what issues the League will address and what action the League will take on the issues.

## WHERE DO I FIT IN?

If you are 18 or older the League needs you. **JOIN** your friends, neighbors, and colleagues in the nationwide grassroots network .



You'll get "inside" in-depth information on the issues through League publications and website...meet the people who make things happen in your community...have a chance to sharpen your skills in any area you choose...make your voice heard in America's political process..help make your community, state and country a better place to live.

## HOW DO I BECOME A LEAGUE MEMBER?

**FILL OUT AND MAIL** a membership form. Join us at any level...local, state, or national... and you automatically become a member at every level.

Visit us on the web ([www.lwvor.org](http://www.lwvor.org); [www.VoteSource.org](http://www.VoteSource.org)) and join us on Facebook ([www.facebook.dj/lwvor](http://www.facebook.dj/lwvor)) and Twitter (LWVofOregon).



Join the **LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS**<sup>®</sup>

*Educate! Advocate! Empower!*

Yes, I am interested in membership in the LWV. Please notify the local League nearest to me and ask them to get in touch. Dues are about \$55-70/year (dues vary by League). Student dues are usually half, and scholarships may be available.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**JOIN TODAY!**

Mail or email information to:

League of Women Voters of Oregon

1330 12<sup>th</sup> St. SE, Suite 200 • Salem, OR 97302 • 503-581-5722 • Fax: 503-581-9403

[lwvor@lwvor.org](mailto:lwvor@lwvor.org) • [www.lwvor.org](http://www.lwvor.org) • [www.VoteSource.org](http://www.VoteSource.org)

# **HOW can you respond to these Excuses when you try to RECRUIT a new MEMBER of the LEAGUE?**

- ***“I’M TOO BUSY.”***
- ***“I DON’T HAVE ANY TIME.”***
- ***“MY FAMILY TAKES ALL MY TIME.”***

## **ANSWERS:**

**--“ You can stay informed through our website and newsletter.**

**--“Your support will make our voice stronger, even if you can't be active.”**

**--“Your membership dues will be helpful to the League, even if you don't have time to be active.”**

**--“We need additional funds to support our local advocacy and program costs. Also, we would like to be able to offer scholarship assistance to those who want to join the League but can’t afford the dues. Your dues would help us.”**

**--“You can be as involved as you want with the League.”**

**--“Do you have 10 minutes a week? You could respond to an action alert by e-mailing elected officials.”**

**--“How about an hour a week? You could staff a voter registration table during election season.”**

**--“Do you have two hours? Attend our next forum or candidate debate.”**

**--“League advocacy keeps government accountable.”**

**--“We need you in League. Join us. You’ll be glad you did.”**

## How can you respond to these Excuses?

- . *“I go away for the winter.”*
- . *“I spend a lot of my time out of town.”*
- . *“I travel a lot on my job (or on business).”*

### ANSWERS:

--“Enjoy your vacation (your travels); as a League member, you can stay current on the issues here in your local community by reading *The Voter* when you pick up your mail or on the website.”

--“You can always monitor state and national League issues via the web as well. The League will keep you informed of the facts behind the issues.”

--“We can help you find a local League where you live in the winter, so you can stay active and involved while you’re there.”

--“No matter where you are, the work of the League continues. As a member, you will be increasing the League’s presence and influence. The League keeps government accountable to the people.”

--“You will be supporting your local League while you are away, through your annual membership investment.”

--“The League is a great **NETWORKING** opportunity. Our members have ties to state and local government, small business and education. Many League members owe their jobs to League contacts.”

## **How can you respond to this Excuse?**

- “My mom belonged to the League. They are all old women. I don’t think I’d fit in.”***

**--“ We have younger folks joining all the time. They know they need to maintain good government for their future.”**

**--“Some of our most active members are MEN; we welcome ALL voters and potential voters.”**

**--“We are looking for younger people to get involved, so bring along some of your friends.”**

**--“The League is a great way to get involved in community service.”**

**--“It’s important to let the government officials hear your voice!”**

**--“The older League members are very dedicated. They will be wonderful mentors to you and your friends, as you deal with issues affecting your generation.”**

**--“The League is a diverse organization -- in terms of age, race, and political philosophy. We advocate for the best interests of all.”**

**--“There are incredible opportunities for professional and personal development through the League. Younger members will find great opportunities to grow themselves, their community, and the League.”**



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF**

**Join us in making our communities  
FAIR, VIBRANT AND STRONG.**

The League of Women Voters is where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement. Join the League and be directly involved in shaping the important issues in our community.

