

Making Democracy Work Award

As you are aware, the Membership Recruitment Initiative includes several major program components. These are designed to keep your League in the spotlight in your community throughout the year. One of these events is a signature award program. This is a visibility mechanism; it is a way to get media attention and provides your League with an opportunity to talk about its good work.

These recommendations are meant to be a *guide*, not a mandate. As with so many aspects of the MRI, we know that “one size does not fit all.” You know your community, your League members and what will succeed in your area. This guide is offered as a resource; it is not meant to limit creative approaches or interfere with existing successful programs.

While we are offering great latitude in most areas of the program, there are certain aspects of the program that are not flexible. In order to ensure success, we strongly encourage Leagues to employ the same name for the award, use the same eligibility criteria for awardees, and most importantly, do extensive community outreach to identify nominees and to promote the award.

Overview

The vision for the LWV Making Democracy Work Award is that local Leagues will present a community leader with an award once each year. The award was initially crafted to coincide with the League of Women Voters’ birthday, February 14 to maximize visibility; however the award can be given at any time during the League calendar. We want to brand the award as our own and in terms that resonate with prospective members. Therefore, all Leagues should refer to it as the LWV’s Making Democracy Work Award. For simplicity, we will refer to it as the MDW Award throughout this section and in later communications.

This award will recognize a woman between the age of 50 and 65 who is/has been in the work force and contributed to the community in a meaningful way. These criteria are important because we want to make connections with individuals who are part of the membership recruitment initiative’s target audience.

Each League should review the program outlined and recommendations made in this memo and feel free to make adjustments as necessary. For example, it is not required that a League host an event (at which the award is presented) for this effort to be “successful” (i.e. raising the League’s profile among members of the target audience.) This program should be tailored according to the resources available to each League.

The LWV Making Democracy Work Award program has been designed to both highlight the value of membership to potential League members, as well as to increase the visibility of the League’s contributions to the community.

Benefits of the MDW Award

As this is a new program for the League, we thought that it would be helpful for League leaders to understand the benefits to both the League and participants.

To Leagues

By sponsoring a community award with specific criteria for eligibility, Leagues will be able to:

- identify and connect with a pool of potential new members;
- gain a minimum of one (the awardee) new member and likely others;
- provide information to the community (and therefore potential new members) about the types of work and activities that the League does;
- increase the League's overall visibility in the community;
- strengthen (or create) relationships with allied organizations through the nomination process;
- strengthen (or create) relationships with the media through promotion of the nomination process and promotion of the awardee;
- brand and establish a "non-election" League event/product;
- create an opportunity for your League to gain more experience in marketing itself and perhaps engaging current members in new and different ways;
- gain a better understanding of leaders in your community through their applications; and
- highlight the value of membership in the League to leaders in the community.

To Nominees/Awardee

Through the MDW Award process, nominees and the awardee will receive numerous opportunities, including:

- sharing their experiences and successes with community leaders and (in the case of the awardee) with the public;
- networking with League members and leaders;
- joining the League, one of our nation's most trusted organizations;
- receiving visibility/recognition in local media outlets; and
- further making a difference in their communities through their association with League.

Making Democracy Work Award - Workplan

Establishing a MDW Award Committee and Timeline

Leagues will need to form a MDW Award committee and select a group of League members to sit on that committee. Committee members will be responsible for drafting the specific award application and guidelines and ultimately reviewing the applications. The committee will also be responsible for selecting the MDW Award winner. In order to preserve the League's "ownership" of the award, we recommend that the award committee members should all be existing League members.

A recommended timeline of activities which will surround the MDW Award application process and event is included.

Nomination Process

Each League will need to actively solicit nominations for this award from non-members within the community. Opportunities for soliciting nominations include:

- Announcing the call for nominations in a press release to the local media – newspaper, TV and radio;
- Announcing the award in League publications (and encouraging members to do outreach to non-members);
- Posting the call for nominations on your League's web site;
- Reaching out to organizations in your community who share similar missions/values as the League and encouraging them to nominate candidates;
- Promoting the award through personal contacts (one-on-one outreach); and
- Request that area employers, libraries and community centers post a request for nominations at their place of business.

A sample press release calling for nominations, a sample letter to community leaders, and a sample PSA script are included.

