



MOBILIZE YOUR MEMBERS

**A SIMPLE HOW-TO GUIDE
FOR USING LISTS EFFECTIVELY**



LEAGUE OF CONSERVATION VOTERS
EDUCATION FUND
1999

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Deb Callahan <i>President</i>	Jennifer Cox <i>Development Associate</i>	Ann Riley <i>National Field Director</i>
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Written by
Fred Heutte and Lisa Wozniak

Edited by
Alyson McColl and Elizabeth Sullivan

Designed by
Cutting Edge Graphics

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League of Conservation Voters Education Fund
1707 L Street, NW, Suite 750, Washington, DC 20036
Phone: 202-785-0730; Fax: 202-835-0491; E-mail: ed_fund@lcv.org

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FOREWORD

*From the Desk of
Deb Callahan, President
League of Conservation Voters Education Fund*

Dear Friends,

I am pleased to put this manual in your hands. It is a clear step-by-step guide on how to maximize the power of your members through list enhancement. You may be informed about how other statewide environmental coalitions have used list enhancement projects to help them organize more effective and efficient issue campaigns. Or, you may be learning for the first time about this new tool. If so, you may want to know why it is important.

Ask yourself a few simple questions:

- Has my organization ever wanted to call members about a breaking issue or community event, but couldn't manually look up all those phone numbers?
- How many of our members vote? Would our cause be served by identifying the non-voters among our members and encouraging them to participate in elections?
- Would our issue get more attention if state legislators knew how many of our supporters live in their districts? Would our members like to know that their elected representative is one of the key decision-makers on this issue?
- Would we be able to use information about the total number of members of environmental groups that might be mobilized to protect a particular watershed, or to demand clean-up of a toxic waste dump?

These questions illustrate how a list enhancement project can open up new opportunities for both long-term organizational development as well as more timely, strategic responses to immediate concerns in your state and community. It is often said that "information is power." List enhancement projects provide information about your members to help build the power of your organizations and coalitions.

This is not a new technology. List enhancement has long been used to help businesses learn more about their customers to develop smarter marketing strategies. Political parties also use list enhancement techniques to further their goals. However, within the nonprofit community, such technology and strategic applications are very new.

Over the past several years, the LCV Education Fund has helped nine statewide environmental coalitions develop list enhancement projects. In these states, we have involved many groups in a collaborative process, with clear ground rules for participation. They have benefited from sharing costs and working together. Each year, we have

brought together representatives from these states to share strategies about how to improve the technical process and programmatic outcomes of the list projects. You have in your hands the benefit of all the lessons we have learned from this field work and the perspective of our grassroots partners.

Our purpose is to help you and your peers organize a list enhancement project that will strengthen the coalitions and organizations in your state. Millions of Americans support nonprofit organizations to improve the prospects of our planet and shared humanity. Through list enhancement projects, we can know them better, and give them more opportunities to be better citizens, more informed and regular voters, and more generous supporters of our shared efforts to foster safe and sustainable communities.

I encourage you to make use of this manual to begin building such projects in your state. Please let us know if you need more copies or additional information.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in green ink that reads "Deb Callahan" with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Deb Callahan
President

INTRODUCTION

About the LCV Education Fund

The League of Conservation Voters Education Fund, a 501(c)(3) organization, is working to increase the capacity of state and locally based conservation organizations to affect public policy. The national trend is toward reliance on environmental regulation and enforcement at the state and local levels. The LCV Education Fund is responding with a wide variety of activities and initiatives to strengthen the power of citizen groups. We are helping state and locally based conservation organizations to participate fully in public policy debate and mobilize their members to vote. We are teaching them how to hold their legislators accountable by creating legislative scorecards, fostering stronger media relations and developing more effective one-on-one lobbying techniques.

The LCV Education Fund is also bridging the gap between core conservation groups and allied interests. By providing services such as membership list enhancement and message training, these potential allies – sportsmen, women’s groups, community environmental justice groups, health professionals and college students – are beginning to form strong coalitions that can have more influence in policy decisions. We are training activists to be more effective at communicating with the public, developing strategic plans, conducting public education campaigns, understanding how to communicate with reporters, practicing electoral skills and growing their own grassroots membership base.

List Enhancement Projects are a central focus of the LCV Education Fund’s current work to build capability within environmental organizations and strengthen coalitions at the state level. This manual is designed to help you learn about these projects and to start your own. We invite you to join in these efforts and contact us for further assistance.

What is a List Enhancement Project?

A List Enhancement Project starts with membership files or other lists of names and addresses, and adds useful pieces of information for each person, such as phone numbers, age, gender, voter registration, voter history, congressional and legislative district, and often data about the importance of environmental issues to the individual.

By “enhancement” we mean adding these additional pieces of data through computerized matching with outside data sources, such as statewide voter files, postal or phone listings.

The most important source for enhancements is usually the voter file, which is available from elections offices or from voter file vendors. Voter files generally contain the data for each registered voter, including name, residence address, mailing address (if different), county, precinct, party affiliation, gender, age, congressional and legislative districts, and voting history (whether or not they cast a ballot in recent elections). The voter history can then be summarized into a simple voter index, usually going from 0 to 4, where 0-of-4 means the voter didn’t vote in any elections, and 4-of-4 is a “perfect” voter.

