



## Strategic Planning Process

Below is an overview and schedule for this 2016 strategic planning process:

- March 2016: Plan the strategic planning process and how to engage stakeholders
- April-June: Engage stakeholders from across the state (League members, partners, donors, funders, etc.)
- July-early August: Compile and analyze stakeholder contributions and post to LWV Minnesota website; click [here](#) to view/download
- Late July: Conduct SWOT workshop based on preliminary stakeholder perspectives to surface additional issues and prepare to develop strategies
- Mid-September: Based on stakeholder input, draft statewide strategic planning goals and key strategies.
- Late September-early October: Gather statewide stakeholder feedback on draft goals and strategies via online survey; compile, analyze, and post results on LWV Minnesota website
- October and beyond: Finalize and collaboratively implement new Strategic Plan

We encourage you to follow progress on the LWV Minnesota website [here](#), which includes additional information and updates throughout the process.

## Grounding Information

On July 26, 2016, League members participated in a SWOT workshop to address this key question: What internal **strengths** and **weaknesses**, and external **opportunities** and **threats**, must the State League account for in order to ensure the commitments listed below.

The content offered by workshop participants was drawn from the *preliminary* analysis of stakeholder contributions. **We encourage you to click [here](#) to view/download that and learn what stakeholders throughout the state have offered so far.**

### Uphold our beliefs (LWV U.S.):

- respect for individuals
- the value of diversity
- the empowerment of the grassroots, both within the League and in communities
- the power to collective decision making for the common good

### Uphold our commitments (LWV U.S.); we will:

- act with trust, integrity and professionalism
- operate in an open and effective manner to meet the needs of those we serve, both members and the public
- take the initiative in seeking diversity in membership
- acknowledge our heritage as we seek our path to the future

### Reflect our core values (LWV U.S.):

- We are a nonpartisan political membership organization.
- We believe that grassroots initiatives and consensus building are the strengths of our organization.

- We believe that our organizational models the principles of good governance.
- We consider well before taking action and prepare well before beginning to act.
- We believe that citizenship requires knowledge, as well as the ability and will to act.
- We believe that the responsibility of good government rests on the shoulders of its citizens.
- We believe that the rights of citizens at home and abroad are interdependent.

**Satisfy our stakeholders' expectations:** Click [here](#) to view/download the *preliminary* analysis of stakeholder contributions provided for SWOT participants.

**Live our mission:** The mission of LWV Minnesota is to encourage the informed and active participation of citizens in government. We take action on selected governmental issues after study and consensus by our membership. We encourage our members to be informed participants in political activity, but as a nonpartisan organization, we neither oppose nor support a political party or candidate even when the office is unaffiliated with a party. That does not preclude us from taking positions on issues and we have taken many positions over the past many decades. Our platform is nonpartisan so that there is no question of our interest in anything other than the general welfare of our democracy and its citizens.

## SWOT Results

Below are the draft results from the SWOT workshop. As noted above, these were based on contributions from League members statewide, and will be another input to the goals and strategies work being done in September.

Watch for notice of the online survey in late September where you can offer your feedback on those draft goals and strategies.

Thanks for your continued interest in this process, and please contact me with any questions at [sstucker@lwvmn.org](mailto:ssstucker@lwvmn.org).



League of Women Voters Executive Director

## **INTERNAL STRENGTHS**

**Strengths are internal characteristics of the LWVMN that place us at an advantage over other organizations, such as successfully applying a core competency or taking advantage of critical skills or capacities. Questions to ask:**

- What advantages does the LWVMN have?
- What do we do better than anyone else?
- What do other organizations or community members see as our strengths?
- What resources can we access?
- What connections or networks can we take advantage of?
- What achievements are we most proud of?

# INTERNAL STRENGTHS: Performance, Importance

Performance				
		Major strength	Minor strength	Low (weakness); see next page
Importance	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name recognition respected</li> <li>• We are a legacy organization that has significant infrastructure in place</li> <li>• Nonpartisan position enables us to engage with all opinions</li> <li>• State League is beneficiary of strong local League work</li> <li>• Engage in statewide education and advocacy on voting rights issues</li> <li>• Factual studies to back up positions</li> <li>• Encouraging action on getting rid of money in politics</li> <li>• Providing citizen education on public policy issues</li> <li>• We do lots of candidate forums</li> <li>• New website increases interest</li> <li>• Member commitment to voter rights</li> <li>• Passionate state committee members</li> <li>• Highly educated members</li> <li>• Good providing opportunities and resources for training (event planning, moderator training)</li> <li>• Safe, supportive space for (white) women to engage in policy issues</li> <li>• Current leadership of board, ED, and President</li> <li>• Experienced ED</li> <li>• New young staff is resourceful</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Keep up the good work</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gathering members on an annual basis (council, convention)</li> <li>• In-depth member communications</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Work harder</i></p>	
	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Always available for help, questions</li> <li>• We don't have to pay for media ads</li> <li>• In some cities we have access to venues (churches/schools) only open to nonpartisan nonprofits</li> <li>• We provide a fun club for people who care</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good membership engagement in nonleague activities (different perspectives)</li> <li>• We have a (free?) space to meet, near Capitol</li> <li>• Good representation in a multi-state issue group (Upper Mississippi River ILO)</li> </ul>	

