Developing Leaders within the League of Women Voters

Leadership Development

What is Leadership Development?
Leadership Development is the process of developing leadership skills in people so that they are empowered to be involved in League decision-making processes. It is important to identify League members with leadership qualities, find out what motivates them through an initial 1-on-1 meeting, help identify new leadership opportunities within the League, and encourage and support them as they learn new skills. This has been done at times and by some Leagues, but doing this in an organized and intentional way ensures new leaders are developed. Leadership development is a key component for successful Leagues and will lead to more engaged members, stronger communities and a more vibrant democracy.

Why do systematic Leadership Development?
The League is a member-driven organization. Members carry out the work of the League and participate in decision-making, organization building, and strategic planning. Sometimes, members feel uncomfortable in parts of this process. The goal of leadership development is to continually expose members to experiences within their "learning zone" that build towards organizational leadership [see p. 3]. When leaders have completed the leadership development process, few parts of organizational work, decisions, or strategy should remain in their "discomfort zone." If we start by placing people in their discomfort zone all the time very often they leave, are frustrated or cannot make sound organizational decisions. Utilizing these tools and process will help your League move people into their "comfort zone" for leadership roles.

Organizational goals
The goal of the League's leadership development work is to have all of our active members developing leadership skills and moving up the "Leadership Development Ladder" [see p. 4] to the extent that they want to. The more League leaders there are carrying out our work, the stronger our organization (and our communities) will be. Ultimately, our goal is to have all leaders in the "Leader" category below before they can take on essential roles within the organization. This will assure that leaders within the League have a base of knowledge from which to draw-on for decision making on behalf of the League and are in their comfort zone while carrying out their leadership duties. As a part of leadership development, it is essential that we take emerging leaders through training and help them to understand the basics. We hope that through this training they become a part of League leadership. We can't do the work of the League without new members coming in and new leaders being developed!

Zones of Learning:

Leadership development happens when people are in their "Learning Zone!"

comfort zone

EASY

Learning Zone

Discomfort Zone

Easy Zone Tasks and activities that so comfortable to the person doing it finds no challenge. While these tasks may be boring for one person, they may be a challenge for someone else. Consider training a new leader to take over this task or activity.

Comfort Zone Tasks and activities that require skill but that a person is really comfortable doing. While staying in this zone is comfortable, they need to move outside the comfort zone to develop new skills.

Learning Zone Experts say that a person learns best when they are outside their comfort zone trying a newly mastered skill – this is the learning zone. Here it is good to have support preparing for the activity and an evaluation of their work afterwards.

Discomfort Zone This is when one feels completely out of their depth. Think about getting help breaking the project into smaller pieces and picking one that would feel comfortable to a new person trying it with support. We don't want people to be doing work that is in their discomfort zone.

