JUNIOR LEAGUE OF
ALBANY

How Do I...?

A How-To Guide for Members of the Junior League of Albany

Dear members,

Sometimes it can be hard to know who to ask for help in the League with so much going on. We've listed some of the questions that we receive each year with advice about how to handle the issue, from communications to reimbursement to requirements.

Generally, if you have a question, you should ask your Council Vice President. Her job is to help your committee run smoothly, and she is your first point of contact for any question about what to do and how to do it.

Before you ask, you should visit the Members Only section of our website and check our bylaws and standing rules to see if your question is addressed there. Every important document that a League member could want to use is posted there, including our budget, tax-exemption document, logos, bylaws, standing rules, and placements.

Unless your Council VP tells you otherwise, please direct your League email to the @juniorleaguealbany.org account associated with her position:

- communications@juniorleaguealbany.org
- community@juniorleaguealbany.org
- finance@juniorleaguealbany.org
- funddevelopment@juniorleaguealbany.org
- membership@juniorleaguealbany.org
- nominating@juniorleaguealbany.org

It is important that messages go to these accounts to help retain information year to year, because different people hold these positions every year or two.

If you need to make an expenditure or communicate with others outside of the League, you should still consult your Council VP, even though you may need to communicate with the Treasurer or VP of Communications. It is important to keep your Council VP in the loop as the year goes on. Thank you for being a wonderful volunteer!

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ALBANY

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JUNIOR LEAGUE OF ALBANY

How do I…

1. Send an email to all members?

We don't send email very often, and in fact try to limit messages to once per week to avoid burdening members' inboxes and also to avoid being flagged for spam. Between September and May, we send a message every Monday called (you guessed it) the Monday Message. This lists announcements, events, and upcoming Done in a Days.

If you would like to include a message in the Monday Message, you can fill out a form that is sent to the Communications VP and our administrative assistant. The form is included as a link in each Monday Message. It is your responsibility to draft the message you would like to send in its entirety. You must send your message request by the end of the day on **Wednesday** for inclusion in the next Monday Message.

Instead of using email, you are free to post League-related information and opportunities to our internal Facebook page.

You can contact the VP of Communications at communications@juniorleaguealbany.org. You should copy your Council VP on this message. All submissions are pending review and approval by the VP of Communications or the Board of Directors.

2. Create a Facebook event?

The VP of Communications handles all League communications with the community, and this includes all Facebook communications other than the internal members-only Facebook page. If you want to create a Facebook event, you can fill out a form that is sent to the Communications VP and our administrative assistant. The form is included as a link in each Monday Message. It is your responsibility to draft the language you'd like to appear in the Facebook event and provide all of the details related to the event. You must send your request at least **two business days** before you would like this event created. All submissions are pending review and approval by the VP of Communications or the Board of Directors.

3. Post a message to the external Facebook account?

The external Facebook account is designed to be seen by people who might want to join the League, work with us, or support us. We sometimes use the Facebook account for announcements.

If you would like some language to appear on our external Facebook account, you can fill out a form that is sent to the Communications VP and our administrative assistant. The form is included as a link in each Monday Message. It is your responsibility to draft the message you would like to send in its entirety. You must send your request at least **two business days** before you would like this message posted. All submissions are pending review and approval by the VP of Communications or the Board of Directors.

4. Run an advertisement on Facebook?

We sometimes put advertisements on Facebook to promote recruiting or special events. This requires using the League credit card, and can only be done from certain social media accounts.

If you would like an advertisement to run on Facebook, you must email communications@juniorleaguealbany.org **at least one week** before you would like the ad to run. You should copy your Council VP on this message.

It is your responsibility to provide images, text, a target demographic, and the time period that you would like the ad to run. Please note that for special events, the cost of the ad **must** be counted as an expense in your budget. There is no separate line item in the League budget for special event advertising. You should familiarize yourself with Facebook ads before making your request:
https://www.facebook.com/business/learn/facebook-create-ad-basics/

All submissions are pending review and approval by the VP of Communications or the Board of Directors.

5. Ask a business for a donation?

Asking for donations encompasses three different tasks: writing the request, documenting your efforts, and thanking your donors. Don't worry—they're easy once you get the hang of things!

a. Writing Your Request

Your committee won't be alone in making these requests; many League committees are in a position to ask business for cash or in-kind donations for different fundraisers. You

might ask a business to donate a service, items, gift certificates, space, or anything else.

