

# Great League Ideas!

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All submission submitted by April 15 will be shared with all delegates at the LWVC Convention. In addition, 5-10 projects will be chosen to be part of a convention workshop.

Local League name \*

LWV of Alameda

Name of project \*

Democracy Matters: LWVA/CoA High School Civics Scholarship Program

Contact person \*

Alice Fried

Email address for more information \*

alicefried89@gmail.com

Brief description of project. Please include the resources used, a list of any community partners, and the results of the project. Please be brief - one page! \*

In partnership with the College of Alameda, LWVA has created the Democracy Matters: LWVA/CoA High School Civics Scholarship Program to help students become informed, critical thinkers and participants in Making Democracy Work. This lively educational program encourages students to develop their communication skills in competition with their peers by analyzing and taking positions on key public policy issues. Debate topics are selected from positions taken by the League of Women Voters. Winners receive a \$1000 scholarship and the runner up receives \$500 All participants earn League recognition and a unit/credit in Communications from the College of Alameda.

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Local League name \*

LWV of Alameda

Name of project \*

Dedicated Voter Registration URL

Contact person \*

Ken Werner

Email address for more information \*

kpclub@yahoo.com

Brief description of project. Please include the resources used, a list of any community partners, and the results of the project. Please be brief - one page! \*

Voter registration is what brought me to the LWV of Alameda. Shortly thereafter I became the co-chair of Voter Service, focusing on the registration side while my co-chair focused on voter education. Though I was successful in registering new voters, it always struck me as very "20th century" that potential voters had to fill out a lengthy affidavit and mail it in. I asked about registering on-line and was told to direct interested people to the Secretary of State's (SOS) or Voters Edge websites and they could register there.

This seemed rather indirect. Then once I found out that our League would get a small honorarium for registering voters, I was doubly interested in streamlining the process. I asked if we could have a dedicated URL so that the SOS would know voters had registered through our League. The Alameda County Registrar of Voters said no one did it that way. That was when I knew I needed to change the game. I presented this information to the LWV of Alameda board and they voted to make it an approved League Project.

I called the SOS's office and made the request. They told me it had never been done before. I asked, "Why?" They didn't have an answer, so I asked them to see if we could make it happen. After many months of calling back to see where we were, finally, on February 12, 2019, we received a letter beginning, "We have reviewed and approved your request for a Unique Online Registration URL".

A very happy day! We also found out that, not only were we the only League in California to have a dedicated URL, but they thought we were the only one in the U.S. as well. The Alameda League's Communications Director modified our URL into both a short "Bitly" address as well as a QR.

We also get a report from the SOS telling us how many voter registrations occurred each month, so we know the number of registrations we completed. Our first stop was to provide online voter registration information to our School District for high school students turning eighteen. As we get closer to the primaries in March 2020, we anticipate that we will see a steep spike in our monthly registration totals.

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Local League name \*

League of Women Voters of Orange Coast

Name of project \*

Mentor Program for new members

Contact person \*

Christine Moore

Email address for more information \*

marychristinemoore@gmail.com

**Brief description of project. Please include the resources used, a list of any community partners, and the results of the project. Please be brief - one page! \***

The goal of the League of Women Voters of Orange Coast is to give every new member a mentor, not only to keep each of them as members, but, more important, as engaged, committed members. Many of them have later assumed leadership roles.

The idea of having mentors for new members is certainly not original. Our League adopted the practice from the San Juan Capistrano League—which was incorporated into our League a few years ago. Other Leagues probably have mentor programs. However, based on our experience, we'd recommend a mentorship program for every League.

Without mentor programs, new members might receive a more cursory welcome at meetings and be uncertain about how they might fit in. With a mentor, who is chosen because of geographic proximity and/or matching interests, they become part of the League.

Here are some examples of the importance of the mentorship program for the Coast League in Orange County.

Janet Dye's mentor, Communications Chairman, Patty Santry, brought her onto the communications committee. Now Jan manages our website to perfection. (Just take a look: <http://orangecoast.org>.) Later, Patty also brought in Nathan Gold who co-manages the website with Jan.

President Rebecca Newman's "mentee," Anne Stone and Secretary Beth McConaughy's new member, Wendy Ralph, have together just accepted the co-chairmanship of the Coast Membership position.

Rebecca Newman also worked with new member Kathleen Montgomery, who became a representative on the U.S. League's UN delegation.