Sample Guidelines and Application Questions

The general guidelines of the award should state that any woman between the ages of 50 and 65 who is/has been part of the work force and contributed to the community in a meaningful way is eligible for the award.

Below you will find sample application questions you may wish to use when drafting your MDW Award application.



Membership Recruitment Initiative - Year Two

Screener Questions

These questions are simply designed to collect the information necessary to determine an applicant's/nominee's eligibility:

- 1) Name:
- 2) DOB/Year of birth:
- 3) Address:
- 4) Profession (current/previous):
- 5) How long has this individual been active in her community?

About the nominee

Applications can be completed by the nominee or by another nominator.

- 1) In one sentence, tell us why you would like to be considered for the Making Democracy Work award or why you are nominating an individual for the award.
- 2) The League of Women Voters celebrates community leaders: individuals who have envisioned a way to improve the community and have mobilized others to work with them to effect a change that has benefited the broader community.

How do you/does the nominee exemplify leadership?

- 3) Please describe in detail what impact this individual has had on our community? What population/organization/event has benefited from her efforts?
- 4) How does this individual stand out from other leaders in the community?
- 5) Do you/does the nominee exhibit leadership qualities in her career, at home, and in her community? Please provide examples of all three.

Nominators Only

- 6) What is your relationship to/with the nominee?

Community Outreach - Pre-selection

It is vitally important that Leagues do community outreach. Incorporating the membership messages in all outreach materials and activities around the MDW award is critical to the success of this venture.

There are press opportunities at every stage of the program. This is especially true as you solicit nominations. State Leagues will work with local Leagues to maximize media coverage. Outreach efforts to members of the press should include specific pitches to reporters covering community affairs. Press releases should go out to the complete media list that each League has already developed through the asset survey and Leagues should follow up with pitch calls to the major media outlets in the area.

Besides engaging the media, Leagues should explore other types of community outreach. This outreach will not only assure that there is a vibrant pool of nominees but it will introduce League to more potential members. Even if individuals do not apply for the award, they will have a better understanding of the organization and its members. They will understand the value of membership, and when asked, hopefully will join the organization.

Presenting the Award

As was noted earlier, the MDW Award can be presented in a variety of settings -- at a true “event” (e.g. luncheon) or by creating a more intimate “photo-op” (e.g. presentation of the award by a local elected official). Regardless, Leagues should publicize the fact that an award winner has been selected. Whatever is done, this is a media opportunity.

If Leagues do choose to host an event, it is recommended that the presentation of the award be scheduled to take place at an event hosted by the LWV that provides a forum for highlighting the exceptional work accomplished by both the League and the winner of the MDW Award. Because this event is intended to highlight the value of membership in the League, we do not recommend partnering or co-sponsoring the event with another organization.

The recipient of the award will be invited to speak at the event and will receive both the public acknowledgement of her work, an award/certificate of some kind and an invitation to work with the League for one year to leverage their work being accomplished in the community.

To improve media outreach on the local level, Leagues should conduct work with the award winner to schedule and prepare for media interviews by drafting sample talking points, which should include general League information, and allowing the winner to ask any questions that she may have in advance. In addition, the League should consider inviting broadcast media to the award event/presentation and ensuring that the venue can support video and audio equipment.

Alternatively, if Leagues choose to present the MDW award privately, we recommend promoting the award to the local media via a press release. Leagues should provide the press with information about the award and the recipient, and make follow-up calls to selected contacts. The recipient of the award would serve as the spokesperson, in addition to League spokespeople, and both can be pitched to the media for potential interviews.

As an additional method to get visibility, the League also may consider having a local governing body (e.g. city council) issue a proclamation about the award. Sample proclamations are available in this section.

Post-presentation follow up

After the award is presented, there are still opportunities for your League to do outreach. Most immediately, Leagues are encouraged to follow up with the award nominees and potentially their nominators. This follow up should restate the values of League membership and include an invitation to join LWV.



Membership Recruitment Initiative - Year Two

League also may want to consider sending a similar letter that announces the winner to the leaders of community organizations that you contacted during the nominating process. Ask them if they want to join LWV to come work along side your newest League member/leader, your awardee. Sample letters are provided.

If the awardee is part of another organization, ask about a “second” presentation at their home organization. Again, this gets the League before a new pool of potential new members.