Some businesses have budgets for advertising or charitable giving each year, and so it's normal to ask for this kind of help. To ask a business for a donation, brainstorm about the possible upside for the business. You might consider that we can bring a large group who might purchase food, drinks, or merchandise to their location, or that we can mention the business at the event or in printed materials. The value of charitable donations can function as a tax write-off for businesses if they document the donations properly.

Once you have an idea of why the business would benefit from helping you, write a letter that explains your event, your request, the League's history, and how exactly the donation will help. **Start with the Solicitation Template letter that is available on our website**. Fill in the specific information about your event and ask your supervising Council VP to proofread the letter and to approve it. **It is very important that this letter be approved by someone on the Board before it is distributed to anyone in the community.** Once it is approved, you will have a copy of the letter on our League letterhead as a PDF, which you can print, email, and otherwise distribute. If you need to print your letter, make sure you have enough money in your budget to cover printing costs!

Visit the business personally and ask to speak with a manager. Make your pitch for support, and bring a copy of your letter, our 501(c)(3) determination letter, and our New York State tax-exemption document—those last two are on our website. Businesses typically require this information before they're willing to make donations. Make sure you take the full name, phone number, and email address of the person you contact, and keep this information safe so that we can use this contact again. Follow up in about a week and thank the contact graciously whatever the business chooses to do.

b. Documenting Your Efforts

Because lots of committees might need to organize events and ask businesses for help, it is important to:

1. keep track of the businesses we ask for help in each League Year;
2. keep good records of what we ask for, what we receive, and when;
3. treat donors who give us similar help similarly; and
4. thank our donors appropriately and consistently.

Keep a spreadsheet or list of every business you solicit, who you spoke with and that person's contact information (first and last name, phone number, and email address), the date you made the ask, and the date you followed up. Once you get a donation, keep track of the value of it—if the donation is financial, that's easy, but if not, ask the donor about the value of the donation.

Make sure that when you have secured donations, you **send this information to your Council VP.** Your VP will help make sure that the donations and benefits that donors give and get are consistent among our different committees. We wouldn't want a donor who helps one committee at a value of $100 is be recognized differently than another donor who did the same thing for a different committee—inconsistency gives the impression that we are unprofessional or unprepared!

c. Thanking Your Donors

Once your event is complete, it's time to **thank your donors**—and give an update about how their donation helped! **Start with the template donation acknowledgement letter available on our website**, and add information describing the event, how successful it was, and including photos if you have any. Say specifically why their donation made the event a success.

You also need to help your donors by documenting their potentially tax-exempt donation.[1] To do this, you ***must*** include the following language exactly as written in your letter (this is already included in the template acknowledgement letter):

When the donor didn't get anything in exchange for the donation:

"Thank you for your contribution of (**insert amount of cash donation OR description of items**) on **Date**. No benefit was bestowed upon this donor in exchange for this contribution, other than the joy of giving to an organization that promotes volunteerism, develops the potential of women, and improves our community. We are an exempt organization as described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code; EIN 14-1431718."

When the donor got something in exchange for the donation:

"Thank you for your contribution of (**insert amount of cash donation OR description of items**) on **Date**. In exchange for your contribution, you received (**describe what the donor received**), the fair market value of which is (**give the fair market value of the benefit**). Only that portion of your contribution that exceeds the fair market value of the

[1] You can learn more about this process by reading guidance from the IRS. https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p1771.pdf

items you received is tax-deductible We are an exempt organization as described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code; EIN 14-1431718."

You can ask our League Administrative Assistant to send out these letters once you have finalized them and had them approved. It's a nice touch to add personal thank you notes and to call your contacts directly after the letters go out.

6. Purchase an expensive item?

You may need to make a large purchase in the course of your placement. We have a League debit card, linked to our bank account, that we sometimes use for these purchases. Only a small number of Board members have a card. It is generally not possible for League cardholders to make purchases for members on short notice.

Members should usually make small purchases themselves, using the New York State sales tax exemption document available on our website, and then request reimbursement within 30 days using the check request form also on our website. Purchases for your placement should be reported to your committee chair and included in the committee budget. Please be sure not to exceed the amount allotted to your committee in the League budget, which is available on our website.

If you need to make a large purchase, please contact your council VP with **at least one week's notice** with all of the information necessary to make the purchase, including:

- Shipping information
- Date the item is needed
- A quote that **does not include sales tax**

The League does **not** pay sales tax, as it is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization. It is your responsibility to contact your vendors to generate invoices without sales tax. This may mean that you cannot make purchases through a website directly, but may need to arrange for a telephone purchase. Please plan ahead when you are making big purchases to ensure this goes smoothly.