LWV Leadership Development Ladder

LD #		Definition	Example of activity
5	*Member*	☑ Sends the League a check	Not active
4	*Volunteer*	☑ On our contact list ☑ Have attended at least one event or responded to one action alert ☑ If they have done no activity *after repeated personal invitations* over a year, they become a 5 again	Attends at least one meeting or event Participates in at least one Action Alerts
4+		☑ Have had a 1-on-1 relational meeting done with League board member or committee chairperson	**The key to moving these folks is that as soon as someone shows some interest and comes to an event, a one on one meeting is scheduled.**
3	*Activist*	☑ Attends meetings, trainings, or committee meetings ☑ Begin to take ownership, , says "we" not "you" when talking about League ☑ Have had an initial LD meeting with your coordinator where we get to know them more, ask them to take responsibility for some project, talk about League ☑ LD plan is started: coordinator talks with them about the skills they have, those they want to learn, and the role in League they want to work towards	Present at more than one of the League activities Attend big organizational events and usually go to member meetings Work with 4's and 5's to begin to engage them in League efforts
3 + ready to move to a 2!		☑ Dependable and accountable—identify with League ☑ Have a drive to do more and are curious about other parts of League ☑ Attendance and participation are regular ☑ Work closely with a leader on leading a project ☑ Shares the League mission and vision ☑ A *second* LD meeting has been done, including some self-assessment and the plan is updated and adjusted	They take personal responsibility for making sure that they have volunteered for are done and done well. They begin to consistently and strategically think about the importance of developing other leaders. They are willing to commit to learning the skill of engaging new members in 1-on-1 relational meetings
2	*Member Coordinator*	☑ Identify as an League leader ☑ Take specific committee/board responsibility, make specific commitments, are dependable ☑ Do outreach, make the ask and engage non-members ☑ Have been through training on how to do 1-on-1 meetings, other specific trainings ☑ Train 3s and 4s	Train 3s and 4s on League activities Plan and carry out League events and running specific projects that directly involve organizing (such as taking a list of 3s and 4s, recruiting and training them for a project).
2 + ready to move!		☑ Training on organizing skills ☑ Aware of their own development ☑ A third LD meeting is done including self-assessment, worldview check-in and discussion, member-coordinator plan, and League strategy ☑ Their LD plan is revised	Have done above types of activities successfully and begin to take personal responsibility for making sure that all the things listed above are done and done well. Very aware of their own development: they know what they are good at and can train others to do and they know what they want to work on improving
1	*Leader*	☑ Potential board member ☑ League can count on them ☑ Do 1-on-1s regularly ☑ Undergone leadership trainings ☑ Committee Chairperson or specific responsibility ☑ Part of planning for possible League activities	In addition to all the activities listed above, they now understand the process that has brought them to this level and **start working to help develop other members in the same way. They take on the role of "member mentor".** Some may step back from some of the roles they have previously filled in order to develop other leaders to fill those roles. Others may become long-term Board members.

We see leadership development as a ladder.

As we mentor new leaders, think about the first thing that is asked of new people by your League. What is that? Be a member? Go to an event? Be on the board?   How about when they had more experience? Be on a committee? Speak at an event? A healthy organizations look like this:
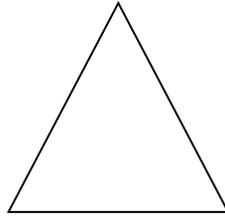
Lots of members are moving up the leadership ladder to positions of more responsibility. To maintain a healthy organization, we have to keep bringing in new members or the organization dies. Have you ever been in an organization like these?
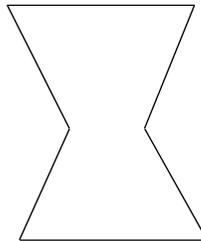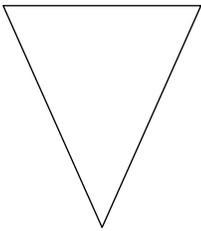
Perhaps there is "old guard leadership" that discourages any new leaders? Or lots of long time leaders and lots of new members, but no pathway between them for new leaders to advance? There should always be more new people coming in than leaders at the top of an organization, so there are lots of new people to grow into leadership positions. Successful organizations are always bringing in new members who have leadership qualities, building relationships with them, understanding their interests and motivations, and finding new roles in the organization that develop their leadership skills and qualities. That is how organizations grow and stay strong.