Leagues also will need to do follow up with their awardee. League leaders will want to establish some ways that you can work together over the year. As these efforts unfold, you may wish to reengage the local media to let them see how this relationship is blooming, what work the awardee is undertaking, your joint successes, etc.

Timeline of Activities

This is a *suggested* timeline, and should be adjusted based on each local League’s current calendar, as well as other external factors.

Task	Recommended Timing	Materials Provided
Select members who will sit on the Making Democracy Work Award application, drafting and review committee.	<u>At least</u> three months prior (earlier if possible)	
Draft application for Making Democracy Work Award.	<u>At least</u> three months prior (earlier if possible)	Sample questions provided
Issue Making Democracy Work Award application to League members (post on the Web site) and distribute to allied organizations, local businesses and post around the community.	Three months prior	Sample letter provided
Draft and issue a media release announcing the award and call for applications to members of the local press.	Three months prior	Media/press release template and PSA script provided
Choose and secure location of event (community center, steps of city hall, private venue, etc.).	At least two months prior	
Application Deadline.	Two to one month	Sample proclamation

	prior	template provided
Select Finalists.	One month prior	Talking points (for working with the media) provided
Select and inform the winner.	One month prior	
Draft and produce award ceremony materials (program, finalist profiles, and winner profile).	Month of event	
Work with the winner to prep for, conduct and set up press. Interviews after the award.	Weeks before event	
Draft and issue media alert about the event and invite local members of the press.	Week of event	Media alert templates provided
Conduct media outreach around the event and schedule interviews with the award winner.	Week of event	
Host event and present award.		Media alert and press release templates provided
Follow up with membership invitations to all nominees and finalists.	Post event	Sample follow up letter provided by LWVUS
Follow up with award winner to establish ways to work together over the year.	Post event	
Conduct ongoing outreach to local media to highlight winner of the award and the League.	Post event	



**Making Democracy Work Award - Sample Letter to Community Leaders
Requesting Nominations**

Please note that you are encouraged to make every attempt to personalize your letters to leaders rather than sending out a generic flier or memo.

Date

Name

Organization Name

Address

City, State Zip code

Dear Name:

The League of Women Voters of XX is pleased to invite you to nominate one of your members/volunteers for our inaugural LWV Making Democracy Work Award. The League of Women Voters celebrates community leaders; individuals who have envisioned a way to improve the community and have mobilized others to work with them to effect a change that has benefited the broader community. This award will honor one such individual that has, in the League tradition, helped to make our community strong, vibrant and fair.

Nominations are open to any woman between the ages of 50 and 65 who is/has been part of the work force and contributed to our community in a meaningful way. Nominees can apply themselves or may be nominated by a friend or colleague. An application form is enclosed or can be downloaded from our web site at XXX. All applications must be received by XXX.

We will be announcing the winner on XX. We believe that there is no greater tribute that we can make to democracy's leaders than to honor a community member who shares the same commitment to leadership and civic improvement as the League of Women Voters.

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. Membership in the League is open to men and women of all ages. With more than 87 years of experience and 850 local and state affiliates, the League is one of America's most trusted grassroots organizations.

We invite you share information about our award program with members of your organization or others in the community. Please feel free to contact me at (TELEPHONE # & E-MAIL), if you have any questions or require any additional information.

Sincerely,
President/Committee Chair
LWV of XXX

Enclosure



Making Democracy Work Award - Sample Call for Nominations Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
[date]
[your League's web site]

Contact:
[your name & contact information]

League of Women Voters to Honor Community Leader

[your city, state] – The League of Women Voters of XX is seeking nominations for its inaugural LWV Making Democracy Work Award. The award, which will honor an individual for her community activism, will be presented in XX.

“The League of Women Voters has had an impact on national, state and local issues for decades. We want to honor that tradition and those who share our passion for making a difference through this award,” said LWV of XX president [name].

Nominations are open to any woman between the ages of 50 and 65 who is/has been part of the work force and contributed to our community in a meaningful way. Nominees can apply themselves or may be nominated by a friend or colleague. An application form can be downloaded from the League's web site at XX. All applications must be received by XX.

The winner will be announced in XX. “The League of Women Voters is the premier organization where hands-on work leads to civic improvement,” said [president's name]. “The LWV celebrates community leaders; individuals who have envisioned a way to improve the community and have mobilized others to work with them to effect a change that has benefited the broader community. This award will honor one such individual that has, in the League tradition, helped to make our community strong, vibrant and fair.”