Voter Service Chairman, Michele Musacchio, brought in Tina Stellhorn, Christine Marx and Julie Tapp all of whom contributed significantly to the outstanding Voter Service effort in the last election.

Social Policy Chairman, Christine Collins, is mentoring Carole Duncan and Joanna Link who both live in the great Laguna Woods community with her.

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Local League name \*

League of Women Voters of Palo Alto

Name of project \*

GOTV Postcards & Youth Vote

Contact person \*

Aisha Piracha-Zakariya

Email address for more information \*

aishapz2016@gmail.com



**Brief description of project. Please include the resources used, a list of any community partners, and the results of the project. Please be brief - one page! \***

Ahead of the November 2018 General Election, the LWV of Palo Alto designed postcards which we used to write to registered voters, reminding them to make sure they go and vote on November 8, 2018. The LWV of Palo Alto held postcard writing parties with our members to write to a very targeted group: youth voters we had registered through the year during our high school voter registrations. This resulted in greater voter engagement of our youth, and we are continuing to use the GOTV (get our the vote) postcards in our VR efforts.

The intention was to not only provide a written reminder to go vote, but to help voters become informed about the issues and candidates. We designed the postcard to include the URL to votersedge.org, and included a QR Code on the front so that people (e.g. a younger and tech-savvy audience) could easily scan the code and instantly get to the Voter's Edge web page for important information on how and where to vote, e.g. "get the facts before your vote"! Here is a link to the postcard sample shared on our website, and we will be happy to share a generic version with CA Leaguers (we did so last fall as well!): <https://www.lwvpaloalto.org/uploads/1/2/1/9/121999310/published/gotv-postcard2018.png?1555201917>.

Our League members wrote postcards to the over 400 high school students we had registered throughout the year. By purchasing voter lists from the Santa Clara County Registrar of Voters, we parsed out those who were eligible to vote on November 8, 2018 and used their registration information to mail out reminder postcards. Our members personalized the messages, encouraging them to go and vote. They also reminded them to do so even if they had gone off to college and opted to vote by mail. The responses we received from many in our community who either received the postcards themselves or on behalf of their young adult children was gratifying, especially as many said how touched they were that League members who had been in the classrooms registering many youth, had also personally reached out to each to remind them to go and vote - and truly make democracy work!

Making the strong connection of registering to vote and being an informed voter with VOTING is something our League is proud to have innovated and implemented as a strong Voter Services practice. We will continue to use this innovative and creative strategy, and have also been using the postcards during our 2019 Voter Registrations at the high schools, by having students write themselves to remind them to go vote in the March and November 2020 elections. These postcards will be mailed by our League just before March 2020 to the newly registered, eligible voters...the same way you get those handy reminders from your dentist...and serve as their reminder to go vote!

The LWV of Palo Alto is proud of our efforts and we feel that our GOTV efforts have had an

impact on youth participation, education and involvement in the 2018 election. We are happy and excited to continue to share our materials and projects with many more of our fellow League members!

We also are proud of the nifty social media signs which we made, asking people to vote in November (used at the our Kick-off), where people could take photos and share/post on social media to get people excited about voting!

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Local League name \*

Fremont, Newark, Union City

Name of project \*

Parkland Voter Movement

Contact person \*

Julie Dunkle

Email address for more information \*

Mir2646@gmail.com

**Brief description of project. Please include the resources used, a list of any community partners, and the results of the project. Please be brief - one page! \***

The Parkland Voter Movement is a grass roots effort to support teens to register other teens to vote. In 2018, over 3,000 teens in Fremont/Newark/Union City were registered as new voters and many voted in the 2018 midterm elections.

The creation of the project came from a local mom/son duo who were inspired by the well-informed, amplified and silenced voices of Parkland youth. The non-partisan, non-issue effort is led by teams of youth who organize voter registration drives, usually at their schools with multiple classes, each period of the day. They congregate for education on the history and importance of (youth) voting while participating in a few fun activities. and then they opt-in to register to vote. Adult (LWV) volunteers walk the students through the (opt-in) registration process.

In addition to receiving the coveted "I registered to vote" sticker and a Voters Edge bookmark, each student receives a PVM wristband with the tagline: Register-Recruit-Vote.

