

THE ASSOCIATION OF JUNIOR LEAGUES INTERNATIONAL, INC.

# FRAMEWORK OF EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

## FOR COMMUNITY IMPACT



## OVERVIEW

For Junior Leagues, community impact is about achieving results because of the high quality community and civic leadership that The Junior League experience fosters in women. This experience defines women as knowledgeable, effective change agents who make a difference by how they multiply the benefits of their leadership throughout their community, country and the world.

The **FRAMEWORK for IMPACT** clarifies The Junior Leagues' approach to community and civic leadership development and the lasting and meaningful impact the Leagues are able to achieve in their communities. This approach is broader than the traditional model of a course curriculum. Instead of being limited to a focus on training, the **FRAMEWORK** is designed to reflect The Junior League experience and how it supports enduring community impact through the development of contemporary women as an exceptional community leadership force. It is how The Junior League Mission and Vision are fulfilled.

Junior League women bring a rich array of knowledge, skills and experiences to their volunteer work. The **FRAMEWORK** illustrates how, through The Junior League, women have a place to deepen their understanding of the issues challenging communities, to sharpen and acquire skills to address those issues and to share all of this with their communities and other women in The Junior League network. This powerful network of women focused

on improving the community is a unique advantage of The Association of Junior Leagues International, Inc. (AJLI). Through the **FRAMEWORK**, League members will learn not only from AJLI experts, but also from one another. Through this network, women will find the solutions, connections, and partnerships that will empower them to bring about lasting and meaningful change in the communities they serve.

This document outlines the values and elements on which the **FRAMEWORK** was built and illustrates what the **FRAMEWORK** looks like when it is in action, with AJLI and the local Leagues working together towards our common Mission. The **FRAMEWORK** was intentionally created as a collaboration between AJLI and individual Leagues to support personalized member development at every stage of ability and level of engagement, while cultivating a vibrant network of Junior Leagues. Success in doing this will yield sustainable, high-impact programming created by a steady stream of effective, female leaders who will ensure improvements in our world for decades to come.

# ELEMENTS OF COMMUNITY & CIVIC LEADERSHIP

There are seven elements that The Junior League values and is uniquely positioned to foster in the course of a woman's development as a community and civic leader. Members will gain exposure to, and expertise in, these elements in two ways: through opportunities provided by AJLI and its partners, and through practical application and on-the-ground experiences in Leagues and community programs. Because these elements are fully integrated into the **FRAMEWORK**, members will be given a full spectrum of opportunities to learn about them in a variety of ways, depending on their individual preferences. While it is important to understand each element and how it contributes to improving communities, it is not imperative that a leader becomes proficient in every one. It is more important for leaders to have great self-awareness of their strengths and areas in need of development so that they can build on their strengths, address their weaknesses and collaborate with others who round out their attributes. The impact an initiative has on a community is deeper and more enduring when it results from many individuals and organizations coming together in dynamic, effective teams that apply all of the resources necessary to tackle any issue.

## COMMUNITY AND CIVIC LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT THROUGH



# ELEMENTS OF COMMUNITY & CIVIC LEADERSHIP

(CONTINUED)

## COLLABORATION

**The Junior League experience supports the development of women as community and civic leaders who:**

- are skilled at making connections, building relationships, convening groups and working effectively with individuals and organizations across sectors;
- are able to effectively employ the tools of conflict management and consensus building to strengthen and sustain the workings of a collaborative group; and
- know how to organize a team of leaders inside the League and support them in representing the League at a variety of community “tables.”

## INCLUSIVE COMMUNICATION

**The Junior League experience supports the development of women as community and civic leaders who:**

- create opportunities to generate member engagement and member involvement in shaping League values, identity, policy, strategy, and programs;
- apply strong facilitation skills to achieve positive outcomes;
- craft compelling messages that engage and motivate others and effectively move a team toward a shared vision;
- are able to advance issue-based impact through effective public speaking skills; and
- establish credibility and trustworthiness by aligning one’s actions with one’s words.

## GLOBAL & COMMUNITY AWARENESS, ACTION AND ADVOCACY

**The Junior League experience supports the development of women as community and civic leaders who:**

- know how to research issues, identify root causes, conduct a stakeholder analysis, and engage others to create a range of perspectives on benefits and solutions;
- are able to develop, adapt, implement and evaluate issue-based programs that have been created by the League, by others or in collaboration with others to achieve impact;
- know how issues intersect in order to maximize synergies;
- understand the tactics of service delivery, advocacy, and public education/awareness and know when it’s most appropriate to use each; and
- benefit from understanding the global implications of issues facing their community.