All you need to enhance your list successfully is the name, address and phone number (where available) of your members. Computer matching makes the rest possible. The end result is a wide range of new and important information on your members that will allow you to move your organization forward.

A Short History of List Enhancement Projects

The first environmental List Enhancement Project began in Washington state in 1995. Confronted with a statewide ballot measure, Referendum 48 (the “takings initiative”), the environmental community used an innovative organizing technique which contributed to the sound defeat of the referendum by 60 percent to 40 percent despite being outspent three-to-one by the opposition. In addition to traditional campaign efforts to publicize the issue, the Washington Environmental Alliance for Voter Education (WEAVE) sponsored a collaborative project to develop an environmental voter database. In all, 18 organizations participated, adding their membership records to a single master list which was compared with the Washington voter file using computer matching techniques. Each organization then received back their original list with the addition of numerous enhancements from corresponding voter file records, including voter registration, voter history, congressional and legislative districts, age, gender and more.

With the permission of the participating organizations, WEAVE contacted low/moderate turnout voters and encouraged them to participate in the upcoming election. The sample was closely targeted and each voter received a phone call, a follow-up mailing, and an absentee ballot form for their county. The results suggested that this targeted contact effort had a substantial impact on voter turnout, encouraging WEAVE to extend their project over the long term. This success also prompted the LCV Education Fund to begin introducing this enhancement process to environmental organizations around the nation.

In 1996, the LCV Education Fund expanded on this idea and conducted List Enhancement Projects in Colorado, Idaho, Maine, Michigan, North Carolina, Oregon and Washington. Similar projects have also been undertaken in California and New York.

In 1998, the project was expanded further to include Alaska and Georgia. Each state is unique in terms of environmental history, activism and politics. In the 11 states that currently have enhanced lists, project organizers demonstrated that their projects can supply data for a long list of innovative uses, and participating organizations quickly signed up. The experience of these states showed that List Enhancement Projects could benefit a wide range of organizations by helping them increase their understanding of their membership, stimulate member involvement in the organization, improve fundraising, develop voter education efforts, and so on. Furthermore, each of the statewide List Enhancement Projects brought its participants shared savings on the cost of the data and provided a new forum for collaborative projects.

Looking Ahead

This manual is designed to help you decide whether a List Enhancement Project is right for you, your organization and your state. We hope that our experience can be useful in the creation of a List Enhancement Project that is unique to your state, while taking advantage of the programming and organizing tools already available.

The approach we present here describes a comprehensive plan to carry out a List Enhancement Project. We describe the use of project managers, computer consultants and voter file vendors to do the actual list enhancements. But we also cover other important factors you need to consider for your project, like additional list sources, training, technical support, and developing a coalition approach to list development.

PLANNING A LIST ENHANCEMENT PROJECT

The first thing you should do when considering whether to start a List Enhancement Project is to ask a few basic questions:

- What are you trying to accomplish through the project?
- What do you need to do to accomplish these goals?
- What problems are you trying to solve? (For example, are you trying to increase voter registration? Learn more about your membership? Increase voter turnout? Increase the effectiveness of your advocacy efforts? Educate/inform your membership about the issues? Raise funds?)

Then ask yourself:

- How will a List Enhancement Project help accomplish these goals?
- Is a List Enhancement Project appropriate for my state? Why?

Once you have identified the purposes of your List Enhancement Project, you can start planning how to construct the list and determine who will participate. In fact, you can use the enhanced data to improve your fundraising, volunteer recruitment and membership marketing efforts.



1.1 Starting a List Enhancement Project

There is no single best way to accomplish a List Enhancement Project. The development of your project depends on the requirements of your participating groups and the availability and cost of the data. Successful data projects need a lot of planning and attention to detail, especially the first time around. And although you don't need to be a computer expert to manage a List Enhancement Project, you *do* need the ability to set objectives, work with a coalition, coordinate resources and schedules, and be flexible in responding to issues as they arise.

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO START YOUR PROJECT?

- A clear understanding of what you want to accomplish
- A set of data elements you want to add to your list
- Potential sources for your data
- Computer equipment and programming assistance to make the project happen

If you decide that the criteria exist within your state to pursue a List Enhancement Project with a broad-based coalition of organizations, the next step is promoting the project and recruiting participants. This is not always easy, however, and coalition dynamics are often complicated, but don't get discouraged. With the right organizer at the

helm and a variety of good recruitment tools in place, a list project can be successfully run just about anywhere.

1.2 Start With Your Own Organization

The best place to start thinking about the benefits of a List Enhancement Project is, of course, your own organization.

Your membership records probably include name, address, phone, contribution records and volunteer codes. But how much do you really know about your members, individually or as a whole? Readily available data sources can be tapped to add crucial data to your membership list, and let you profile and target your membership far more effectively. And it can be done efficiently and affordably.

What wonderful new things could your organization do if it had additional data about each of your members? What kinds of data would be most useful, in aggregate as well as for individuals? The examples and descriptions presented later in this manual will help you work through the possibilities.