Membership in the League is open to men and women of all ages. With more than 88 years of experience and 850 local and state affiliates in all 50 states, the League is one of America's most trusted grassroots organizations.

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**Call us at:**

**Email us at:**

**Visit our Web site:**



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OF OREGON**  
1330 12th St. SE, Suite 200  
Salem, OR 97302

**Name**  
*Position*

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INTERESTED IN JOINING THE LEAGUE? Please fill in this card and return to the LWV office.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

INTERESTED IN JOINING THE LEAGUE? Please fill in this card and return to the LWV office.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_



## New Member Prospect Letter Template

[DATE]

[NAME]

[ADDRESS]

[ADDRESS]

Dear [NAME],

Thank you for your interest in the League of Women Voters, where hands on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement! This fall, we worked tirelessly to help ensure that everyone in our community was able to vote and that every vote was counted. We were pleased that so many individuals, like you, were engaged in and energized by this historic election season as well.

LWV of [YOUR LEAGUE] is an organization where smart, active leaders work to create lasting change in the community. We invite you to join us!

For [NUMBER OF YEAR YOUR LEAGUE ESTABLISHED] years, the members of LWV of [YOUR LEAGUE] have worked to:

[LIST THREE SUCCINCT AND RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS HERE]

As a valued member of our community, we hope you'll join us in contributing to efforts that will make [YOUR COMMUNITY] stronger. Members of LWV of [YOUR LEAGUE], have many opportunities to create an impact on local, state, and even national issues. I've enclosed a membership brochure to give you more information about joining our League.

In addition, you will also be receiving our newsletter, *The Voter* [OR NAME OF YOUR LEAGUE'S NEWSLETTER], for the next three months in order to familiarize yourself with our League. To learn more, I encourage you to attend our general meetings which are held on [USUAL MEETING DATE] at [USUAL MEETING PLACE]

By joining LWV you become part of one of the most respected groups directly involved in shaping the important issues, which help to keep [YOUR COMMUNITY] strong. I would be happy to answer any questions that you have and hope you will join the League as an active leader for civic improvement.

Our next event is [DAY, MONTH DATE], at [TIME], at [WHERE]. I look forward to seeing you there!

Sincerely,

[YOUR NAME]

[TITLE]

Enclosure

## ***Cultivate your Donors -- GROW them into MEMBERS<sup>1</sup>***

Here are some suggestions that will help you to *grow your membership by cultivating your non-member donors!*

1. ***Invite*** all donors to attend as many League events as possible
2. ***Mail*** them your publications, to ***thank*** them for their support
3. ***Socialize*** with them. Arrange meetings with all major donors;
4. ***Ask*** them to host a major donors party
5. ***Invite*** them to attend a board meeting
6. ***Ask*** them for advice, send them questionnaires
7. Send them ***cards*** on ***birthdays or anniversaries*** or when they are ill
8. Send ***press clippings*** and notes when the League is recognized in the news
9. ***Invite*** them to join an ***Honorary or Advisory Board***
10. ***Invite*** them to join delegations or go on League ***field trips***
11. ***Establish a memorial*** or tribute gifts program
12. ***Establish a donor recognition*** program

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<sup>1</sup> Based on "31 Ways to Cultivate Your Donors"  
by Stephen Hitchcock

## **Tips for New Member Welcome and Orientation**

### **1. Here's how to introduce a new Member to the League effectively:**

- a. **Call** the new member to **welcome** him/her.
- b. **Send** the member's name to the **State and National rosters. Add to your mailing list.**
- c. **Assign a "new member ambassador"** to send out **a packet of materials**, including:
  - 1.. a welcoming letter from the local League president,
  - 2.. a Board list,
  - 3.. a membership list or directory,
  - 4.. program information ,
  - 5.. a "Welcome to the League" booklet, and
  - 6.. a calendar of the year's planned activities.
- d. **Provide these additional items** after an introductory learning period has passed: your League's by-laws, a brief history of League, current action items.
- e. **Find out about the new member's interests** and availability. Call or use a questionnaire.
- f. **Assign** the new member to one activity. Think of **specific tasks** that are particularly suitable to the new person's interests. **Most people will participate if they feel needed!**

### **2. Here's how to provide effective orientation to League procedures:**

- a. Offer a variety of suitable formats. Some new members prefer a **daytime** meeting, others prefer **evenings**, others a **Saturday morning**.
- b. Don't be afraid to try new accommodations, so that everyone can participate and learn; i.e., child care, telephonic orientation, Webinars.
- c. Have several seasoned presenters available to speak at your Orientation. Make sure all new members introduce themselves. Let them ask questions. Tell about the League's work/successes. **Share personal stories about League.**

3. **Mentor** the new member. **Use phone contact** to give insight and advice about League practices and actions. Consider **matching** people based on similar backgrounds or interests.

