



LWVO Spotlight On...LeaderSpark

Today's email is a service from LWVO and features a key issue the League is currently addressing. Sometimes the topic will be plucked from one of the five imPACT reform issues: accountability, redistricting, elections, judicial, and campaign finance. At other times, we will spotlight another concern.

If you're a true policy wonk, you can subscribe to our monthly Legislative Updates consisting of legislation that is currently tracked by our Lobby Corps and moving through the General Assembly. Another choice available to you, especially if you are interested in education, is the Education Update written by our education lobbyist, Joan Platz. For more information on education issues, sign up for Joan's weekly USEP-OHIO Education Update email by sending an email to usepohio@usepohio.com and type "subscribe education update" in the subject line.

Having been a League member for over 30 years, "Collaboration" has been essential to both my personal and my organization's success. LeaderSpark partners with groups (including Leagues in Ohio and New York State) to deliver a leadership skills development training curriculum that focuses on group process and working effectively with others to bring about positive change. Part of this training is about collaboration. The following five steps in building and maintaining collaboration can help Leagues further their mission of encouraging informed civic engagement and participatory democracy.

Step 1. Identify Partners to Form Collaboratives:

- Leagues can further their mission by partnering with other community groups;
- Partners who provide access to the populations you want to reach;
- Partners who have access to volunteers or services you want to provide;
- Partners who are potential funders.

Step 2. Explore Collaboration with Potential Partners:

- Look to your community for partners;
- Look to compatible organizations, e.g., similar values and mission;
- Identify "champions" within organizations that you want to work with;
- Meet potential partners to discuss interests and needs; address barriers.

Step 3. Use a Memorandum of Understanding (M.O.U.) to Create Collaboration:

- Clarify goals and objectives through a written agreement;
- List each partners' roles and responsibilities;
- Agree on how the collaborative will work and create a timeline;
- Establish an evaluation process to be used annually;
- Have all partners sign the Agreement.

Step 4. Establish Successful Collaborative Relationships:

- Invest time to build relationships-face-to-face meetings help;
- Ensure sufficient members from all organizations are involved;
- Document and communicate successes;
- Recognize and give credit to all partners in publicly;
- Undertake annual collaborative planning and evaluation together.

Step 5. Sustain the Collaboration Over Time:

- Nurture a climate of trust and valuing;
- Practice open and honest communication;
- Engage "partners" in making decisions together;
- Understand and respect partners' motivations and incentives;
- Be flexible and adaptable in working with others; respect differences among groups and honor reciprocity;
- Provide a regular review of the shared vision through on-going evaluation of joint efforts;
- Recognize and share credit with all the partners.

To learn more about LeaderSpark, visit us at www.Leaderspark.org.
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