1.3 Include Other Participants

Because of the numerous steps and programming costs for list enhancement, it is a good idea to find other organizations to participate in your project. Cost-sharing is a significant benefit of cooperative list projects. Coalitions of 10 to 40 groups have successfully accomplished List Enhancement Projects and kept the costs reasonable even for small organizations.

Coalition work is an essential part of building a more effective movement to protect the environment. Because environmental groups vary considerably in their history, composition, approach, and issue interests, this is often hard to accomplish. One of the great benefits of List Enhancement Projects is to get groups to sit down and work with each other on a project providing mutual benefits. This helps build the foundation for more cooperation in the future.

1.4 Define the Benefits

Each organization participating in a List Enhancement Project should consider what the enhancements might be able to provide, particularly in helping with their top priorities. What projects is the organization currently pursuing? What new ones would they like to pursue? What is their fundraising plan? How are they recruiting new members? What information do they provide to members? How can they save money and staff time by focusing their mailings and other membership contacts to the members most likely to respond?

In deciding whether to participate in a List Enhancement Project, it is a good idea to write down the expected benefits. The objectives don't have to be shared directly with the list project manager or other project participants, but having them in writing allows each organization to identify their specific priorities for list enhancements. This will not only clarify your approach now, but it will provide a benchmark later to see whether the project met your expectations.

EXAMPLE: PROJECT BENEFITS LIST

1. The List Enhancement Project will collect and add data to our membership file, including: (1) age; (2) gender; (3) voter registration; (4) absentee status; (5) voter history (how many times each member voted in recent elections); and (6) congressional and legislative districts.
2. These list enhancements will enable us to select membership records and target them for projects including:
 - The Voter Motivation Project, to improve voting turnout by our occasional (1-of-4 and 2-of-4) voters;
 - The Medium Donor Project, which will target members at the basic dues level who are likely donors (two or more years of membership, 4-of-4 voters) to double their donations;
 - The Clean Water Project, to recruit volunteers living within a five-mile radius of a combined sewer outflow area.

A CASE STUDY: List Enhancement Project Benefits

Let's imagine for a moment that you are the director of a group called Citizens for a Clean Environment. You have just finished a List Enhancement Project that has added age, gender, congressional and legislative districts and voter history to your membership list.

What do these enhancements tell you about your members, and how can your group use this information to provide better service to your members and accomplish your program objectives?

First, you can create a chart of membership by age and gender (see chart to right). What can you tell from this chart?

Citizens for a Clean Environment has done a good job of recruiting both men and women between 35 and 54, but there are very few members under the age of 35. You might decide to increase your membership marketing to your strongest age/gender segment, and figure out ways to change and improve outreach to the others.

CITIZENS FOR A CLEAN ENVIRONMENT MEMBERSHIP BY AGE AND GENDER

AGE GROUP	FEMALE	MALE
18-24	1.2%	0.9%
25-34	4.6%	4.0%
35-44	12.5%	10.4%
45-54	14.5%	14.0%
55-64	6.5%	6.4%
65+	13.0%	12.1%
Total	52.3%	47.7%

CITIZENS FOR A CLEAN ENVIRONMENT VOTER PARTICIPATION

VOTE INDEX	CCE GROUP	ALL VOTERS
0-of-4	7.5%	20.2%
1-of-4	18.3%	20.1%
2-of-4	20.2%	19.3%
3-of-4	25.0%	20.9%
4-of-4	29.0%	19.5%

Now let's look at another view of the data: how often your members vote (see chart at left). Remember that 0-of-4 means they did not vote in any of the previous four primary and general elections, 1-of-4 means they voted in one previous election, 2-of-4 means they voted in two elections, 3-of-4 in three elections, and 4-of-4 means a perfect voter.

Congratulations! The majority of your members are already excellent voters, voting in three or four of the last four elections. But a surprising number of your members vote half the time or less. You can design some new projects making use of the your membership voter history:

- **A voter motivation effort aimed at increasing the election participation of your low-turnout members (0-of-4, 1-of-4 and 2-of-4 voters).** All kinds of groups, including 501(c)(3) groups, can promote increased voting by their members. (But be aware that there are regulations about how to do this, and 501(c)(3) groups cannot be involved in “electioneering,” which means promoting specific candidates; see the LCV Education Fund legal manual, *Maximize Your Grassroots Power*, for further details, and consult with an attorney familiar with laws governing nonpartisan voter participation programs.)

- **A write-your-legislator project focusing on the higher turnout voters (3-of-4 and 4-of-4 voters).** You can combine this with your district information (state assembly and senate data) to target specific legislators who need to hear from your members about a particular issue. Selecting by voter history helps you target and reach the members most likely to respond to a legislative issue. All organizations, including 501(c)(3) organizations, can participate in lobbying efforts. Again, there are some restrictions, so consult with your legal advisors.

- **A fundraising special appeal to support an upcoming project, focused on your best 4-of-4 voters.** Several organizational studies have found that motivated voters are also the highest donors and most active volunteers.