4. **Introduce** new members to the group and to individuals when they come to their first meeting. **Recognize them** at subsequent meetings. **Thank them** for becoming a member. Ask what their interests are and to inform them about upcoming events.

5. Send a **"satisfaction" survey** after six months. This may help you identify any problems a new member may be having and allow you to serve all members better.

## *Member Satisfaction Survey*

Please participate by answering these few questions, then fold and mail in by \_\_\_\_\_.

**1. Rank these League of Women Voter services in order of importance (1 being the most important, 6 being the least important service) to you:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Non-partisan proposition analysis reporting
- \_\_\_\_\_ Non-partisan candidate forums
- \_\_\_\_\_ Committee/unit meetings
- \_\_\_\_\_ City/County agency observing & reporting
- \_\_\_\_\_ Education workshops (e.g. Lunch & Learn)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Social, professional networking (e.g. Winetasting)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

**2. In your opinion, how effective is the League in providing those services? Circle the most appropriate number, as follows:**

	Highly effective...	So-So...	Ineffective		
Non-partisan proposition analysis reporting	1	2	3	4	5
Non-partisan candidate forums	1	2	3	4	5
Committee/unit meetings	1	2	3	4	5
City/County agency observing & reporting	1	2	3	4	5
Education workshops (e.g. Lunch & Learn)	1	2	3	4	5
Social, professional networking	1	2	3	4	5
Other _____	1	2	3	4	5

**3. Rank the following in order of how effective you think these would be in membership recruitment and retention (1 being most useful, 5 being least):**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Personal/Leadership skill-building workshops
- \_\_\_\_\_ Diversification of membership
- \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone reminders of events
- \_\_\_\_\_ General membership/unit meetings
- \_\_\_\_\_ Action alerts

**Thank you for your time!! We value your assistance.**

## **“HOT TOPICS LUNCHESES” or “SOUPER SUPPERS”**

- What are the challenges that face your community today?
- What is the hot button issue that everyone is talking about?

Consider using the structure of “**Hot Topics Lunches**” or “**Souper Suppers**” to discuss timely issues, while also bringing a spotlight to League **MEMBERSHIP** .

- **Step One:** Enlist a small committee to draw up a plan for three to four months. Decide upon the topics to be covered and appropriate **speakers\***. Consider “**controversial**” **subjects** outside of the “usual” League interests, such as:
  - ***Distinguishing Objective News Stories from Opinions***
  - ***Restoring Voter Trust***
  - ***Legislative Wrap Up / Kick off***
  - ***Ethics at the Local Level: Promises and Pitfalls***
- **Step Two:** Secure a **venue** to use regularly. A **private dining room** is a must. Also **consider audio visual capability**. Negotiate a set price for food and beverage for your guests. Set the cost of admission to cover the attendee’s meal and a share of any room rental. An amount could be added to help offset the cost of the speaker’s meal.
- **Step Three: Market** your lunch/supper programs consistently and frequently. Attendance will grow, but it will depend on very consistent reminders.
  - ✓ Put **Hot Topics speakers\*** on the cover of your League’s newsletter with their photograph and a brief biography.
  - ✓ Send out a colored postcard as reminder. Include the location, price, and how to RSVP. The use of post cards will cut down on your postage costs!
  - ✓ **Encourage members to invite their friends**, family, and neighbors
- **Running your Event:** Plan on a minimum of 90 minutes from beginning to end. Arrive early, and remember to bring membership forms! Introduce your speaker promptly, so attendees who must return to work, will hear the entire program.
- **Keep it fun:** Make it an interesting and informative event for members and guests to network and socialize while learning about important issues.