Healthy Organizations look like this:
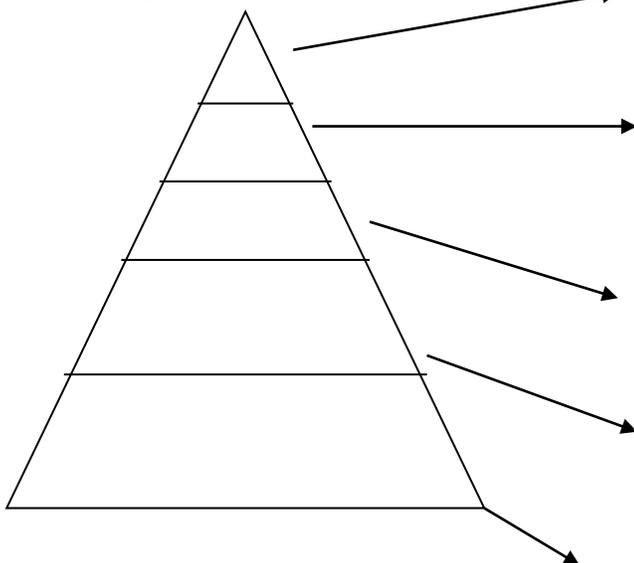
Ultra Experienced leaders:
 Board members, Leaders who chair teams and/or
 committees and in running the organization.

Experienced Leaders
Leaders who are involved in committees, regularly participate in actions, events & membership recruitment

Leaders
Participate and play a role in several events or activities per year

Active Members
Pay annual membership dues and come to one or more activities per year.

Members - Pay membership dues

What Makes a Good Leader?

Leadership Qualities

Leadership qualities are attributes and we can work to develop these characteristics in our emerging leaders .

- *Motivates, inspires*, **& develops others**   A good leader motivates, inspires, and develops others and is recognized as a leader. This is most important – above all, *leaders are people who have followers.*

- *Values & Vision*   Good leaders are clear about their values and have some idea about what they would like the world to be like. A good leader is committed to work to advance those values and vision.

- *Positive Outlook*   Leaders look for solutions to problems instead of focusing on the difficulties.

- *Imagination*   Good leaders rely on their imaginations to find creative solutions to problems, to think of solutions they've never tried before.

- *Confidence* A leader that is confident will understand their weaknesses and ask for help when they need it. They will also stand up for themselves and their organization even in the face of adversity.

- *Trust in people*   Good leaders believe in people. They encourage them, listen to them, and respect them. They see the potential in others and want to help them use that potential to the greatest degree possible. Leaders don't violate the *Iron Rule of Organizing:* Never do for others what they must do for themselves.

- *Critical Perspective*   Leaders are frequently the people who ask "why" and "why not?" A healthy skepticism – especially of unaccountable leaders and institutions – is a useful quality in a leader.

- *Sense of Humor*   A sense of humor acts as a safety valve for anger. It's a way of staying sane during the struggle for social change. Good leaders can sit back and laugh once in a while.

- *Agitation*   A leader stirs things up. You can't get clothes clean without an agitator!

- *Courage*   A leader has courage and is willing to take risks. As the saying goes, "Nothing ventured, nothing gained." A good leader is willing to accept challenges and to work outside their "comfort zone."

- *Passion at injustice*   Passion can propel one to act. Passion can be helpful and constructive when it is focused and aimed for good.

- *Lot's more…!* What are qualities that could be added here that we value in our leaders?

What Makes a Good Leader?

Leadership Skills

Leadership skills tend to be learned – and they are most often learned in an organized way. Not all leaders have all of these skills, but they recognize that they are important and work to develop them (including partnering with others who are strong in skill sets one might want to develop).

Leaders build and nurture community. Leaders have followers.

- ✓ ***Leaders bring people together and nurture community***   Often, people are leaders in their families and among their friends but do not see those skills as leadership skills. They are. Leaders are aware of the people around them and supporting their growth.   Leaders inspire and motivate others because they care about the group, and not just themselves. Leaders build community.
- ✓ ***Recruitment***   All leaders need to be able to recruit others to work with them. Learning the nuts and bolts of a recruitment plan and having experience in recruiting others is an important skill. Leaders also understand "Event Math" – you always have to recruit more people than actually show up!
- ✓ ***Relational Organizing***   One-on-one organizing brings people into deeper relationship with one another and builds stronger more powerful communities and organizations. Ultimately, people get involved because someone they trust and respect invites them to step up and supports them in doing so.
- ✓ ***Listening***   A key skill for all leaders is active listening. Understanding each person's self-interest, motivations, worries, and hopes allows us to match their self-interest with organizational roles and activities to maximize their interest and engagement.
- ✓ ***Membership Training and Development***   Without new members and leaders, organizations get stale. In a healthy, growing organization, all leaders see developing new leaders as a key leadership task and build it into their activities.