For more information, please contact [name & telephone] or visit XX.

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The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. Membership in the League is open to men and women of all ages. With more than 87 years of experience and 850 local and state affiliates, the League is one of America's most trusted grassroots organizations.



Membership Recruitment Initiative - Year Two

Making Democracy Work Award - Sample Public Service Announcement (PSA) Script

Who is the most impressive woman you know?

Do you know a local leader who keeps her community strong, safe and healthy?

Nominate her today for the LWV's "Making Democracy Work Award."

The League of Women Voters is honoring women who have improved our community through their leadership on civic issues. Nominations are open to any woman between the ages of 50 and 65 who has contributed to our community in a meaningful way. An application form can be downloaded from the League's web site at XX. All applications must be received by XX.

Nominate your choice for the LWV's Making Democracy Work Award. The League of Women Voters – where leaders volunteer to make democracy work!

Making Democracy Work Award - Sample Proclamations

SAMPLE HONOREE PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, (*LWV of _____*) is affiliated with League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS), the organization where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement in the United States and in (*name of community/state*); and

WHEREAS, LWV is a nonpartisan political organization, that has fought since 1920 to improve our systems of government and impact public policies through citizen education and advocacy.; and

WHEREAS, League members are constantly striving to serve their communities to make strong, safe, fair and vibrant places to live; and

WHEREAS, the League of Women Voters' Making Democracy Award honors active community members that exemplify the League mission ; and

WHEREAS, (*LWV of _____*) collaborates with LWVUS and other organizations to achieve mutual goals, increase civic participation, create lasting change in the community and, above all, to signify to others that LWV "*Makes Democracy Work;*" and

WHEREAS, (*name of honoree*) was selected by the (*LWV of _____*) from nominations from the community as the Making Democracy Work Honoree because of significant contributions to the (*name of community*); and

WHEREAS, our citizens of our community have benefited from and are grateful for the contributions of this woman

NOW, THEREFORE, I, (*name of public official*), (*position*) of the (*town/city/state*), do hereby proclaim the ____ day of _____, 20__, as "*(name of honoree) Day*" and urge all residents of (*town/city/state*) to pay great tribute and respect to this outstanding woman/man for all she/he has accomplished on behalf of her/his fellow citizens.

Dated: _____

Mayor/City Councilman/Governor



Membership Recruitment Initiative - Year Two

SAMPLE LEAGUE PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, (*LWV of _____*) is *the* organization where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement; and

WHEREAS, LWV is a nonpartisan political organization, that has fought since 1920 to improve our system of government and impact public policies through citizen education and advocacy.; and

WHEREAS, League members are constantly striving to serve their communities to make strong, safe, fair and vibrant places to live; and

WHEREAS, the League of Women Voters' Making Democracy Award honors an community member that shares the League's commitment to community leadership and activism; and

WHEREAS, (*LWV of _____*) collaborates with other organizations, such as (*honoree's affiliation*), to achieve mutual goals, increase civic participation, create lasting change in the community and, above all, to *Make Democracy Work*; and

WHEREAS, (*name of honoree*) was selected by the (*LWV of _____*) from nominations from the community as the Making Democracy Work Honoree because of significant contributions to (*name of community*) ; and

WHEREAS, citizens of our community have benefited from and are grateful for the contributions of (*name of honoree*)

NOW, THEREFORE, I, (*name of public official*), (*position*) of the (*town/city/state*), do hereby proclaim the ____ day of _____, 20__, as "LWV *Making Democracy Work Day*" in honor of (*name of honoree*) and urge all residents of (*town/city/state*) to pay great tribute and respect to this outstanding woman/man for all she/he has accomplished on behalf of her/his fellow citizens and all that LWV does to make our community healthy, vibrant and strong.

Dated: _____

Mayor/City Councilman/Governor

Making Democracy Work Award - Talking Points

This section contains recommendations for sample talking points to be used in press outreach efforts surrounding The Making Democracy Work Award. As with all talking points, these should not be read as a script, but instead be used as a guide when speaking publicly and with the press about the award.