## **INTERNAL WEAKNESSES**

**Weaknesses are internal characteristics that place the LWVMN at a disadvantage, such as unsuccessfully applying core competencies or not taking advantage of critical skills or capacities. Questions to ask:**

- What could we improve?
- What should we avoid?
- What are other organizations or community members likely to see as our weaknesses?
- Where do we have fewer resources than other organizations?
- Are we completely confident in our core strengths? If not, where are the weakest?

# INTERNAL Weaknesses: Performance, Importance

Performance			
	High (strengths); see prev pg	Minor weakness	Major weaknesses
Importance	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generating equal partnerships with other organizations on voter service activities</li> <li>• Need to ensure universal access to info for League members without good web access or technological skills</li> </ul> <p><i>Work to improve</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organization not sustainable</li> <li>• Lacking Membership, growth, and recruitment implementation plans</li> <li>• Under-represented groups do not have a safe supportive space to engage in policy issues</li> <li>• Lack of racial diversity amongst members limits our importance and relevance (doesn't reflect League values)</li> <li>• Lack of diversity and lack of focus on equity does not uphold core values</li> <li>• Not engaging or recruiting younger people</li> <li>• Poor member, volunteer recruitment &amp; retention</li> <li>• Lack of volunteers to be effective advocates</li> <li>• Development –fundraising, lack of plan</li> <li>• Membership resistance to change</li> <li>• Poor ability to react to issues in the Program of Action</li> <li>• Duration of studies related to timeliness of issue</li> <li>• Do not do enough of advocating on current positions</li> <li>• No explicit commitment to voting equity</li> <li>• Losing our audience and relevance due to slow response and ineffective public communication</li> <li>• Need to hire a policy person on staff to lobby and be present at the Capitol and with our coalition partners</li> <li>• Participating with coalitions to share advocacy positions</li> <li>• Insufficient capacity to effectively react to a major voting rights threat</li> <li>• Lack of clear purpose of state office</li> <li>• Poor alignment of US/MN LL lacking strategies &amp; organizational policies</li> <li>• Poor data collection (local league not providing data to state)</li> <li>• Breakdown of communications between local leagues and State</li> <li>• Not using social media to fullest potential</li> <li>• Fundraising takes staff time</li> <li>• Marketing and communications budget is \$0</li> <li>• Number of staff is too small and too inexperienced to be consistent</li> <li>• Building ownership, needs to be sold</li> </ul> <p><i>Concentrate efforts here</i></p>
	Mediu	<p><i>Possible overkill</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positions on issues too broad for effective advocacy</li> <li>• Insufficient communication to members</li> <li>• LWV not keeping up with technological advancements/pace</li> <li>• LWV spread too thin by focus of time, effort, \$ on many study issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conflicts among members about citizen advocacy</li> <li>• Members too busy</li> </ul> <p><i>Low priority</i></p>

## **EXTERNAL OPPORTUNITIES**

**Opportunities are external factors that the LWVMN can take advantage of to positively affect the organization's capabilities and performance as long as we take advantage of it. Questions to ask:**

- What good opportunities can you spot?
- What interesting trends are you aware of?
- What networks of strategic contacts and resources can help us or offer good advice?
- Are any other organizations failing to do something important? If so, can we take advantage of those gaps?
- Is there a (relevant) need that no one is filling?
- How can we turn our strengths into opportunities?

