



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF VIRGINIA

Virginia Results of the LWVUS Voter Service Study for the 2016 General Election

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March 15, 2017

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Preface

Last summer the League of Women Voters of the U.S. asked Leagues around the country to collect data on the efforts they made to carry out the League’s mission through the November 2016 Election. That mission states, “The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. We never support or oppose any political party or candidate.”

Questionnaires were sent out and copies of the results of the LWV-VA were forwarded to the state office. We decided to compile the results of the survey to determine how effective our efforts were in making a difference. There may be something to learn from the things we did not do. The results are presented in this report.

Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Preface | 2 |
| Contents | 2 |
| Summary | 3 |
| Voter Registration - Tab I | 4 |
| Voter Education - Tab II | 5 |
| Voter Protection & Get Out the Vote - Tab III | 7 |
| Visibility & Recruitment - Tab IV | 8 |
| Additional Details Submitted | 9 |
| Appendices | 9 |
| Tab I Voter Registration | 10 |
| Tab II Voter Education | 11 |
| Tab III Voter Protection & Get-Out-the-Vote | 12 |
| Tab IV Visibility & Recruitment | 12 |

Summary

By Lois M. Page, Co-President

All thirteen of the Leagues in Virginia participated in this effort to varying degrees. Total voters registered to vote reached 2,100 due to the 2,300 volunteer hours put in at 155 events. All the usual methods and materials were utilized in the effort.

Voter Registration: A variety of registration targets was in place. Leaguers could consider increasing the outreach to some of the other categories listed in the survey, such as in minority communities. The question of whether or not to retain registration information remains. Some organizations use this as a follow-up, to remind people to vote, and there is evidence that it is very effective. For all the hours put in, it would appear as if we did not reach all that many non-registered people. Big question: How can we best make use of the ability to register online? Do we need to have notebook computers on hand as much as possible? Remember, we can be assigned a unique URL so that we can discover how many people we have helped to register online. Then there is the high school voter registration competition which should have kicked off in the fall. Not everyone seems to have been able to do that; we do know that some local school districts discourage outside registration help.

Voter Education: Leagues might consider turning their voter registration drives into a more full-service voting information opportunity. Few Leagues reported providing absentee voting information, for example. We suspect most Leagues did provide more than just registration help, but it might be desirable to advertise and prepare for this more mindfully. Charlottesville had much success with this approach. Providing opportunities to meet and talk with candidates was a mixed bag. It might be desirable to stop calling anything a “debate,” perhaps instead an informal “meet and greet.” Various in-person candidate events have turned toxic in our current political climate, so Leagues will have to be very mindful of setting up policies and procedures that keep the lid on things. Fairfax has held a number of successful “meet and greets” and has even used a local public service TV station to hold a question and answer session with a small audience and controlled environment. Local Leagues might try to make more use of state and national voter education materials. Remind everyone to check out our state Facebook page and [share](#). Also, remember that the state League changed its policy on holding events without all the candidates; locals have the option to do what they want.

Voter Protection and Get Out the Vote (GOTV): All Leagues need to have a Facebook page set up during election season where new entries are made on a regular basis. We all need to find different ways to remind people to vote. The state League paid for and made available several GOTV videos and that could have been distributed more broadly. The number of us working at the polls is significant and future efforts could be made to collect election day stories and lessons learned. Should we be looking into some sort of election day calling effort, providing rides and other help getting people to the polls?

Visibility and Recruitment: Leaguers have obviously learned the value of working with other organizations. The number and variety of partnerships are commendable. The amount of media coverage also was significant, but can always be improved. In addition to Facebook, local Leagues should make every effort to maintain a lively and up-to-date website. Funding election efforts is a challenge for all of us, but we need not be ashamed to ask for help with this. Our efforts are worth community help--we need to repeat this as many times as needed.

VOTER REGISTRATION – Tab I

Number of New Voters were Registered **2,088**

Taking Advantage of On-Line Registration

- Directing voters to state online portal 12 Leagues
- Directing voters to online registration tool VOTE411 10 Leagues
- Purchasing Equipment 1 League
- Other 4 Leagues

Set up URL to register and got credit for all registered;
1400 cards and 400 flyers on how to register; used laptop to
show people how to register

Did Your League Collect Contact Information? **1 League**

How?

- Sign in Sheets
- Voter Registration Logs
- Partner with Inspire VA
- Pledge to Vote and Pledge to register cards

How Will You Follow Up With Them? How?

