

Guidance on Opportunities  
**External Trends = Opportunities for Leagues**  
December 2017

As the League looks to the future, there are three external trends that are impacting both our current and future members. These three trends are: Volunteerism, Demographics, and Technology. While these trends may not sound new, this month's guidance will explore how each impact the League and offers the organization opportunities – in theory and in practice.

**Volunteerism**

Over the last several decades, volunteerism has changed. In the 1950s, volunteers were generally women in the home dedicating a full-time commitment to an organization. Today's volunteers have professional careers and limited time to devote to volunteering. The Bureau of Labor and Statistics reports that there has been an overall decline in the number of people volunteering since 2002.

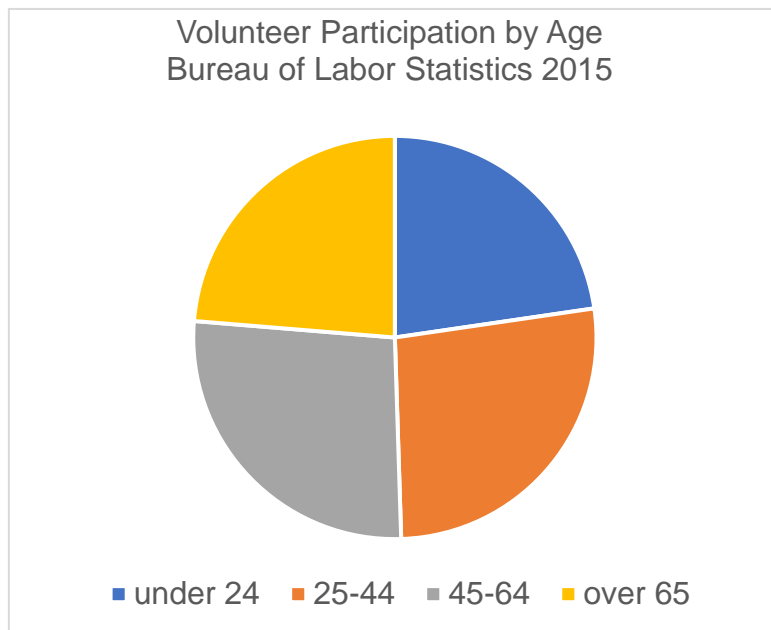
However, while the size of the volunteer pool may be shrinking, statistically there are not significant differences among generations. One trend is that a higher percentage of women volunteer (28.4%) than men (22.2%).

What may be different is that today's volunteers have higher expectations for what they want to get out of their experience. There is less inclination to simply "help out," volunteers want to feel as if they are making a valuable contribution to the League that will also

better themselves. **Each League should be offering meaningful, exciting and high-quality opportunities for our members to maximize their valuable time.**

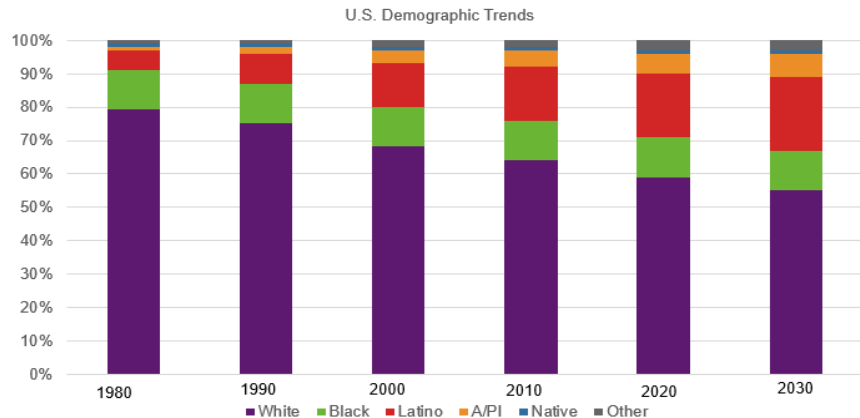
One way to create these types of opportunities is through virtual volunteerism. Virtual volunteering presents a flexible and less-time intensive opportunity to serve with the League. *The Nonprofit Times* suggests that there is serious evidence of numerous potential volunteers with technological skills that are not being utilized. Some ways you can engage in virtual volunteering are:

- Hold an online fundraising campaign
- Use Social Media as a platform to distribute messages and information
- Have those who can't volunteer in person use social media to recruit potential volunteers



## Demographics

The generational and racial makeup of the United States is changing and changing quickly. (*Graph provided by La Piana Consultants.*) This too presents challenges and opportunities to the League. We must adapt to serve and appeal to younger and increasingly diverse members.



The good news is that there is strong interest in our mission and impact work. We may need to be engage individuals around our work in new and different ways, but our core mission and values have universal appeal.

What does that look like? Providing engagement opportunities that allow people to “make a difference.” This also means listening to new members or volunteers. What are they interested in? What talents/opportunities/assets do they have to share that helps to further our shared interests and mission? What are their ideas for engaging the community?

## Technology

Technology’s growing role in society has had an impact on volunteering and civic engagement. With the growing role of technology comes the growing role of social media. According to a Pew survey, 70% of all adults use social media, with Facebook being the number one preferred platform.

Facebook and other social media platforms (like Twitter or Instagram) provide unique opportunities to both get free publicity for your League as well as engage members and promote discussion. Take advantage of services such as Facebook or Instagram live to engage members who cannot be physically present at events. Make sure your League has social media accounts that are followed by your members and engagers and are regularly updated.

### **How to events more visible on social media**

- ✓ Use a photographer or enlist the services of a member with a nice camera
- ✓ Use a backdrop or photo booth
- ✓ Use a whiteboard where people can express why an issue is important to them

*Remember that people LOVE seeing pictures of themselves on your Facebook page and will share them— which means free publicity!*