## OPERATIONAL EXPERTISE

**The Junior League experience supports the development of women as community and civic leaders who:**

- operate in an ethical and prudent manner to use resources in a way that yields the greatest impact for the community;
- apply the principles of sound governance and board responsibilities, including a thorough understanding of and ability to operate within the fiduciary, strategic and generative spheres of effective governance;
- apply sound management principles to ensure organizational effectiveness in alignment with The Junior League Mission and issue-based community impact areas;

# ELEMENTS OF COMMUNITY & CIVIC LEADERSHIP

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- align fund development efforts with The Junior League Mission and issue-based community impact areas;
- use appropriate technology to advance impact; and
- know how to develop the framework for a strategic communications plan that achieves recognition for impact and builds support with internal and external audiences.
- have a global perspective across sectors and issues that highlights patterns, interrelationships, interconnectedness and possibilities in the community;
- think about the strategic positioning of the League in the context of being a network of women developed as community and civic leaders creating impact; and
- are nimble and able to assess when to make strategic changes.

## SOCIAL AND CULTURAL INCLUSION

**The Junior League experience supports the development of women as community and civic leaders who:**

- demonstrate that people of different cultures, background, experiences, ages, interests and viewpoints bring value to discussion;
- are committed to learning about and learning from various segments including those who are being impacted directly;
- are committed to creating shared solutions with those who are being impacted directly;
- engage in reflection and inquiry to become aware of and sensitive to the history and context that impact a situation; and
- uphold effective principles and practices that reflect and support diversity and inclusion throughout the League, and a culture that is transparent, receptive, respectful and responsive.

## STRATEGIC THINKING

**The Junior League experience supports the development of women as community and civic leaders who:**

- are driven by The Junior League Mission and Vision;
- focus on community and civic leadership development as a customizable opportunity accessible to all League women;
- think beyond the current issues, anticipate future needs, issues and trends and are able to articulate their intended impact with short-, mid- and long-term outcomes necessary to achieve it;

## VOLUNTEER DEVELOPMENT

**The Junior League experience supports the development of women as community and civic leaders who:**

- can secure and sustain volunteer engagement for a common purpose;
- can effectively evaluate volunteer skills, abilities and interests and match them appropriately to meaningful work;
- support advances in volunteer skills and knowledge to enhance community benefit;
- focus energy on opportunities, strengths and possibilities when faced with challenges or barriers;
- stay the course until the intended outcome is reached, no matter what obstacles stand in the way;
- demonstrate courage in taking responsibility for the public action that one initiates as well as action that needs to be initiated; and
- recognize, develop and encourage multi-tiered leadership for sustained impact.

# THE FRAMEWORK IN ACTION

At the heart of The Junior League experience is the work that women do in their community, country and the world. The formal development opportunities provided by AJLI are created to support League members' work and it is by engaging in this work through the League that the greatest development of all occurs.

Five formal systems are available to all Junior League members to utilize for their development as community and civic leaders. These five systems, a mix of efforts supported by AJLI and Leagues, are avenues for learning experiences and development opportunities that link directly back to one or more of the seven elements of leadership. In addition, with the exception of "Opportunities in League," each of these systems will incorporate an opportunity for members to provide feedback on their effectiveness. (See "Peer Resource Review & Rating" below for additional information.)



## ACTION LEARNING

AJLI is committed to supporting and encouraging a collaborative environment that taps the knowledge and creativity within Leagues and League members to work in concert with the knowledge and creativity of AJLI staff. One tool to aid in this commitment is action learning.

Action learning is a process that involves a small group working collaboratively to generate solutions that address a critical or urgent problem where no known solutions exist. It is a process that balances creativity and innovation with achieving concrete, actionable results. It is centered on convening a small group of individuals to create networks of learning and design. Working collaboratively, what is achieved reflects the creativity and power of the collective effort. No single individual or

organization holds all the knowledge, skill and creativity required to innovate.

Action learning was developed as a methodology that combines reflective inquiry, continuous learning, equal engagement of all participants and the ability to take action. Action learning is, therefore, also a leadership development tool where participants consciously and proactively engage in building skills sets that contribute to the collaborative learning process.

