



League of Women Voters of Massachusetts

Statement of Strategy

Approved by LWVMA Convention May 21, 2011

The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts (LWVMA) is at a crossroads and needs to decide what work we will pursue, along with which operating models will be effective in fulfilling our mission and vision for the future.

A Strategic Planning Committee studied and identified current trends and referenced our traditions, initiatives and activities to advise our members about what could be the future vision and plan of operations for the LWVMA.

Our Approach

In June 2010, the LWVMA Board of Directors voted to develop a strategic plan with an implementation horizon of three years (fiscal years 2012–2014). LWVMA Board Member Terry Yoffie was appointed as Strategic Planning Committee Chair. Over the summer of 2010, technical support was arranged with the support of Monitor Group, Inc.,¹ through Tammany Hobbs Miracky. Other state Leagues were interviewed, and their experiences considered, in crafting LWVMA work plans. A working committee was recruited through fall 2010.² The Strategic Planning Committee began its work in October 2010 and defined its goals:

- Study ourselves and the environment in which we work.
- Identify activities and initiatives we want to continue or develop.
- Identify activities and initiatives we want to discontinue.

Field work and primary and secondary research commenced online, in the LWVMA archives and with other state Leagues. A web site was developed for the committee to use as a repository for documents, ideas and online resources. Focus groups with LWVMA members and interviews with external organizations and individuals were scheduled and completed by March 2011. Five work groups were defined, each working on an aspect of the LWVMA's strategic plan:

- Organization and governance.
- Marketing, membership and communications.
- Revenues, expenses and sources of funding.
- Program, advocacy, Voter Service and civic engagement.
- External environment as it relates to LWVMA and its future.

Common themes were identified and are presented in this document. Based upon the results of our focus groups, external interviews and work done by the groups, both analytically and in our group working sessions, we identified a vision for the LWVMA and reaffirmed the mission statement. We also clarified what we will pursue and what we will not.

¹ Monitor Group, Inc., Cambridge, MA. See www.monitor.com and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monitor_Group. Special thanks to Ruthanne and Joe Fuller for their support and introductions to Tammany Hobbs Miracky, who led us through the thickets of strategic planning technique and practice.

² See Appendix for committee members and what their group assignments were.

Common Themes - Internal and External Reviews

Common Themes - Internal (based on results of LWVMA focus groups and 2010 LWVMA membership survey)

- Need for a strategic plan.
- LWVMA mission reaffirmed.
- Voter Service is our most successful local program and of which local Leagues are most proud.
- Local Leagues looking for more support from LWVMA.
- LWVMA has long term, loyal members.
- Declining membership since the eighties has led to declining PMP revenue.
- Membership is aging.
- Communications (within LWVMA and with the local Leagues) need improvement.
- Leadership development needs improvement.
- Advocacy needs strengthening and focus.
- Programs are not offered or well-distributed geographically. Studies are not staffed and cannot be completed.
- Technology is our servant, not our master; we need to take advantage of technological tools to organize and recruit members, improve communications, get our committee work done and effect change.

Common Themes - External (based on views of League from external organizations and individuals)

- There is high certainty about our good work in Voter Service.
- Advocacy – non-members are not sure about what issues LWVMA follows and advocates. Many say they don't know the League or haven't worked with the League in the past five to ten years.
- LWVMA has weak links with MA legislature and executive branches and with advocacy organizations.
- Past collaborations with coalitions have not been effective.
- LWVMA should stick to its strengths in Voter Service and government oversight. All believed that we were uniquely positioned to carry on the role of good government because of our high standards and nonpartisan stance, and as overseers of good government. Our work in Voter Service and government oversight was noted as important for assisting other advocacy groups to be effective at the local government level.
- There is great respect for our studies and process, and our care in getting it right.

Vision and Mission

A Clear Vision

The LWVMA, in partnership with its local Leagues, will act to inspire good government and transparency so that government is responsive to the needs of its people. We will do this by providing infrastructure, information and tools to support local Leagues as they work to energize an informed citizenry to participate actively in the political process, and work to ensure transparency and good government.



With a Focused Mission

The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts, 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.

Goals***Create strong connections between LWVMA and local Leagues through communications and leadership development***

- LWVMA to develop an external and internal communications plan and proceed to implement this plan by the end of fiscal 2012.
- LWVMA to establish a Presidents' Council that will have up to two seats on the LWVMA Board of Directors and will serve to strengthen relationships between LWVMA and local Leagues. LWVMA will establish a network of local League presidents.
- Priority in year one (fiscal 2012) will be to implement strong administrative systems. A board portfolio will be added to oversee operational issues for LWVMA.
- Membership and Training to work with LWVUS staff and LWVMA Membership Committee to implement the Membership Recruitment Initiative (MRI) in Massachusetts starting in summer 2011. Primary goals are to add and support new members, identify local League training needs and run training opportunities in the regions.
- LWVMA will initiate a review of demographic targets looking for social and political engagement. A report on expansion will be presented by Membership and Training to the board by fiscal 2013.