# EXTERNAL OPPORTUNITIES: Attractiveness, Probability of Success

		Attractiveness		
		High (major opportunity)	Low (minor opportunity)	
Probability of Success	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make more short videos to share voter info</li> <li>• Build coalition with media, other political groups to produce one state-wide voter guide</li> <li>• Partner with orgs that do candidate forums</li> <li>• Coalition with other groups that work with people of color on common issues</li> <li>• Increase Local League outreach to strengthen program and work to increase membership and visibility</li> <li>• Increase collaborations with secondary and higher education to promote Your Vote Your Voice</li> <li>• Providing opportunities for civil discourse</li> <li>• Have an external advisory perspective</li> <li>• LWVMN's get out the Vote to exceed those of Wisconsin</li> </ul> <p><i>Do it!</i></p>	<p><i>Try and do it</i></p>	
	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate with partners to achieve common goals</li> <li>• Establish a writing corps to respond to Letters to the Editor and produce more nimble Op Ed pieces on broad range of League positions</li> <li>• Leveraging partnerships to inform our work with other organizations</li> <li>• Start new leagues to increase visibility and increase membership and diversity</li> <li>• Expand relationships with local high schools and colleges for voter service work and legislative initiatives</li> <li>• Be more visible to public (issue and policy leadership)</li> <li>• Train with white ally groups for mostly white state League to increase cultural competency</li> <li>• Create emerging leader/candidate development include women and people of color</li> <li>• Promote/create programming for civil/civic engagement</li> <li>• Public education on adopted policy issues</li> <li>• Sale of building in order to free up resources</li> <li>• Increase collaboration with diverse organizations</li> <li>• New funding to help with developing inclusion</li> <li>• Capitalize on new interest in younger people in government transparency</li> <li>• Future office space with fewer issues</li> <li>• Maintain communications with new citizens</li> <li>• Increase # of partners especially in disadvantaged communities</li> <li>• Partner to evolve as an organization</li> <li>• Increased relationships with elected officials</li> <li>• Willingness of other organizations to work with LWV on equity centered work</li> </ul> <p><i>Consider doing it</i></p>		<p><i>Think about it</i></p>
	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen relationship of league with new citizens</li> <li>• Strengthen lobbying and policy efforts to address transparency for \$ in politics</li> </ul> <p><i>Not a good idea</i></p>		

## **EXTERNAL THREATS**

**Threats are elements in the environment around the LWVMN that can cause trouble or barriers for us, that could challenge or threaten our capabilities and performance unless we take positive or proactive steps to address them. Take a look at other organizations, current events, and the changing statewide “climate” for possible threats. Questions to ask:**

- What obstacles do we face?
- What are other organizations doing?
- Could any of our weaknesses seriously threaten the LWVMN?
- Is the demand or need for our organization changing?

# EXTERNAL THREATS: Impact or Significance, Likelihood of Occurrence

## Impact or Significance

		High (major threat)	Low (minor threat)
Likelihood of Occurrence	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to ensure universal access to voter info for general public without good web access or tech skills</li> <li>• Perception of some Leagues is that they are partisan</li> <li>• More difficult to get funding and grants</li> <li>• Growing voter apathy, disengaged voters</li> <li>• Increased hostility towards new immigrants (impact voting/new citizens)</li> <li>• Membership organizations losing popularity – Millennials do not join groups</li> <li>• “Our work” is being done by other groups</li> <li>• Other organizations are doing candidate forums and voter registration so we’re less unique and distinct</li> <li>• Changing demographics and other languages – and all our material is in English</li> <li>• Perceived or actual cultural incompetency</li> <li>• Organizations with similar voting related goals but a wider issue base and more diverse membership are more attractive to young people and people of color</li> <li>• Funders funding racially diverse organizations and not LWV or its work</li> <li>• General public perception is LWV is “older, white” and irrelevant</li> <li>• Public/voters have lost interest and trust in electoral process</li> <li>• Loss of interest and hope for “common ground” and common good, commonweal</li> <li>• Public is too busy to get involved in LWV work</li> <li>• Increased competition for member time and talent</li> <li>• Apathy and disaffection regarding anything to do with politics</li> <li>• Money in Politics/ Citizens United</li> <li>• “Norming” of fear, mistrust, dislike and disrespect of political “others” (organizations)</li> <li>• Perception of LWV as “secretly partisan” despite nonpartisan claim</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Take protective action now</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased media and news access makes League activities less relevant (candidate forums)</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Plan ahead and act as needed</i></p>
	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rising cost of putting on candidate forums</li> <li>• Reduced funding for public policy initiative</li> <li>• Public acceptance of eliminating same-day registration</li> <li>• Increasing partisanship and uncivility make League less appealing and relevant</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Keep close watch</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bad PR from other women’s groups regarding potential sale of building</li> <li>• Progressive nonpartisan positions result in candidates challenging impartiality</li> <li>• Anti-voting groups malign League</li> <li>• Single issue organizations are gaining appeal</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Ignore</i></p>