Leaders are "unflappable" and relentlessly optimistic!

- ✓ ***Unflappable***   Leaders understand that change takes time and are unflappable in the face of setbacks. Good organizing means being able to hear "no" and to keep asking. Leaders can handle rejection and keep their eye on the prize. Leaders are in it for the long haul.
- ✓ ***Optimistic*** Leaders can see through disappointments and setbacks to stay positive about achieving our vision. Leaders are not easily discouraged. When leaders fail, they try, try again. Leaders bounce back.
- ✓ ***Open to learning***   Leaders see mistakes and disappointments as opportunities to learn. They understand that one can't get ahead without falling behind sometimes. As Samuel Beckett said, "Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better."

Leaders help build their organization.

- ✓ ***Tending the organization*** Leaders are skilled at inviting others to join, reminding them, turning them out, and supporting them to stay involved. Leaders understand that it takes work to build and maintain community, and they are willing to do that work.
- ✓ ***Running and participating in successful meetings***   There is nothing like a badly run meeting to turn off new members. Being able to run efficient meetings where everyone is heard and decisions are made are important leadership skills. Leaders can also participate in a meeting without dominating so that others can shine. Leaders know when to step forward and when to step back.

- ✓ *Democratic Practices*   Community and civic organizations are strongest when they are accountable to their members. Building democratic practices into our organizations and taking the time to follow them is an important leadership skill.
- ✓ *Fundraising & membership*   While we mostly rely on organized people – we also need organized money to be successful. Fundraising is a key skill for a successful grassroots leader. There are many kinds of fundraising.
- ✓ *Planning events* All leaders need to develop skills in setting measurable and realistic goals and following through. Leaders know that event planning takes work and commitment. They are thorough and organized.
- ✓ *Evaluation* We learn by doing. And we learn better when we get feedback on what we did. Strong organizations and leaders have a culture of evaluation where every major activity or event is reviewed to better understand what when well and where we can improve.

Leaders are able to do outreach and communicate about issues.

- ✓ *Talking about issues*   Communicating about issues that we care deeply about can be hard, but it is important if we are going to bring others along with us. Leaders are able to talk to people they know and people they don't know about community issues they think are important.
- ✓ *Reaching out*   Leaders know that to make change, we have to get out there and talk to people. The League is an outward looking organization that wants to improve our democracy, education citizens and make our communities better. To achieve this, we need to reach out to others and engage them in what we do.

Leaders are personally organized and accountable.

- ✓ *Workplans & systems*   Leaders need to be personally organized. They need good systems for keeping track of meetings, following up with people, making calls, etc. Without good systems, follow-through does not happen and commitments not upheld.
- ✓ *Accountability*   A good leader lives up to his/her commitments and is interested in reciprocal relationships. A good leader holds others accountable for their commitments and is willing to be held accountable by others.
- ✓ *Delegate*   Good leaders are able to share power and responsibility. They do not wish or need to do everything or control everything. They believe in collective leadership and encourage and develop the talents of others.

Leaders communicate with members, the media and allies.

- ✓ *Making your voice heard*   Leaders can respond to Action Alerts to contact their public officials on a League issue, or invite and help others to take action.
- ✓ *Media* Understanding what different media outlets look for in a story can help shape our presentations to best insure our story is covered. Remember to explore new media outlets too.
- ✓ *Developing a clear message*   Leaders need to be able to clearly communicate the League vision, to connect this vision with others, and help members learn and celebrate. The key to any good presentation is to take the time to lay out the key points to make and to identify a few stories that best make those points – this is developing a clear message and personal story.
- ✓ *Connecting individual self-interest & organizational vision* Once one has their story – they need to understand the audience and figure out how to connect what is said to that audience. They also want to have the presentation connect back to the broader organizational vision.
- ✓ *Public speaking*   Being a good public speaker requires practice, practice, practice.