Email link to website

Did Your League Participate in National Voter Registration Day? **7 Leagues**

Did You Target Any of the Following Communities?

| <u>Organizations/Groups</u> | <u>Registration</u> | <u>GOTV</u> | <u>Absentee</u> |
|--|---------------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Community college/technical/vocational school students | 6 | 6 | 1 |
| High school students | 10 | 2 | 2 |
| Individuals with limited incomes | 10 | 2 | 0 |
| Communities of color | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| New citizens | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| Seniors | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| University/4-year college students | 5 | 0 | 1 |
| Veterans | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Other | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| Felons w/ restored rights | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Women's Groups - 100 Black Women | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Churches | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Latino community | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Vietnamese community | 1 | 1 | 0 |

Participant Comments

Some Leagues reported on the groups that they assisted. These included: veterans who requested information at drives, hospital staff members, charity shops, agencies, low income housing, multicultural festival, letters to all activities directors in retirement homes, and homeless shelters. One League reported attending monthly Naturalization Ceremonies and out voter information. Another effort reported was manning a call-in desk at NBC Channel 12, answering call-in questions about voting, precincts, registrations and looking up registration dates and ballot issues. On-air interview with League members on local radio discussed League, Vote 411, registration dates and ballot issues.

Observations:

Pluses

- Five out of our 13 Leagues participated in the National Voter Registration Day.
- Over 2,000 citizens were registered, one-third came from efforts at new citizen ceremonies.
- Voter registration efforts focused on youth, people with limited income, minorities and seniors, and numerous methods were employed to reach out to voters.
- On-line voter registration was pushed by most Leagues.

Minuses/Improvements Needed

- Leagues did not collect much information on the people they assisted and essentially have no follow-up data or plans to do so. Why might this be desirable?
- Only 5 out of 13 Leagues participated in the National Voter Registration Day.

VOTER EDUCATION – Tab II

How many election-related events, total did your League host? 143

If you produced a voters' guide, what kind was it? 11 Leagues

- Built an online guide using VOTE411's software 8 Leagues
- Made a guide available on your website either as a web page or a PDF 5 Leagues
- Distributed a printed guide on your own or as part of a coalition 4 Leagues
- Partnered with a local newspaper for distribution 4 Leagues
- Produced a guide in an alternative language (which ones (Spanish, Chinese, Tagalog, etc.)) 1 League
- Other (please tell us) 1 League
 - (distributed materials in English & Spanish)

How many voters' guides did your League print? 14,200 (total for all Leagues)

Where did you distribute them?

Leagues

- Libraries 6
- Community Centers 8
- Schools 4 (VCU, Community College)
- Apartment buildings 4
- Transit Stops 1 (Placed message on busses) Businesses 3 (Dr. offices, news agencies,

- | | | |
|------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| | grocery store) | |
| ➤ Door-to-door | 2 (insert in local paper) | |
| ➤ At events | 4 | |
| ➤ Polling places | 2 | |
| ➤ Other | 3 (Naturalization ceremonies) | |

If your League created or distributed any other types of voter education materials, pamphlets or postcards, how many did you distribute? 11,800

Did you use any voter services materials provided by your state League? Which ones?
Six Leagues did - College Student Guide, photos

Did you use any voter services materials provided by LWVUS/LWVEF? Which ones?
Six Leagues used national materials; VOTE411 cards (3), student guides (2), posters from AIGA partnership (1), Vote, educate, advocate, impact (2).

If your League hosted candidate debates or forums, how many did you host?
Seven forums, one of which was streamed on radio and two were on bond issues.

Did your League face any resistance or challenges when planning a debate or forum, from candidates, partners, venues or others?
Four Leagues reported they encountered resistance; One candidate said she could not participate. In most cases the candidates did not respond to League inquiries about participating.

If so, were you ultimately able to host the debate or forum?
All debates were cancelled

Pluses:

- Local Leagues hosted 155 election-related events.
- Most Leagues targeted community college and high school students.
- Leagues assisted voters at a variety of events from multicultural festivals to naturalization ceremonies.
- Over all participation by Leagues was good. As might be expected, the older more established Leagues had more members involved.
- Work with under-served groups was primarily in the larger areas with more diverse populations.
- Informal meet and greet evenings sessions were popular since they do not use a debate format.
- Eleven Leagues produced Voter’s Guides using Vote411 software for a total of 14,000 plus guides that were distributed in a variety of ways.

Minuses/Improvements Needed

- Very few Leagues reported getting out absentee voting information. Some of this may be the result of not collecting this data before the survey was set out.
- Few Leagues made an effort to follow up with people assisted. (Why might this be desirable?)
- Fewer than half used materials provided by state and National. (How can this be improved?)
- Debates and forums were resisted on four occasions and were cancelled.

VOTER PROTECTION & GET OUT THE VOTE – TAB III

Did your League participate in poll observation, Get-out-the-vote, or other Election Day activities? If so, what were those activities?

Three Leagues participated, with one reporting they worked as individuals primarily on registration drives and getting out the vote. one League provided transportation to the polls. In addition, many League members throughout the state served as election officials.

About how many inquiries did you receive from voters at your League phone line/email inbox/office?