When drafting these talking points, we had the following three goals in mind –

- ❖ **Position the League.** The talking points below aim to establish and position the League as a leader in the community, as well as a leader in the field of democracy.
- ❖ **Establish the connection.** The second goal of these talking points is to establish the connection between the Making Democracy Work Award recipient's accomplishments and League's ongoing work.
- ❖ **Ask.** As always, a critical component to include in all communications is the piece which asks others to join the League and provides them with information about where to learn more.

We encourage Leagues to keep these same three goals in mind - and utilize talking points to support them - in *all* communications surrounding this effort. That said, we also encourage League spokespeople to review these talking points and to make adjustments, put them into their own words so that they are comfortable using them.

Talking Points

Positioning the League

- The League of Women Voters is an organization dedicated to improving our systems of government; it is *the* organization where leaders volunteer to make democracy work.
- The League of Women Voters of [INSERT CITY] is where smart, active leaders volunteer to make democracy work and create positive change in the community.
- All of the nominees for the Making Democracy Work Award are smart leaders who are creating change in our community. As one of the most trusted organizations in [INSERT CITY], the League of Women Voters is proud to be part of a community with such dynamic citizens and is honored to present this award.

Establish the connection

- [NAME's] dedication, commitment and shared passion to improving our community represents all that the League stands for and supports in [INSERT CITY], and we're thrilled to be able to publicly recognize [NAME's] efforts here today.



Membership Recruitment Initiative - Year Two

- [INSERT CITY] needs everyone to participate in order to be a strong, safe, and vibrant place to live. This is why the League of Women Voters of [INSERT CITY] has selected [NAME] as this year's Making Democracy Work Award winner out of many nominees from the community.
- The League of Women Voters celebrates community leaders like [NAME], who are safeguarding democracy in our community. Without active leaders, [INSERT CITY] would not be the strong, vibrant, and fair place it is today.
- League members are passionate about making democracy work in [INSERT CITY] – the LWV Making Democracy Work Award is a chance to honor and celebrate a member of our community that expresses the same passion for democracy.
- The League of Women Voters is dedicated to safeguarding democracy and creating positive change; The Making Democracy Work Award is an ideal occasion to celebrate an individual who exemplifies this in our community.

Ask

- We invite all those who want to affect change in our community to join the League of Women Voters. Contact [NAME] or visit [YOUR LEAGUE WEB SITE], for more information.
- We invite all those who want to join our efforts in making democracy work to learn more about the League of [INSERT CITY] and how we can affect change together. Contact [NAME] or visit [YOUR LEAGUE WEB SITE], for more information.
- Any member of the community can join our League and do the hands-on work to create lasting change in the community. Making democracy work is what the League of Women Voters is all about. We welcome more members of our community to join us and make an impact.
- Join the League, where community leaders are actively engaged in effecting change on the local, state and national level. Together, we can all make democracy work!

Making Democracy Work Award - Sample Media Advisories**SAMPLE Media Advisory #1 – Awardee not named****** LETTERHEAD ******MEDIA ADVISORY**

[DATE]

Contact: [NAME], [PHONE NUMBER]

League of Women Voters to Honor [CITY] Citizen with 1st Making Democracy Work Award

CITY, STATE – The League of Women Voters of [CITY] is honoring a local leader with the 1st Annual League of Women Voters' Making Democracy Work Award. The award honors a community member who has been a leader and actively engaged in hands-on work to keep [CITY] a strong and vibrant place to live. The honoree will be selected from a pool of nominees from the community.

What: Making Democracy Work Award Presentation [, at the EVENT NAME which is open to the public.] **INCLUDE ONLY IF AWARD PRESENTATION IS AT AN EVENT NOT DEDICATED TO MDW AWARD**

Who: League of Women Voters of [CITY]

When: Day, Month Date, Year, Time

Where: [LOCATION]

The League of Women Voters is where leaders volunteer to do the hands-on work that creates lasting change in our community. For more information about the League of Women Voters and the Making Democracy Work Award, please contact [NAME] at [PHONE NUMBER OR E-MAIL] or visit [YOUR LEAGUE WEB SITE]. Join us in making democracy work!

INSERT LOCAL LEAGUE BOILERPLATE

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SAMPLE Media Advisory #2 – Awardee named

**** LETTERHEAD ****

MEDIA ADVISORY

[DATE]

Contact: [NAME], [PHONE NUMBER]

[HONOREE NAME] Awarded 1st Annual League of Women Voters Making Democracy Work Award

CITY, STATE – The League of Women Voters of [CITY] is honoring [NAME] with the 1st Annual League of Women Voters' Making Democracy Work Award. The award honors a community member who has been a leader and actively engaged in hands-on work to keep [CITY] a strong and vibrant place to live. [NAME] was selected from a diverse pool of nominees from the community.