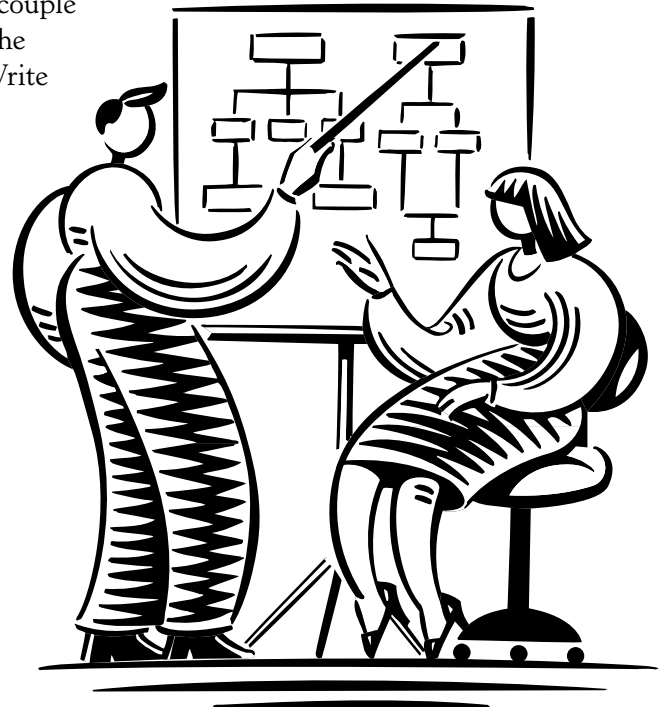
RECRUITING GROUPS FOR A LIST ENHANCEMENT PROJECT

A fully developed List Enhancement Project can be far more than just a technical exercise involving computer data and programming. In fact, it can become a collaborative effort by a variety of organizations to pool their resources and gain common benefits. List Enhancement Projects require organized, consistent effort and an understanding of organizational process and dynamics.

As the manager of a List Enhancement Project, there are many ways you can recruit organizations to participate. The following sections describe an approach that has worked very successfully for LCV Education Fund sponsored list projects around the country.

2.1 Develop a Target List

First, assess who should participate in your list project. This is a good brainstorming project for you and a couple of associates. Decide on basic criteria for selecting the target list: organization size, issue focus, location. Write down all the groups that come to mind, particularly those who often work together on coalition projects. Show the list around and ask for suggestions. Compile a contact list including organization name, principal staff and board members, addresses, phone numbers, fax and email.



Think carefully about the key contact for each organization. Sometimes it might be the executive director, other times a board member or departmental staff person. Find out about the steps each organization will need to take to consider the project and then formally agree to participate.

Finally, remember that membership lists aren't the only ones that you can include in your project. During the 1995 referendum campaign in Washington state, several petition signer lists were data banked and added to the enhancement process. In Idaho, because the base of environmentalists was limited, the list enhancement project managers acquired a subset of the statewide voter file and conducted an opinion poll on environmental issues, adding respondents to the project list. Keep an eye out for these kinds of non-membership lists which could provide additional value to their users if they are enhanced.

2.2 Describe the Project Clearly

The key question for any buy-in is: "What's in it for me?" Address the issue up front. Show that the results are concrete and achievable.

EXAMPLE: LIST ENHANCEMENT PROJECT DESCRIPTION

As a participant in the List Enhancement Project, your organization will improve the quality and the uses of your mailing list – for fundraising, volunteer recruitment, voter participation, and more. You will receive training in how you can use your membership data more effectively and what uses are legal for your organization. You will work with numerous other groups in a project that will help build connections among like-minded organizations and save money by pooling your efforts.

To participate, your organization must supply your list to the project manager by (deadline date) in the format outlined in the enclosed instructions. Once received, your list will be merged with other lists, retaining ID numbers for each of your members and for your list as a whole. Once the merge is complete, the overall list will be purged of duplicates and matched against the statewide voter file. You will then receive back the enhanced records for your use.

As the manager of a List Enhancement Project, one of your key tasks is to create a short written description of the project. What are the purposes? What does each participating organization need to do? What will happen to their lists in the project? What will they get back?

The more examples of the benefits of a List Enhancement Project you can provide, the better. Organizations will find their own way to use their enhanced lists once they get them, but the possibilities are not immediately obvious to most groups at the beginning. WEAVE's *Help Wanted* manual provides numerous helpful examples and case studies of projects that took advantage of enhanced lists.

2.3 Provide Legal Training

One of the key uncertainties holding back immediate buy-in for List Enhancement Projects is the lack of clear understanding about what is and is not legal for each category of organization. There is no question that the legal issues surrounding the activities of 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) organizations and political action committees (PACs) are complex.

For example, many 501(c)(3) groups are wary of projects that propose to obtain voter history and jurisdictional information, not realizing that such

information can be used for educational activities that clearly fall within their allowable purposes.

The LCV Education Fund realized early on that legal training is a very important initial step in encouraging commitment to a List Enhancement Project. The LCV Education Fund has sponsored numerous legal trainings on list project issues and published a legal guide primarily aimed at 501(c)(3) organizations. The trainings have also provided another opportunity

for face-to-face meetings among participants, which is one of the keys to successful collaborative projects. It is always helpful to see first hand who else is participating, especially when the project is somewhat complex and the commitment needs to be strong.