**\*In identifying speakers, consider local professors, reporters/columnists, agency heads, law enforcement, legislators, lobbyists, elected or appointed school officials, hospital and college administrators, local activists or organizers, and authors. Utilize connections among League members to help secure speakers.**

***SAMPLE REMINDER LETTER at DUES RENEWAL Time:***

**Dear \_\_\_\_\_,**

It's time to renew your membership in the **League of Women Voters** of \_\_\_\_\_. You are an important part of a grassroots network of women and men in communities across the country. Your participation and dues support help the League fulfill its commitment to ensuring every citizen has a voice in government.

The **League of Women Voters** is where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement. As a member, you are directly involved in shaping the important issues to keep our communities strong, safe and vibrant.

This year the **League of Women Voters** (list activities here). Your participation and dues support made these and other valuable services possible.

Every member strengthens the League's political clout. Even when you don't have the time to be personally involved, your membership dues support the actions of other League members who work for better government.

Please renew your membership in the League by returning the enclosed **renewal form** before the end of the month so you can continue to receive mailings over the coming year. Please complete our **Member Satisfaction Survey** as well.

Thank you for your membership in the League. Your involvement is important and much appreciated. If you have a spare moment, please fill the out the enclosed survey.

Sincerely,

Membership & President

P.S. Dues for membership are not deductible for income tax purposes. If you wish, you may include a separate check, made out to the League's Education Fund, which would be a tax-deductible donation.

## ***RETAINING MEMBERS: How can we prevent non-renewals?***

We know our *loyal members* will *renew* every year. ***How do we build that loyalty?***  
How about members we don't know very well? How do we keep them?

### ***Retention occurs through:***

- **Involvement** in League work and issues
- **Friendships** that make League work rewarding
- **Feeling Appreciated**
- **Sense of Achievement**
- **Ability to Make A Difference**
- **Meaningful jobs** in doable chunks to complete League projects.

### ***Suggestions for maximizing loyal Membership in your League:***

- Include a ***personal, handwritten note*** with all first-year renewals.
- ***Contact*** those members who do not respond to your renewal letters by phone and ask them to renew. If they say they do not intend to renew, ask if they will agree to an exit interview to find out what the League can do better.
- ***Include a brief survey*** with your final renewal letter asking the member who seems not to be renewing why she/he chose not to renew.
- ***Analyze your survey results.*** Keep a file, with notation of why members have dropped.
- ***Contact past members,*** asking them to rejoin when they are ready.
- ***Invite*** former members to attend functions.
- ***Recognize*** active members in your bulletin for their accomplishments.
- ***Welcome new members*** in your bulletin. Thank members who renew.
- ***Send an annual interest questionnaire*** with renewal notices to update members' interests, as circumstances change.
- ***Develop a record-keeping system*** on cards or computer for member renewal and interest follow-up.
- ***Keep your membership rosters up-to-date – at LWVOR and LWVUS!***

League of Women Voters of Oregon

Membership Chairs / Member List Persons

**New Members and Updates for Current Members Form**

Fill out this form and return as an email to [kathyg@lwvor.org](mailto:kathyg@lwvor.org) or  
send as a paper copy to LWVOR, 1330 12<sup>th</sup> St. SE, Suite 200, Salem, OR 97302  
Keep a copy for your records.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

League \_\_\_\_\_

Member Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email Voter \_\_\_\_\_ Email Legislative Report \_\_\_\_\_

Special Requests \_\_\_\_\_  
(such as “no phone calls”, “only Spring and Summer Voter”)

Please check what applies

**New Member** \_\_\_\_\_

Individual Membership \_\_\_\_\_

Household Membership \_\_\_\_\_

Student Membership \_\_\_\_\_

Honorary Member \_\_\_\_\_

**Updates for Current Member** \_\_\_\_\_

Did Not Renew \_\_\_\_\_

Deceased \_\_\_\_\_

Moved \_\_\_\_\_ Include old and new address

Date \_\_\_\_\_

League \_\_\_\_\_

Member Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email Voter \_\_\_\_\_ Email Legislative Report \_\_\_\_\_

Special Requests \_\_\_\_\_  
(such as “no phone calls”, “only Spring and Summer Voter” etc)

Please check what applies

**New Member** \_\_\_\_\_

Individual Membership \_\_\_\_\_

Household Membership \_\_\_\_\_

Student Membership \_\_\_\_\_

Honorary Member \_\_\_\_\_

**Updates for Current Member** \_\_\_\_\_

Did Not Renew \_\_\_\_\_

Deceased \_\_\_\_\_

Moved \_\_\_\_\_ Include old and new address

**Keeping our Membership Database current is important. Your help is needed to accomplish this!**