Five Leagues reported they received a total of 40 calls. However, one League manned a call-in center and received hundreds of calls

Did you make phone calls, send text messages or send robocalls to voters? If so, how many?

None of our Leagues participated

Did your League take part in any statewide voter protection or election reform efforts? What did you do?

Five Leagues participated, four on redistricting and one on Electoral College reform.

Did your League meet with local elections officials to discuss voter registration & election prep?

Nine Leagues; Voter registration and get out the vote were discussed.

Did your League encounter potentially disenfranchised voters (voter ID challenges, purging, improperly staffed polling place) or other concerning activities in your community? What did you do about it?

Only two Leagues reported in the affirmative: “We did encounter this through the on-line calls with Channel 12. We discussed procedures with them, referred them to chief election official at precinct, also alerted TV station of any problems with precincts so they could cover as news.” The other League’s President received some phone calls.

Pluses:

- Redistricting was a key issue and several Leagues had dialogs on this situation.
- Most Leagues interacted with registrars in their area.

Minuses/ Improvement Needed

- Information was not requested on the number of Leaguers who volunteered as election officials. In the more populated areas this number is probably significant.
- Only 8 out of 13 Leagues participated in Get-Out-the-Vote activities.
- None of the Leagues used phone calls, texting, or robo-calls on election day to GOTV. (However, this has rarely been a League-like activity, but why not?)

VISIBILITY & RECRUITMENT - TAB IV

| | |
|---|--|
| About how many members and volunteers participated in your overall voter service activities this year? | 252 volunteers |
| About how many hours of volunteer time went into your voter service activities this year? | 2,300 hours |
| Did your League recruit new volunteers or members as part of your voter service work this year? | 10 Leagues |
| About how many media (traditional and online) stories highlighted your League's work? | 40 stories |
| Did your League increase your social media presence this year? If so, how? – Most reported through Facebook and one League set up a Facebook account; others expanded the use of website to pass on information. | 6 Leagues |
| With whom did you partner to carry out your voter services work? | 28 partners |
| Registrars School Districts AAUW NAACP AARP Sororities & fraternities Universities & Community colleges Election officials | Muslin Community Center Libraries & Hospitals OneVirginia2021 Inspire VA CASA (Latino organization) Professional Employers Organization (Loudoun Co) Jubilee Center (Intercity Help Group) |

Did your League receive any external funding, such as grants or donations, to carry out your election year work?

2 Leagues received external funding (sources -**Clinch River Foundation**; **LWVUS**); 1 held a spring concert fundraiser

Pluses:

- There were 250 volunteers participating in League activities, giving 2,300 hours of their time to the cause
- Leagues partnered with 28 organizations of all kinds in a effort to keep people informed.
- Most Leagues used their Facebook accounts to inform voters and one League established a new Facebook account.

Minuses/ Improvements needed

- Although two Leagues received outside funding for the effort, most of the monies used came primarily from individual League budgets.

Additional Details Submitted

Charlottesville Area League

- 1) Charlottesville staged a combined event at the downtown mall on Voter Registration Day. It was their 70th anniversary so they had a cake and walked up and down the mall in sandwich boards, encouraged people to post things on the “Free Speech Wall,” and handed out election materials.
- 2) They paid \$100 to put up a banner over the street at the East Market location (farmer’s market) urging people to go to VOTE411 for information.
- 3) Promoted the Car2Vote program, transportation to the polls.
- 4) Provided hours of absentee voting information via their office phone.
- 5) Provided a political science professor questions about the elections.
- 6) Participated in three radio interviews

Fairfax Area League

1. We had 34 events, each probably requiring about 4 hours of one volunteer’s time, 2 volunteers per place.
2. 34 events X 4 hours X 2 volunteers = 176 hours. Then you need to add whatever Kathleen Henry did. At a rate of 5 or 6 voter registrations per week, she signed up 50 at Greenspring, but I don’t know the number of weeks that it took.
3. There were GOTVs at Huntington and Wiehle metro stations. I don’t know how many times the Mount Vernon members go there, but they estimate that they gave out 2000 “What’s on the Ballot.”
4. Next year, it would help if LWVUS gave out the Excel sheet ahead of time so that we would know what they want us to keep track of.