2.4 Build Relationships

Relationships between the List Enhancement Project coordinator and the key players in the community are absolutely essential to making the budding coalition work. In order to build your statewide file, you must establish strong, trustworthy relationships with environmental and conservation organizations and allied constituencies. For example, during the 1996 Michigan LCV Education Fund List Enhancement Project, approximately 40 different groups were contacted, resulting in 23 organizational participants, 29 different lists and close to 400,000 membership names. Participating groups represented a range of different perspectives, and included sportsmen organizations and environmental groups who did not often collaborate. Having a project coordinator who understands the history and relationships between different elements of the community is a big factor in building trust and understanding.

2.5 Get Early Buy-In From Key Players

The LCV Education Fund also has found that it helps to have the “major players” buy into the project first. In North Carolina, for instance, the North Carolina Wildlife Federation and the Conservation Council of North Carolina were two of the first organizations to join the project, signaling other organizations that the List Enhancement Project was an important and appropriate new endeavor in which to be involved.

While there is safety in numbers, someone has to be willing to step up and take the lead. Think about the organizations most respected by the groups you want to participate. Their key contacts should be your initial targets.

2.6 List Enhancement Summit Meeting

Some states have found it useful to incorporate list enhancement “summit meetings” into their recruitment strategy. Often there are two of these: one when the project gets started, and another when the data processing has been completed and groups have received their enhanced files.

In Michigan, for example, the LCV Education Fund held a summit to which potential participants were invited. The agenda covered all of the various components of list enhancement work:

- Voter files — what are they?
- Enhancements provided by voter file matching
- Analyzing the list — learning more about your members
- How to use the voter file enhancements within your own organization and/or on a coalition basis
- The legalities of list enhancement work

These meetings allow participants to become more familiar with the overall list enhancement process and ask questions in the context of a larger group. Again, buy-in by the key players at such a meeting is extremely helpful in motivating other organizations to participate.

2.7 One-on-One Meetings

LCV Education Fund field staff have found that supplementing group meetings and trainings with one-on-one meetings often leads to greater success in project recruitment. With the LCV Education Fund legal manual and other materials in hand, one-on-one meetings can help answer questions regarding the list enhancement process, while increasing participation and commitment for the project.

2.8 Assure List Security

An important factor for any participating organization is how their list will be handled during the project. Trust is a key component to List Enhancement Projects. Describe your plan for limiting access to the data. Specify the “safety features” of the program and back them up in writing in a project contract (see below).

It is important to emphasize that each organization’s data will be protected during the list enhancement process. No one will have access to the lists for any purpose without specific written approval from the participants. Whenever possible, data should be stored and transferred under password protection.

2.9 Project Contracts

The final recommended tool in the recruitment process is a legal contract. Following the example set by WEAVE in 1995, LCV Education Fund sponsored projects all use a contract drawn up and thoroughly reviewed by an attorney with substantial experience with nonprofit organization matters (see *Appendix B*). These contracts define in detail the limitations of list use by the facilitating organization. The contract assures individual organizations that their list will be used solely for the purpose of obtaining the enhancements and for no other reason. This is a crucial piece of the puzzle due to the detailed restrictions most organizations have regarding the use of their lists. Without such a contract in place, recruitment would have been virtually impossible for the LCV Education Fund field staff.

COLLECTING LISTS

Once the initial groundwork for the List Enhancement Project has been laid out and project agreements have been signed, it's time to go out and actually acquire lists from the participating groups. This phase of the project can be frustrating. But don't worry – proper planning and setting of deadlines can turn this phase from a logistical nightmare to a manageable exercise.

3.1 Set Up a Project Timeline and Deadlines

First, come up with a timeline that fits the project needs. Start backwards from the day that you will hand the enhanced data back to participating groups, and set reasonable dates for each major step of the project. The LCV Education Fund follows a simple seven step timetable (see *sidebar* on page 10).

The time between the steps varies due to the nature of each phase. To be on the safe side, allow at least two weeks between steps and a minimum of three weeks for step three. LCV Education Fund projects last about four months between the time we start soliciting data and the time we return the final comprehensive analysis.



CREATING A PROJECT TIMELINE

Imagine for a moment that you are the coordinator of a List Enhancement Project for Green Folks for Green Space (GFGS). Recruitment of participants will begin in April and you would like to have the enhanced lists and detailed analysis back in the hands of the

participating organizations no later than August 15. This timeline is tight yet achievable, but you need to get moving on recruitment right away to meet the goal. Wisely, you start backward from the deadline as you establish the project timeline:

EXAMPLE: LIST ENHANCEMENT PROJECT TIMETABLE

1. Signed contracts returned to GFGS
2. Individual organizations' membership data received by GFGS
3. Membership lists transferred to computer consultant for merge and purge to create a unified master list
4. Unified list received by list vendor for enhancements
5. Data returned to computer consultant for decoding and reassembly
6. Data returned to participating groups with initial analysis
7. Detailed analysis returned to participating groups

DATE	MILESTONE
<i>August 15</i>	Return detailed analysis to the participating organizations.
<i>August 1</i>	Return data to the participating organizations.
<i>July 15</i>	Voter file vendor returns data with enhancements to the project computer consultant, who begins decoding, reassembly and initial analysis.
<i>July 1</i>	Data sent to the voter file vendor for enhancement.
<i>June 8</i>	Computer consultant has all data from participating organizations and begins the merge, purge and cleanup process.
<i>May 24</i>	Membership and other data is sent to GFGS by each participating organization/source.
<i>May 10</i>	Signed contracts received by GFGS. GFGS then counter signs and returns a copy to each organization.
<i>April 26</i>	GFGS meets with individual organizations to answer any specific questions they may have.
<i>April 12</i>	GFGS holds a List Summit meeting bringing all interested groups to the table. GFGS incorporates a legal training in the Summit, distributes the LCV Education Fund Legal Manual and responds to questions regarding the project.
<i>April 1</i>	GFGS begins contacting individual organizations regarding the project and sets date for the first List Summit meeting.