Focus Program and Action and Voter Service activities

- Program and Action and Voter Service to work together to accomplish the mission of an informed citizenry and an effective government. Their proposed plan and goals will be presented for member approval by the end of fiscal 2012.
- Voter Service/Citizen Education will be a priority. Emphasis will be placed on the local Leagues' strengthening their ability to provide Voter Service/Citizen Education. LWVMA Voter Service will also coordinate area and regional activities.
- LWVMA to reclaim our position as provider of candidate forums and debates.
- Program and Action to have no more than three primary advocacy issues. Those issues that are not the top three priorities will continue to be followed by our specialists.
- Program and Action and Voter Service to coordinate programs to accomplish the mission and vision. Looking forward, Program and Action and Voter Service will operate together to support the priorities set by the members.
- Program and Action to build strong relationships with coalition partners and officials of the legislative and executive branches of local governments and with all branches of state government to accomplish LWVMA goals of good government and transparency.

Change the funding model and expand revenue sources, while limiting expenditures

- LWVMA Board to commit to expanding funding sources with all board members participating in fund development. A development plan will be created and approved by the board by July 2011.
- LWVMA Board to commit to activities that are self-funding and returning revenue to the LWVMA.
- LWVMA Board to commit to reducing expenditures.
- LWVMA Board to commit to finding new revenue sources.
- LWVMA Board to commit to education of the board in reading and understanding financial statements, as well as becoming informed about risk management.

Shift LWVMA Board structure and operations to implement strategic priorities

- LWVMA to study and consider board design, organization and expansion. A plan will be presented to membership by the end of fiscal 2012.
- LWVMA Board to implement the strategic plan and provide periodic reporting to members.
- LWVMA Board to institute processes for managing board operations. This would include explicit objective setting for each board member with an operational portfolio, monthly progress updates and annual individual and collective evaluations.
- LWVMA to implement structural changes to support the effective implementation of the strategy.
- LWVMA Nominating Committee to implement a board training and orientation program to assure that sitting board members are supported in their roles.

APPENDIX - WHO WE ARE - STRATEGIC PLAN COMMITTEE MEMBERS**Chair:**

- Terry Yoffie, Newton; LWVMA Board Member, LWVMA Strategic Plan Committee Chair, LWVMA Finance Committee Chair

Technical Advisors:

- Tammany Hobbs Miracky, Newton; Monitor, Inc.
- Amy Yoffie, Westfield, NJ; President, iReminder

Technical Reviewer:

- Carin Kale, South Hamilton; President, LWV Hamilton-Wenham

Steering Committee:

- Jo-Ann Berry, Acton; LWVMA Voter Service, Citizen Education/Voter Service Committee, former LWVMA Board Member
- Anne Borg, Newton; Leadership Team, LWV Newton
- Jean Childs, Wellesley; President, LWV Wellesley
- Ellen Grody, Newton; Member, LWV Newton
- Elizabeth Handler, Needham; LWVMA Budget Committee Chair
- Marcia Hirshberg, Westwood; LWVMA Acting President
- Carin Kale
- David LeBouef, Worcester; Member, LWV Worcester
- Tammany Hobbs Miracky
- Carole Pelchat, Haverhill; LWVMA First Vice President, LWVMA Program and Action Chair
- Marilyn Peterson, Acton; President, LWV Acton Area
- Karen Price, Needham; President, LWV Needham
- Stefani Traina, Andover; LWVMA Voter Service, Citizen Education/Voter Service Committee Chair, former LWVMA Board Member
- Eva Valentine, Haverhill; LWVMA Treasurer
- Amy Yoffie
- Terry Yoffie

Working Groups:

Group One - Organization and Governance: Anne Borg, Marcia Hirshberg, Carin Kale, Karen Price

Group Two - Membership, Market Development and Communications: Ellen Grody, David LeBouef, Wendy Manz (Lexington; LWVMA Board Member), Terry Yoffie

Group Three - Funding, Budget and Development (Donor and Grant Development): Elizabeth Handler, Marcia Hirshberg, Eva Valentine, Terry Yoffie

Group Four - Program Development, Voter Service and Education: Jo-Ann Berry, Tammany Hobbs Miracky, Carole Pelchat, Stefani Traina, Jackie Wolf (Amherst; LWVMA Board Member)

Group Five - Context: Carin Kale, Tammany Hobbs Miracky, Terry Yoffie

Online Focus Groups: Marilyn Peterson, Amy Yoffie, Terry Yoffie



Face-to-face Focus Groups: Jo-Ann Berry, Betsy Bray (Harwich; Membership Chair, LWV Cape Cod Area), Joan Craig (Natick; Member, LWV Natick), Marcia Hirshberg, Tammany Hobbs Miracky, Carole Pelchat, Marilyn Peterson, Karen Price, Stefani Traina, Eva Valentine, Amy Yoffie, Ariel Yoffie, Terry Yoffie