Collaborative Partners - The most critical partner for the PVM is the League of Women Voters of FNUC, especially as the League serves as a 501-c-3 and host the website. Also paramount for PVM success are all the teens (~50) and (~100) adult volunteers. In addition, the leadership of the school districts and school boards were super helpful. Partnerships with the American Muslim Voice (ethnic diversity), the Tri-City Health (homeless) and the Mission Peak Unitarian Church (community development) exemplified just a few of so many collaborators with similar goals.

The PVM is a wonderful model for other leagues as it is so easy to replicate and implement. There are many resources on the PVM website that leagues can download and use: presentations to the students, slides on walkthroughs or registration process, ways to engage schools/youth, detailed plans for students on how to organize a school reg drive, etc. LWV volunteers often report feeling very energized by the students enthusiasm and by the critical value of the effort.

Critical Elements for Success -

- Engagement commitment from LWV chapter and specific measurable goals
- Collaboration with student, school, district and community orgs for access, volunteers and funding.
- Enthusiasm, creativity (carrying beyond into 2020 to do youth centric GoTV activities like Flash Mob Voting), ability to connect with youth (and get youth to become LWV members) and educators.
- Some funding for PVM wristbands to help market and spread the program

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Local League name \*

League of Women Voters of Oakland

Name of project \*

Providing Civic Engagement Services to the Re-entry Community

Contact person \*

Elaine Ginnold

Email address for more information \*

Eginnold@yahoo.com

**Brief description of project. Please include the resources used, a list of any community partners, and the results of the project. Please be brief - one page! \***

According to the John Jay Prison Reentry institute, successful re-entry from the carceral system into the community depends on how well formerly incarcerated individuals are able to meet six basic life needs: livelihood, residence, family, mental and physical health, criminal justice compliance, and social and civic engagement.

In July 2017, the League of Women Voters of Oakland (LWVO) received a two-year grant from the Alameda County Probation Department's Community Capacity Fund (Grant) (LWVCEF as Fiscal Sponsor). The purpose of the Grant is to assist the LWVO to build its capacity to work with reentry CBOs to deliver effective voter education programs and services to formerly incarcerated individuals and thus help meet their sixth basic life need, for social and civic engagement.

In 2018-19, as part of our work on the Grant, League members interviewed representatives of 8 community-based organizations (CBOs) that provide direct services to people entering the community from the carceral system. Two of the eight are restorative justice programs for youth ages 18-24. Members also met and interviewed representatives of other organizations such as the Probation Department, Public Defenders Office and the ACLU to obtain background information about the needs of people who are formerly incarcerated. Our goal was to learn about the services provided by CBOs in Oakland and to find out how the League could effectively work with them on civic engagement programs for the people they serve.

In the course of this work, and in line with the learning we gained from our field work (available upon request), the League distributed voter registration forms and voter education information to CBOs, including League publications such as Who Represents Oakland and Your Voting Rights; provided information about current elections to CBOs; made presentations at CBO reentry community events about voting, the pros and cons of ballot measures, and ranked choice voting; distributed Easy Voter Guides; discussed issues such as the importance of voting, reasons for voting, the social impact when people don't vote. We also trained and offered stipends to several formerly incarcerated individuals to provide information about voting and the pros and cons of ballot measures to others in their organizations. Finally, we participated in voter registration rallies and events sponsored or attended by reentry organizations and CBO representatives.

In addition to this work for the community, since 2016 we have raised the awareness of our members about the challenges and needs of the reentry population by disseminating information in the form of articles in the Voter, speakers at programs and at last year's annual meeting.

A comprehensive description of all our re-entry activities, internal and external, is available upon request.

As a result of work under the Grant, the League is better equipped to offer a civic engagement program targeted to reentry CBOs and the people they serve. We plan to update our printed materials to focus on the special voter registration requirements of the reentry population. We have organized a Reentry Task Force to continue and hopefully expand on the work with reentry CBOs we started under the Grant. Other objectives are to continue disseminating reentry knowledge to our membership and to explore ways to encourage formerly incarcerated individuals to learn about elections and voting from League resources and take this information back to their peers.

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Name of project \*

Mentor Program

Contact person \*

Christine Moore

Email address for more information \*

marychristinemoore@gmail.com

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Rebecca Newman also worked with new member Kathleen Montgomery who joined the LWVUS observer team for the 63rd United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, last month.

Voter Service Chairman, Michele Musacchio brought in Tina Stellhorn, Christine Marx and Julie Tapp, all of whom contributed significantly to the outstanding Voter Service effort in the last election.

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