What: Making Democracy Work Award Presentation [, at the EVENT NAME which is open to the public.] **INCLUDE ONLY IF AWARD PRESENTATION IS AT AN EVENT NOT DEDICATED TO MDW AWARD**

Who: League of Women Voters of [CITY]

When: Day, Month Date, Year, Time

Where: [LOCATION]

The League of Women Voters is where leaders volunteer to do the hands-on work to create lasting change in our community. For more information about the League of Women Voters and the Making Democracy Work Award, please contact [NAME] at [PHONE NUMBER OR E-MAIL] or visit [YOUR LEAGUE WEB SITE]. Join us in making democracy work!

INSERT LOCAL LEAGUE BOILERPLATE

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SAMPLE Media Advisory #3

**** LETTERHEAD ****

MEDIA ADVISORY

[DATE]

Contact: [NAME], [PHONE NUMBER]

**Citizens of [CITY] Make Democracy Work -
League of Women Voters to Honor Community Leader with Award**

CITY, STATE – The League of Women Voters of [CITY] is recognizing one member of the community with the 1st Annual League of Women Voters' Making Democracy Work Award. The award, in its inaugural year, honors a community member who has been a leader and actively engaged in the hands-on work to keep [CITY] a strong, fair, and vibrant place to live. The honoree will be selected from a diverse pool of nominees from the community.

What: 1st Annual Making Democracy Work Award

Who: League of Women Voters of [CITY]

When: Day, Month Date, Year, Time

Where: [LOCATION]

The League of Women Voters is where leaders volunteer to do the hands-on work to create lasting change in our community. For more information about the League of Women Voters and the Making Democracy Work Award, please contact [NAME] at [PHONE NUMBER OR E-MAIL] or visit [YOUR LEAGUE WEB SITE]. Join us in making democracy work!

INSERT LOCAL LEAGUE BOILERPLATE

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Making Democracy Work Award - Nominee Follow-up Letter

[LWV LETTERHEAD]

NAME
ADDRESS
ADDRESS
CITY, STATE, ZIP

DATE

Dear [NAME],

Congratulations on your recent nomination for the League of Women Voters' Making Democracy Work Award. As you know, the award recognized one influential leader who made and impact on [COMMUNITY NAME]. You are among [COMMUNITY NAME]'s elite volunteers that take action to make democracy work. We salute your dedication and hope that in the future you consider joining the League of Women Voters of [LEAGUE NAME] .

The League of Women Voters is where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement. As an LWV member, you would be directly involved in shaping the important issues that keep our community. Join LWV and be a part of an organization where smart, active leaders work to create lasting change!

Enclosed is some information regarding membership and a copy of our most recent newsletter. We would be honored if you would consider becoming a member. If you have any questions please contact [CONTACT NAME] at [CONTACT E-MAIL AND/OR PHONE NUMBER].

Congratulations once again on your nomination for the League of Women Voters Making Democracy Work Award. Your efforts have made our community strong, safe, and vibrant.

Sincerely,

[NAME]
President, LWV of [LEAGUE NAME]

Enclosures (2) [MEMBERSHIP BROCHURE AND NEWSLETTER]



Making Democracy Work Award - Allied Organization Follow-up Letter

[LWV LETTERHEAD]

NAME
ORGANIZATION
ADDRESS
ADDRESS
CITY, STATE, ZIP

DATE

Dear [NAME OR ORGANIZATION],

Thank you for promoting our Making Democracy Work Award. *Optional Sentence* [NAME] from [ORGANIZATION] was nominated [and was a finalist/winner] for the League of Women Voters Making Democracy Work Award. As you know, the award recognized one influential leader who made and impact on [COMMUNITY NAME]. Your members are among [COMMUNITY NAME]'s elite volunteers that take action to make democracy work. We salute your organization's dedication and hope that in the future you consider partnering with the League of Women Voters of [LEAGUE NAME] to make democracy work!