Leaders help plan and carry out strategies to implement the League mission

- ✓ *Legislative Process*   Knowing the formal process of how a bill becomes a law is important. Equally important is the understanding of the forces that influence the democratic process.
- ✓ *Electoral Process*   A key piece to achieve our vision is understanding how the electoral process works and what roles the League plays in advancing full participation in this process.
- ✓ *Systemic Change*   Helping other members see connections between issues and how to develop a shared vision for action.
- ✓ *Understanding Power*   Leaders need to use good judgment in making decisions and that requires a clear understanding of the complex relationships of our organization, our allies, and our opponents.

Leaders build relationships with public figures

- ✓ *Building relationships with elected officials*   Leaders understand the League Nonpartisan Policy and our issue positions. Leaders build relationships with elected officials to build impact for the League to help us achieve our goals.
- ✓ *Planning an action*   Actions are where we show our strength and numbers to our members and our targets. Learning how to plan an effective action includes a turn-out plan, developing a message and developing creative tactics.
- ✓ *Deliver a clear message to a target and get a clear answer*   A key leadership skill is to be able to make a presentation on behalf of the League.
- ✓ *Good judgment & preparation*   Being a leader requires one to think on their feet and show good judgment. Role-playing scenarios ahead of time can help ensure that one is prepared for every outcome.

Leaders understand and can help participate in coalitions.

- ✓ *Basics of Coalition Building*   We are stronger when we work together in coalition with allies. Knowing the keys to building and maintaining strong coalition partnerships is an important leadership skill. Leaders understand how coalitions work, and the benefits and tradeoffs of joining them, and they can participate in decision-making around coalition participation.
- ✓ *Relationship building*   Leaders can network with other individuals and organizations to build relationships. By building relationships and joining forces with others, our organization becomes stronger.
- ✓ *Self-interest*   If people are clear on their own – and their organization's – self interest, then they can understand the self interest of allies and opponents, which allows one to make commitments and compromise.

Leadership Qualities & Skills Self-Assessment

The purpose of the self-assessment is to help you or someone you are mentoring identify individual leadership development goals through work in the League. It is a tool to communicate about individual interests – it's not a quiz! It's good if you identify areas where you do not have much experience – we are here to work on exactly that. Ultimately, this helps us to understand what you are interested in learning and doing as part of our League, so that you are having the experience you want to have and growing into even more of the leader we know you are meant to be! After discussing this assessment, it should be clear what you are comfortable doing, what you are not comfortable doing, and what you want to learn how to do.

Name _____ **Date:**_____

Refer to the list of "Leadership Qualities" (p. 6), or brainstorm your own. Remember that qualities are often things that you are born with, but can also be developed.

1. Which three leadership qualities do you consider your strengths? Why?

a._____

_____

b._____

_____

c._____

_____

2. Which two or three leadership qualities would you most like to work on strengthening over the next 18 months? Why?

a._____

_____

b._____

_____

c._____

_____

On the next set of questions, refer back to the list of "Leadership Skills" (p. 7-9). Rank your comfort level with the following skills and activities. Can you complete the activity…

    E = really easily
    C = comfortably
    L = it would be a learning experience
    D = with discomfort, I don't feel ready for that challenge yet

Leaders build and nurture community. Leaders have followers.
    a. I can identify 1 person that I could ask to come to a League event _____
    b. I can identify 15 people that I could ask to come to a League event _____
    c. I can turn people out for a meeting or event and I understand "Organizers Math" (you always have to recruit more people than actually show up) _____
    d. I find I can be a good listener _____
    e. I can do a one-on-one relational organizing meeting with another volunteer _____
    f. I find that I can train and/or mentor other leaders _____