The most important part of creating the timeline is to set clear deadlines and to meet them. Because enhancement projects are built on trust, you must fulfill your promises. Every group counts on having their data returned on time. Don't jeopardize the integrity of the project by setting deadlines that you cannot meet.

When you are setting up the timeline, remember that complicated data projects always bring up unexpected problems. Make sure to give your schedule enough slack to accommodate such developments. Remember that data quality is the most important priority, and should always take precedence over the schedule.

3.2 Provide Guidelines for List Transfer

After you have developed a workable timeline, you should work with your computer consultant to develop data guidelines for the groups.

For example, the LCV Education Fund uses a standard form (see *Appendix C*) so each participating group can specify the membership database or other program they use, the file format and the data fields they are sending, and their method of delivery (email, diskette, Zip disk, magnetic tape, etc.).

Be sure to include a list of preferred or required fields:

- ID number (*very important!*)
- Name (including all the names in a record, if more than one)
- Address
- City, State, Zip code
- Area code and phone (if available)
- Email address (if available)

The ID number for each record is important because it provides an accurate and efficient way to incorporate the enhanced data back into each group's own files. Be sure to stress this when organizations provide their lists.

Finally, make sure to get the name of both the main contact (the person responsible for communicating about the project and approving uses of the data) and the programmer or person who handles the data for the organization.

3.3 List Collection and Follow-Up

After getting all of the paperwork squared away, it is time to collect the actual data from the participating groups. This might sound like a simple task, but be forewarned: it will take a lot of time and energy to meet your timeline. Even the most enthusiastic participating groups and key contacts have many other priorities, so it is important to follow up and remind them a week ahead of time that the deadline is coming. On deadline day, you should call each of the groups and kindly remind them to send their data if they have not already done so. For the groups who just plain forgot, or have not had time, give them another deadline and this time stick to it. Let them know that if they don't have their data in by the new extended deadline, they will not be able to participate in the project. It is important for the other partners who have provided their data in a timely fashion to know that the project's time commitments will be met.

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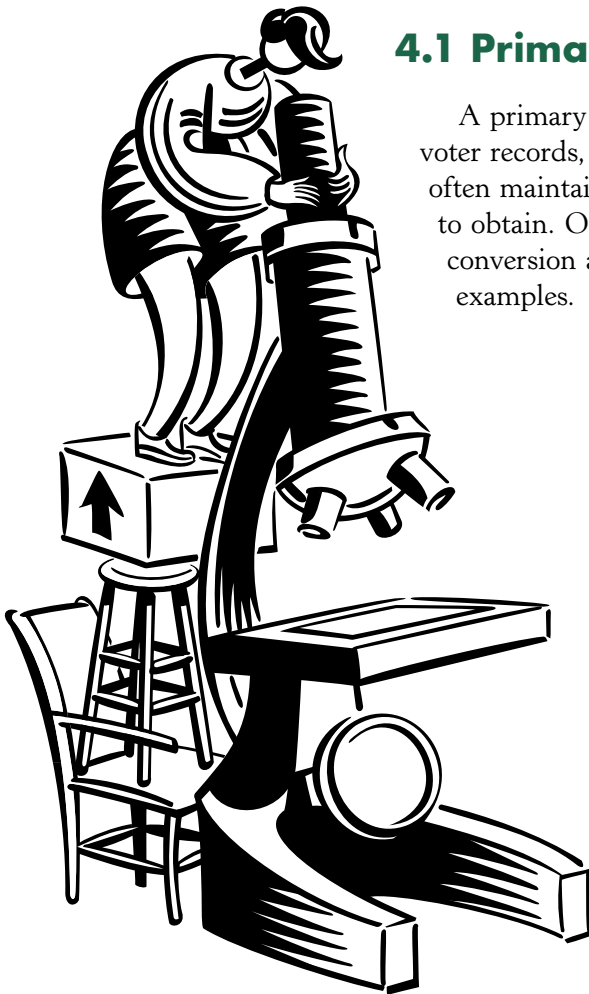
ENHANCEMENT SOURCES

There are many potential data sources for your List Enhancement Project. Plan to spend time doing research on what is available, the price, and the steps needed to acquire the data.

To help clarify the nature of the available data, we describe them here in terms of primary and secondary sources. The most direct or “primary” data sources may be cheaper to purchase, but are often more time-consuming for a List Enhancement Project to deal with. Secondary data sources take data from one or more primary source and make it available commercially. In most cases, you will probably be more interested in getting data from a secondary source because it has already been cleaned up and standardized.