Appendices

Notes on Appendices:

1. Not every League answered all the questions. Numbers are totaled for all Leagues and only the state total are presented. Individual League responses are available at the League office.
2. Additional information offered by Leagues has been added to the end of the questions and enclosed with brackets.
3. Longer notes are designated by asterisks and the note appears at the end of the table.

| Questions | State Totals |
|--|--------------|
| VOTER REGISTRATION | |
| About how many new voters, total, did your League register? | 2,088 |
| If your state has online registration, how did your League take advantage of it? | |
| - Directing voters to your state online voter registration portal | 12 |
| - Directing voters to the online registration tool at VOTE411.org | 10 |
| - Purchasing equipment (ipads, laptops, etc.) for voters to use at your registration drives | 1 |
| - Other (please tell us) | 4 |
| Did your League collect contact information for the individuals you helped register? How? | 1 |
| How will you follow up with them (photocopied the forms, pledge to vote cards, sign-in sheets, etc.? [provided email links to data base; sent emails; sign-in sheets] | |
| Did your League participate in National Voter Registration Day (Sept. 27)? | 5 |
| Did you target any of the following communities for voter registration, get-out-the-vote, or other activities? | |
| Community college/technical/vocational school students | 6 |
| High school students | 10 |
| Individuals with limited incomes | 10 |
| Communities of color [Low income housing, Shopping centers, Charity shops] | 9 |
| New citizens [Naturalization ceremonies] | 7 |
| Seniors | 6 |
| University/4-year college students | 5 |
| Veterans | 2 |
| Other [homeless shelter, multicultural event, hospital staff] | 5 |
| Felons with recently restored rights | 1 |
| Women's Groups, [100 Black Women] | 1 |
| Churches | 1 |
| Latino Communities | 1 |
| Vietnamese Community | 1 |

| Questions | State Totals |
|--|--------------|
| VOTER EDUCATION | |
| How many election-related events, total, did your League host? | 155 |
| If you produced a voters' guide, what kind was it? | |
| Built an online guide using VOTE411's software | 11 |
| Made a guide available on your website either as a web page or a PDF | 8 |
| Distributed a printed guide on your own or as part of a coalition | 5 |
| Partnered with a local newspaper for distribution | 4 |
| Produced a guide in an alternative language (which ones (Spanish, Chinese, Tagalog, etc.)) | 1 |
| Other (please tell us) | |
| About how many voters' guides did your League print? | 14,186 |
| Where did you distribute them? | |
| Libraries | 6 |
| Community Centers | 6 |
| Schools | 4 |
| Apartment buildings | 4 |
| Transit stops | 1 |
| Businesses | 3 |
| Door-to-door | 2 |
| At events | 4 |
| Polling places | 2 |
| Other? Naturalization ceremonies, local League events | 2 |
| If your League created or distributed any other types of voter education materials, pamphlets or postcards, how many did you distribute? | 11,800 |
| Did you use any voter services materials provided by your state League? Which ones? | 6 |
| Did you use any voter services materials provided by LWVUS/LWVEF? Which ones? | 6 |
| If your League hosted candidate debates or forums, how many did you host? | 7 |
| Did your League face any resistance or challenges when planning a debate or forum, from candidates, partners, venues or others? | 4 |
| If so, were you ultimately able to host the debate or forum? | none |
| *Used state League VA constitutional amendment pros and cons on VOTE411.org; Determined candidate Q's for 3 Congressional Districts! | |
| ***We also designed a Vote 411 Information card and a Voting in Virginia card for real estate agents to give out, | |
| ****We also publish Facts for Voters every year. | |

| Questions | State Totals |
|---|--------------|
| VOTER PROTECTION & GET-OUT-THE-VOTE | |
| Did your League participate in poll observation, Get-out-the-vote, or other Election Day activities? | 3 |
| If so, what were those activities? | 3 |
| About how many inquiries did you receive from voters at your League phone line/email inbox/office? | 40 |
| Did you make phone calls, send text messages or send robocalls to voters? If so, how many? | 0 |
| Did your League take part in any statewide voter protection or election reform efforts? What did you do? | 5 |
| Did your League meet with local elections officials to discuss voter registration & election prep? | 9 |
| Did your League encounter potentially disenfranchised voters (voter ID challenges, purging, improperly staffed polling place) or other concerning activities in your community? What did you do about it? | 2 |
| * We did encounter this through the online calls with Channel 12. We discussed procedures with them, referred them to chief election official at precinct, also alert TV station of any problems with precinct so they could cover as news. | |
| ** Provide info and helped felons with restored rights register. | |



| Questions | State Totals |
|--|--------------|
| VISIBILITY & RECRUITMENT | |
| About how many members and volunteers participated in your overall voters' service activities this year? | 252 |
| About how many hours of volunteer time went into your voters' service activities this year? | 2,306 |
| Did your League recruit new volunteers or members as part of your voters' service work this year? | 10 |
| About how many media (traditional and online) stories highlighted your League's work? | 40 |
| Did your League increase your social media presence this year? If so, how? | 6 |
| With whom did you partner to carry out your voter services work? | 28 |
| [See Narrative Report] | |
| Did your League receive any external funding, such as grants or donations, to carry out your election year work? | 1 |
| *Democrats willing to comment on the election. We did and their conversation was on NPR. On social media---we used Facebook & our website. | |