Please keep in mind that you are required to seek **at least three** quotes or bids from vendors for expensive items. Consult our standing rules for more information.

7. Create a letter, flyer, poster, or other document that our community will see?

You should feel free to design your own written communications to help with your placement, but you must secure board approval before circulating any written information outside of the League. This means that all letters, flyers, posters, and other documents must be carefully proofread and submitted to the board for approval **at least one week** before they must be sent, and ideally much further in advance than that. **All communications must be free of typographical and style errors, be professional in tone, inoffensive, nonpolitical, and clear.**

No document should bear the President's or any other board member's name or signature unless that person has specifically approved the document.

We adhere to brand standards that AJLI has set, which you can review at brand.ajli.org. When you use our logos, which are available on our website, please **do not stretch, skew, or alter** them in any way. Please do not change their color. When you submit a document for approval, send Word or comparable formats for letters, so that they can be edited, and send .pdf or comparable formats for any other document. **Please remember to send only .pdfs to printers, as other formats can look different when printed.**

8. Put an announcement on our website?

The VP of Communications handles all League communications with the community, and this includes all website content. If you would like to put an announcement on our website, it is your responsibility to draft the language you'd like to appear in the announcement and provide all of the details related to the event. You must send your request at least **two business days** before you would like this announcement posted.

You can contact the VP of Communications at communications@juniorleaguealbany.org. You should copy your Council VP on this message.

You can do all of this easily using a form that is linked in each Monday Message. Your submission will go to all of the correct people and you'll be prompted to give all of the right information through the form.

9. Add an item to the eStore?

The VP of Communications and League Treasurer supervise our ecommerce and our eStore. If you would like to put an item for sale in the eStore, it is your responsibility to draft the language you'd like to appear in the eStore and provide all of the details related to the item for sale, including images, pricing, shipping information (if any), the

email address where notifications of sales should be sent, and the dates that the item should be offered for sale. **It is your responsibility to arrange for shipping or delivering purchased items to buyers.**

You must send your request at least **two business days** before you would like an item posted to the eStore.

All items purchased through the eStore are subject to a fee that Paypal charges us for accepting online payment. This rate for us and other qualified nonprofit organizations is 2.2% plus $0.30 per transaction. To protect the League and for simplicity, we often charge a $4 convenience fee to cover transaction costs and other possible fees we might face for online transactions. When selecting the price for the eStore, decide how you'd like to describe the price, and whether you'd like to mention the transaction cost or include a convenience fee. **Please keep in mind, when budgeting, that you will only really earn the total charged less 2.2% plus $0.30.**

You can contact the VP of Communications at communications@juniorleaguealbany.org and the treasurer at treasurer@juniorleaguealbany.org. You should copy your Council VP on this message.

10. Hold an event at the Desmond?

If you would like to host an event as part of your placement, you may book a room at the Desmond. Please note that there is a per-person cost for every room rental, which means that you must have sufficient funds in your committee budget to justify the rental. Please consult the League budget, which is posted to the website, and ensure your committee chair is aware of the expenditure.

To book an event at the Desmond, send a message to president@juniorleaguealbany.org **at least one month** before your scheduled event, with the proposed date, time, and size of your event. Please know that we cannot guarantee that a room will be available, and so you may be responsible for booking an alternate site for your event.

11. Invite a speaker to a GMM?

We would be delighted to host speakers at GMMs. We keep GMMs to approximately one hour, which means that we cannot always accommodate speakers on short notice, as others will have been invited to present to members. Please email president@juniorleaguealbany.org **with as much advance notice as possible, ideally at**

least one month before you would like the speaker to attend an event, and provide the speaker's name, contact information, background, and the topic about which he or she will speak. **Please do not guarantee speakers a meeting or ask speakers to attend on short notice.**

12. Give a presentation at a GMM?

Any member can make an announcement at a GMM—just ask to be added to the agenda as the meeting begins! If you would like to give a longer presentation at a GMM, please email president@juniorleaguealbany.org **with as much advance notice as possible, ideally at least one month** before you would like to make the presentation. Please describe your presentation, how long you expect it to take, and any technological needs you might have. Please also be prepared to provide your own computer and projector unless we tell you otherwise. Note that GMMs should not last longer than one hour, if at all possible.

13. Ask questions about requirements?

Email your Council VP if you have questions about whether you are meeting your requirements, if you have difficulty meeting them, or if you believe you are missing credit for requirements. It is your responsibility to keep track of your requirements. Requirements are also posted to our website!

http://www.juniorleaguealbany.org/members-only/important-documents/