



LWMA Voter Service Committee

Maximizing Voter Service with
Multi-League Candidates' Events

Getting Started . . .

1. Start early.
2. Meet regularly and frequently.
3. Assign responsibilities: chair/ co-chairs, minutes, others see below
4. Set calendar early.
5. Line up media first, then choose moderator to get maximum coverage and audience.
6. Choose moderators with care.

. . . Getting Started

1. Use committee members' strengths & interests.
2. Keep frequent contact with campaigns.
3. Set the event formats.
4. Include all the Leagues in the district in some way.
5. Put out frequent press releases and media advisories.
6. Understand that there will be bumps in the road, usually without warning.
7. Consider including independent candidates in pre-primary forums.

Start Early

- Email all local Leagues in the Congressional district & invite them to an organizational meeting.
- Ask participating Leagues to obtain approval to expend funds, if necessary.
- Determine how many events and what format.

Set Meeting Ground Rules

- Be willing to make decisions and stick to them even with a changing group
- Encourage substitutions to keep every League represented
- Frequency of meetings
- Conference calls or in person and whether to alternate
- Share minutes as soon as possible

Meet Regularly & Frequently

- Set up a comprehensive email contact list so that every participating League is included.
- Establish key goals and objectives at first meeting, including how and how often to meet.
- Meeting every 2 weeks helps keep everyone on task and in the loop.
- Pick a central location to meet in person. Keep meetings to 90 minutes.
- Conference calls are a good option. Keep calls to 1 hour.

Set Calendar Early

- Set locations and calendar as soon as possible.
- Once dates are set, notify the potential candidates verbally and in writing.
- If possible, have the campaign manager rather than the scheduler confirm the dates.

Line Up Media First

More options than ever!

- Try to get nearest city media involved.
- Try to get a TV or radio political reporter, anchor or other recognized journalist or academic as moderator, if possible.
Nonpartisanship is a must.
- Explore cable TV, radio, and internet options.
 - Local cable streaming, Wicked Local, Patch.com, facebook events, twitter, etc.

Venues

- Parking
- Accessibility
- Expenses:
 - Rental
 - custodial expense
 - Security / outside detail, inside
- Size – better to fill a smaller room than have an empty large space
- Consider cable studios, local colleges, school auditoriums, other public buildings

Choose Moderators With Care

- Using a well-known person can draw an audience. Prepping moderator is key. Know their skills.
- Don't choose anyone who is likely to endorse a candidate or be involved in any campaign, including contributing to any candidate in the race.
- Ask potential moderators about this directly.

Use Strengths & Interests

- Match skills and interests to keep people connected and engaged, and get the best results.
- A great opportunity to involve League members in what they do best.
- A great opportunity to connect local Leagues with one another.
- 2007 group still connected and active in League today.

Volunteer Tasks

- Developing calendar and schedule
- Lining up locations for forums
- Developing media list
- Writing and Sending press releases and media advisories
- Writing letters to candidates
- Campaign contact: main contact and back-up
- Media contact: main contact and back-up

Volunteer Tasks

- Moderator contact: main contact and back-up
- Developing paper and social media outreach
- Developing candidate and moderator packets
- Developing schedule /timing for forums
- Collecting questions for forums and writing final questions
- Lining up volunteers at events

Frequent Contact With Campaigns

- Designate one person 'candidate wrangler.'
- Establish relationship with campaign.
- Verify event dates early and reconfirm periodically.
- Communicate with campaign regularly.
- Maintain essential contact information for all relevant campaign personnel.

Develop Format

- Keep length to 90 minutes. Attention spans are short!
- Determine topic areas to cover.
- Consider various formats.
- Consider number of candidates, how many questions, etc. Time to the minute including asking question, answer, response.
- Decide whether to include opening and closing statements.
- How to handle questions: advance, live, League, email, etc.
- Include time for moderator to explain rules and format.
- Include time for LWVMA president to welcome everyone & explain the non-partisan policy.

Include All Leagues in District

- Every League can be involved in some way.
- Publicizing the event(s).
- Recruiting volunteers.
- Soliciting questions for candidates.
- Contacting local cable stations.
- Attending the event(s).

Frequent Press Releases

- Set schedule for putting out press releases and calendar information. Use electronic media: Patch.com, etc.
- Include whether candidates have or have not confirmed their participation.
- Designate 1 or 2 people as media contact so that consistent information is provided.
- The media contact should be readily available to answer questions quickly.
- Media spokesperson **MUST** realize that anything she says to a reporter may be quoted and attributed to her as a representative of the LWV.

Bumps in the Road

- There WILL BE BUMPS IN THE ROAD that usually happen without warning.
- Some examples include:
- Summer events=vacations. Be sure the moderator is really available on your date.
- Confirm everything in writing (email is fine).
- Candidates can withdraw from the race at any time, causing a shuffle in the format.
- Have several format & script scenarios ready for last minute changes.
- Be prepared to explain the League's 'empty chair' policy.
- There is no way to prepare for everything. Be willing to roll with the punches.

Tips & Resources

- Read the LWVMA Voter Service Guide.
- Policy for Candidates Debates and Forums is available at <http://lwvma.org/candidateforumspolicy.shtml>
- Consult LWVMA Moderators' Handbook.
- LWVMA Voter Service Committee Facilitators:
Jo-Ann Berry joannberry@verizon.net
Nancy Brumback nancy.brumback@gmail.com
Stefani Traina steftraina@verizon.net
- Request a copy of the Voter Service packet.

Other Ideas

- Cable TV in studio – together or separately
 - Materials available
- Conference Call line / set up own?

Do's and Don'ts

- Placement of candidate info and buttons
- Name pronunciations
- No stand-ins

handouts

- PowerPoint
- Leagues by district
- Policy for candidate debates and forums
 - Empty chair policy
 - Nonpartisan policy
- Candidate agreement letter
- Items from Newton list

Successful Events

- Special Election US House district 5 in 2007
- US Senate: preprimary Nov 2009 Amherst
- US House: Districts 1, 3, 4, 5, 10 in 2010