4.1 Primary Data Sources

A primary data source is one containing *original* data, such as voter records, phone numbers or driver’s licenses. These sources are often maintained by government agencies and is usually inexpensive to obtain. On the other hand, you usually need to do a lot of conversion and programming to make use of it. Following are a few examples.



COMMON PRIMARY DATA SOURCES:

■ **Voter registration files** (*Source: county or town elections offices*) These files usually contain jurisdictional information like precinct and congressional, legislative and local districts, registration date, party (if applicable), other information such as gender and age, and sometimes voter history for one or more previous elections. Election offices often provide voter records in the form of printed lists or labels. On the other hand, getting the raw data in an electronic format usually takes special effort.

■ **Driver's license records** (*Source: state department of motor vehicles, or "DMV"*) These files often contain age and gender, two very useful pieces of information for list projects.

■ **ZIP and ZIP+4, carrier routes, and delivery point barcodes** (*Source: U.S. Postal Service*) This data is not very easy to use directly. See Section 4.2 for more about secondary sources for postal address verification.

■ **Census data** (*Source: U.S. Census Bureau*) This includes voluminous statistics about groups of people in census blocks and tracts, including average income, education, household size and other useful indicators.

■ **Residential phone numbers** (*Source: telephone companies*) Phone companies provide names and phone numbers both directly and through secondary resellers. Phone company lists are obviously up-to-date, but unlike the other primary data sources listed here, they are usually very expensive (10 cents per name and up). Also, remember that it may be complicated and time-consuming to buy phone listings directly from all of the phone companies serving your state.

FACTORS TO CONSIDER WHEN USING PRIMARY DATA SOURCES:

■ **Completeness.** Not all records will have complete data. For example, voter records vary widely in the amount of age, gender, and voter history data they contain.

■ **Access and privacy.** Public data sources like voter files and driver's license files are restricted to specific uses. For example, many states require that you sign an affidavit that you won't use voter file data for commercial solicitations. This is not a problem for List Enhancement Projects, which are clearly related to voter participation, but it could become a problem if you are fundraising or prospecting a set of non-members from the voter file. Also note that federal privacy laws now allow people to withdraw their addresses from voter files and motor vehicle registrations. In some states, up to 20 percent of the applicable population have "opted out" of the driver's license file.

■ **Procedures.** Obtaining each primary data source usually means that you will need to fill out a form or send a letter requesting the data, along with a check for prepayment. Make sure to identify the specific person who should receive your request, and call them to make advance arrangements.

■ **Usefulness.** Some types of data enhancements are more important than others, even essential. For example, phone numbers are useful for many organizational activities. But they are essential for political campaigns. You may want to make special arrangements to get the most up-to-date phone numbers possible.

4.2 Secondary Data Sources

As mentioned earlier, secondary data sources are those that collect data from one or more primary sources and make it available commercially. Here are some common secondary data sources:

■ **Voter file vendors.** There are several dozen companies that specialize in assembling and selling state-by-state voter data. Voter file vendors take primary data sources, such as county voter files, DMV lists and phone data, and create enhanced lists in a standard format. Some only work with one state, while others cover much of the country. No single vendor has current data for every state. Voter file vendors usually sell lists in printed page and label form, although it is increasingly possible to buy the actual data. Since voter file vendors are the primary source for most List Enhancement Projects, we will cover them in extensive detail in the next section.

■ **Grassroots Organizations Accessing Legislatures (GOAL).** The LCV Education Fund's GOAL project adds congressional and legislative districts for any address with a valid ZIP+4 (which GOAL also supplies where possible). This project is absolutely free to qualifying environmental groups and List Enhancement Projects, and available at a modest fee for other groups (see *Appendix E*). You simply submit basic address data to GOAL via email or diskette (to protect list privacy, addressee names are not required). The GOAL project accepts new data on the first of every other month. After about two weeks, your file is returned with the addition of the ZIP+4 and congressional and legislative districts. Even if you have very good voter file data, you should run your list through GOAL to pick up congressional and legislative districts for the addresses that don't match to voter records.

■ **Postal data vendors.** You may not deal directly with bulk mail, but as a List Enhancement Project manager you should know about the basic requirements. The U.S. Postal Service regulations are extensive and complex, and well beyond the scope of this manual. However, there are two main postal address verification systems you should know about – CASS and NCOA:

— **Coding Accuracy Support System (CASS)** is a U.S. Postal Service program for verifying the validity of mailing addresses. CASS doesn't tell you whether a person lives at a particular address, but CASS does include all of the postal codes needed to create ZIP, ZIP+4, carrier route and delivery point bar codes for any valid address in the United States. Most U.S. Postal Service automation discounts now require that all addresses are CASS-certified. For a few hundred dollars, you can buy CASS software that runs on a regular PC. Because of postal requirements, the software is usually sold on a subscription basis with updates every two months. You will probably want to purchase CASS software for your List Enhancement Project, since it will significantly increase the match rate you get for voter data and other enhancements and possibly reduce the costs of your mailings.