Action Learning Teams (ALTs) offer Junior Leagues multiple opportunities to engage in systemic change using practical learning, sharing and problem-solving that can be applied at all levels of the organization. Much like incubators for innovation, Action Learning Teams (ALTs) may generate, test and refine

# THE FRAMEWORK IN ACTION

(CONTINUED)

design models and develop strategies and recommendations that can be put into practice at the League level, fine-tuning them as they proceed with implementation. Through the combined power of Leagues and AJLI, lessons learned and innovations made in the context of the ALT may also be developed and shared across the Association for Leagues to adapt and apply to their specific circumstance.

In every case, Action Learning Teams (ALTs) build new strategies and systems including the tools and resources needed to support them. Regardless of where the action learning takes place, within a League or among a group of Leagues, AJLI can take the learnings and apply them to new resources developed for the Learning Co-Op, Online Learning, and Conference workshops. In this way, all Leagues benefit from the fruits of action learning.

## IN-PERSON LEARNING

League members have access to development opportunities through a variety of in-person channels, including small and large conferences covering a range of topics and areas of interest organized by AJLI; conferences and meetings organized by Leagues; and conferences and workshops organized by AJLI partners. These in-person experiences are designed to take skills to the next level, to provide an opportunity for learning among peers and, in some cases, to conduct Association business.

Many Leagues pay the expenses to send League leaders or selected delegates to AJLI conferences. However, it is important to note that any League member in good standing may attend a conference if she so chooses to pay her own way. Nomination or selection by a League is not a requirement for registration. In addition to the conferences, meetings and workshops, AJLI also provides customized staff

expertise that can be tapped to address specific League goals and needs.

## ONLINE LEARNING

Currently under development, Online Learning through AJLI will include podcasts, on-demand learning experiences and real-time learning experiences (i.e., live, online workshops). Members will be able to access the tools and information they need to support their development at the time, place and pace that works for their schedule. Members will also be able to track their progress through their profile on the AJLI website.

As capabilities develop, it may become possible for Leagues to share their online learning materials through AJLI's website for the benefit of members across the Association.

## THE LEARNING CO-OP

This cooperative portal will be populated with content-rich materials created by the Association's Headquarters Staff, content partners and individual Junior Leagues. All of these entities will be able to submit the resources they have developed to The Learning Co-Op, where it will be shared with members across the Association. These resources may include static PDF, Word, Excel and Power Point files, videos, podcasts, and links to material from external sources that members can use to supplement and support other learning experiences.

## THE FRAMEWORK IN ACTION (CONTINUED)

### OPPORTUNITIES IN LEAGUE

While AJLI plays a significant role in the development of Junior League members as community and civic leaders, the primary platform for that development can only be found at the League-level: experiences in the community. It is through these experiences that members can apply their skills, knowledge and training to become effective leaders and improve the community.

AJLI will provide Leagues with tools that they can use directly in their own League including training modules and research to support League initiatives. However, for the **FRAMEWORK** to realize its fullest potential, members will need to look within their own League to find additional learning opportunities and ways to apply their skills. Members should refer to their League's Placement and/or Nominating Committee(s) to determine the best fit for their skills and goals to become a community and civic leader.

### PEER RESOURCE REVIEW & RATING

An exciting element of the **FRAMEWORK for IMPACT** is the opportunity for League members and AJLI Staff to rate and review materials found in Action Learning, In-Person Learning, Online Learning and the Learning Co-Op. These delivery systems will be designed to give individual League members and AJLI Staff the opportunity to rate the value of resources as something they "Recommend," are "Neutral" about, or "Do Not Recommend."

The rating system will be accompanied by a comment box where League members and AJLI Staff can share ideas, suggestions and general thoughts about the corresponding materials. Comment boxes will give League members the opportunity to identify individuals across the Association who are working on similar projects—and facing similar challenges—so that they can connect directly to share ideas, mistakes, and successes.

In addition to the general crowd-sourcing activities listed above, AJLI will also establish a "Peer Review Board" consisting of League members from across the Association who have a personal or professional background in one or more of the seven elements of community and civic leadership. The Board will be responsible for reviewing materials found in the Learning Co-Op and will give those materials they believe to be exceptional the "Peer Review Board Seal of Approval."