The League of Women Voters is where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement. Enclosed is some information about the League and our local, state and national activities. We hope that in the future we can work together to keep making an impact on [COMMUNITY NAME]. If you have any questions please contact [CONTACT NAME] at [CONTACT E-MAIL AND/OR PHONE NUMBER].

Thank you once again on your support of the League of Women Voters Making Democracy Work Award. Your organization's efforts have made our community strong, safe, and vibrant.

Sincerely,

[NAME]
President, LWV of [LEAGUE NAME]

Enclosures (3) [LEAGUE INFORMATION, NEWSLETTER, and MEMBERSHIP BROCHURE]

Making Democracy Work Award - Examples from MRI Year One**Great Success Story - Greater Omaha, NE**

Greater Omaha began planning their Making Democracy Work Award in December. They decided to go with the suggested timeline and tie the event to the League's birthday. Early on, they lined up a speaker whom they had worked with during their election events and they went to the Lozier Corporation and asked for sponsorship. Lozier underwrote all of the costs of their event. While Omaha had some relationship with this company in the past, they believe that the company agreed to support the award because the League asked.

To solicit nominations, the League sent letters and nomination forms to all schools, and organizations like BPW, AARP, AAUW, National Coalition of Jewish Women, the Republican Party, the Democratic Party, and the Commercial Law League of America. They received lots of responses from their initial contact. They made their nomination form available on their League Web site.

To create even more buzz, the League invited the mayor to the event. Though he couldn't come, he did read a proclamation about the Making Democracy Work Award at his office the day before the event which was covered by the local television stations. The League's PR chair sent press releases out to all radio stations and media partners. It hit 5 desks at the *Omaha World Herald*, the paper the League was most interested in getting involved with throughout the year. In addition to the media, the League sent information about the Making Democracy Work Award to City Council members, and the public relations contacts for their allied organizations. They promoted the award in the Jewish Press and community calendar section of *Omaha World Herald*. The efforts focused on the *Omaha World Herald* paid off in the end. One reporter who received their information wrote an article about the event after the award was presented.

For the event, the mayor's office sent a representative who read a speech linking the League's event to Valentine's Day and women. The winner of the award was the head of the Women's Fund in Omaha, a wonderful and strategic addition to the League. She is a good spokesperson and excellent contact. After the event, the Women's Fund asked the Greater Omaha League's project coordinator if she would be willing to do their PR after seeing all the MDW award visibility generated - she responded "if you help me fundraise for the League".

Additional Examples of the Making Democracy Work AwardOakland, CA

- The Oakland League decided to tie the Making Democracy Work Award event with their successful annual luncheon in April. They had a panel of speakers, and a League member served as moderator. There were at least 300 reservations for the event. Many of

the previous year's underwriters supported them again, plus some new ones, including the local Fox TV station (one of who's reporters was one of the panelists), provided support. *The Tribune* and *The Montclarion* picked up the call for nominations press releases, and a couple of the City Council members circulated the call for nominations on their e-mail lists. In all, the Oakland League received 21 nominations (and leads for new members) from a variety of people and groups, which they described as very gratifying. The two awardees were two nuns who co-direct an adult literacy program in West Oakland and a program that works with teens in several high schools in Oakland and nearby East Bay cities to train them to solve racial and ethnic conflicts that occur on campus and to lobby for equitable treatment of schools that serve predominantly low-income families. Both the individuals and the organization were thrilled to be honored. Numerous volunteers who work with the adult literacy program attended the luncheon. The press release about the luncheon and the awardees was picked up by *The Montclarion* and ran in a great location in the front section of the paper.

Palm Beach County, FL

- Palm Beach County tied their Making Democracy Work Award to their Annual Meeting event in March. The League worked to announce the event in community calendars and through press releases to all their media contacts. They presented the award to their event speaker, *New York Times* reporter Linda Greenhouse and had a brunch open to the public. Membership materials were available at every table during the brunch.

Spartanburg County, SC

- Spartanburg County did not do a "grand" event for the Making Democracy Work Award. Instead they folded the award in to one of their general League meetings in February with an award presentation and celebration of the League's birthday at the end. The committee formed for the award selection had one member who was not a member of League. She and her mother joined after her experience of helping with this event. The winner selected works for the Chamber of Commerce and was particularly pleased with being honored for her volunteer contributions - not her work achievements (which she had previously been recognized for in the past). Press releases went out, and the League received media coverage in the Chamber of Commerce section of the newspaper.