Leaders are "unflappable" and relentlessly optimistic – they can hear "no" and keep asking!
    a. I can ask and ask again – when I hear "no", I stay optimistic _____
    b. I am in it for the long haul – I am not easily discouraged _____
    c. I can handle setbacks and learn from mistakes _____

Leaders help build their organization (people power *and* money power!).
    a. I believe in the power of many – I care about bringing others along with me _____
    b. I can make reminder calls to turn people out for an event or meeting _____
    c. I can report back on a task or project at a group meeting _____
    d. I can facilitate a meeting _____
    e. I can chair a committee _____
    f. I can invite others to speak in a meeting _____
    g. I have served on a board _____
    h. I can host a meeting _____
    i. I can help to plan a League event _____
    j. I can raise money for a cause by helping to plan a fundraising event _____
    k. I can raise money for a cause by asking others for a contribution _____

Leaders are able to do outreach about issues.
    a. I can talk to people I know about issues I care about _____
    b. I can talk to people I *don't* know about issues I care about _____
    c. I can distribute literature about an issue I care about _____
    d. I can make a personal appeal to people about an issue I care about _____
    e. I can make phone calls to talk about an issue I care about _____
    f. I can ask others to do outreach around issues we both care about _____

Leaders are personally organized and accountable – they do what they say they will.
    a. When I say I will do something, I keep my word _____
    b. I have ways to keep track of my commitments _____
    c. I hold others accountable to their commitments _____
    d. I think about which activities I can delegate to others _____
    e. When I delegate to others, I follow up and support them _____
    l. I can evaluate my own role in events or activities _____
    m. I have helped evaluate an event or activity as part of a group _____
    f. I have helped an organization set clear goals and been part of evaluating progress towards meeting those goals over time _____

Leaders communicate with the media and allies.
    a. I can share my personal story _____
    b. I can write a letter _____
    c. I can invite and help others to write a letter _____
    d. I could make press turnout calls for a media event _____
    e. I can speak at a press event _____
    f. I can share my personal story at an event _____
    g. I can make presentation to a group about the League or an issue _____

Leaders build relationships with and hold public figures accountable
    a. I could talk to an elected official about an issue I care about _____
    b. I could testify at a public hearing on an issue I care about _____
    c. I can invite an elected official to a meeting _____
    d. I can invite others to a meeting with an elected official _____
    e. I have participated in an action effort _____
    f. I have helped plan an action effort _____
    g. I have shared my story at a public meeting _____

Leaders help plan and carry out action efforts
    a. I can implement tactics to win on an action effort _____
    b. I can brainstorm tactics as part of an action effort_____
    c. I understand the legislative process _____
    d. I understand the electoral process and how action campaigns work _____
    e. I can participate in a campaign strategy session _____
    f. I understand the relationships that impact work on issues _____
    g. I see the links between different issues and their connections to broader systemic problems _____

Leaders understand and can help participate in coalitions.
    a. I understand how coalitions work, and the benefits and tradeoffs of joining them _____
    b. I can participate in strategic decision-making around coalition participation _____
    c. I can network with other organizations and build relationships _____
    d. I can identify self-interest in other individuals and groups _____
    e. I would be able to prioritize groups to ask to join a coalition _____
    f. I have participated in a coalition _____
    g. I have been a leader in a coalition _____

1. Which two or three leadership <u>skills</u> do you consider your strengths? Why?

a._____

_____

b._____

_____

c._____

_____

2. What two or three leadership <u>skills</u> would you most like to work on strengthening over the next 18 months? Why?

a._____

_____

b._____

_____

c._____

_____

With your coordinator, brainstorm this part together: These are the 2-3 activities I'm going to work on to build the skills we've talked about building over the next 18 months:

a._____

_____

b._____

_____

c._____

_____