— **National Change of Address (NCOA)** is a U.S. Postal Service program for tracking valid delivery addresses for individuals. The NCOA database is where your Change of Address card goes when you move. NCOA is only available through 24 U.S. Postal Service-certified vendors. NCOA matching is expensive — usually about two cents per address submitted. But since 10 to 20 percent of people in any given area move

within a year, it may be a good step to take with your list. Important to note: some voter file vendors run both CASS and NCOA on their files, so you may not need to resort to an expensive NCOA update.

- **Phone list vendors.** Numerous firms verify, update or add phone numbers to lists. They purchase the data from local phone companies and offer it on a statewide, regional or national basis. Some also offer one-stop shopping with CASS and NCOA processing. The advantage of using phone list resellers is that they cover your entire state at a fraction of the cost of getting the data from each phone company. But the disadvantage is that the data is often months old — even more than a year, depending on how often they purchase the primary source data. And keep in mind, your voter file vendor may also provide recent phone listings, making a separate phone match unnecessary.

- **Geocoding.** Many specialty firms offer geocoding services, which means adding geographic indicators to address lists. These normally come in two forms: longitude/latitude and census block/tract. Some vendors include these as add-on services when you do a CASS or voter file match, since the data can be linked to ZIP+4 listings (a ZIP+4 may apply to one side of a block on a street or even to a single building). The importance of geocoding is that it allows list users to link their address records to mapping programs and then target their members using geographic and census coordinates.

- **Other files.** List vendors and brokers make numerous other files available, some of which may be applicable to your List Enhancement Project. Home ownership, family size, magazine subscriptions, appliance and car purchases, and other data can be purchased. The quality and price vary considerably.

4.3 Voter File Vendors

For most List Enhancement Projects, a statewide voter file vendor is the best choice for data and matching services. (If your state lacks a good voter file, don't give up — we'll explain below how you can use other data sources to make your project happen.)

WHO SELLS VOTER FILE DATA?

- **National or regional vendors.** The leading vendors compile voter files for several states, and then resell printed versions of the data in standard list and label formats. They usually have large programming and sales staffs and can send you a standard price list.

- **Single state vendors.** Several states have vendors who work only with the voter file in that state. Sometimes these vendors have a better understanding of their state's voter files than a larger national firm.

- **Private vendors.** In a few states, private vendors collect and manage voter file data, usually in association with a political party. Although these firms may not have retail price lists and services, they may be willing to provide a voter file match for a List Enhancement Project.

VOTER FILE VENDOR CHECKLIST

The most qualified vendor will be happy to answer every question you have without hesitation. Assume nothing, and ask about everything.

- What types of data does the vendor have? Get a complete list in writing, including jurisdictions (congressional, legislative and local districts), precinct, absentee status, party, gender, age, phone, and voter history (how many elections, and how far back, for each county or election district). You should ask about data availability in exhaustive detail, or you may be disappointed with your enhanced file.
- How often do they get voter registration updates? Some vendors get them before each major election, while others may only do this once a year or even less, depending on the size of the state.
- Find out if they do regular postal (CASS and NCOA), phone and driver's license updates.
- How many of their records are complete? If there are gaps, can they explain why? For example, the voter history in a vendor's statewide voter file might vary considerably by elections office. It is not enough to say, "We have voter history for four years," when what they mean is that for some of the major cities they have four years, but for a lot of areas they have one year or nothing at all.
- How do they propose to accomplish your file match? Will they account for name and address variations like nicknames and misspellings? Do their voter records include both residence and mailing address, and will they match your records against both of them?
- Not all of your records will match to the voter file. Voter file vendors usually have a pretty good idea of the match percentage you can expect, but treat match percentages with caution – a percentage alone doesn't tell you much about match quality.
- Do they include phone updates as part of the standard price, or is that an extra charge? What other data is available for an extra fee? Some vendors will add geocoding, for example.
- Will the vendor allow your consultant to work directly with their programmers to ensure the match is done properly?
- Does the vendor have a knowledgeable and responsive staff? This includes both the sales people and the programmers. Your project is going to be unique even if the vendor has done some matching work in the past. Will they work with you productively to go through all the details, offer you a fair price and fix problems immediately when they occur? Question your vendors carefully and ask for references.

CHECK OUT POTENTIAL LIST VENDORS

Finding out about the list vendors for your state is a necessary but sometimes tedious task. Since these firms have very specialized services, they may not even be listed in the Yellow Pages. *Campaigns & Elections* magazine has occasional vendor listings and an online directory.

Use the political grapevine in your area — particularly experienced campaign managers or the state headquarters of the political parties — to find out about potential voter file vendors for your project. Use the Vendor Checklist (*on page 16*) as you search for the right vendor.

4.4 Get Bids in Writing

It is important to be precise about what you need and what each of your potential vendors says they can provide. Broad assurances will not do. You should agree on a list of fields to be provided with your enhanced list, otherwise problems are bound to occur. In the past, some List Enhancement Projects have had problems when vendors did not supply some of the expected jurisdictions or voter history.

- **Get It In Writing.** You should get a formal bid, negotiate final terms, and then sign a formal contract. It is wise to have an attorney review your data contracts. Be sure you have the rights to use the data as required by the List Enhancement Project, and that you can get prompt action by the vendor if there are data problems.

- **Get Multiple Bids.** Because List Enhancement Projects involve custom work for voter file vendors, you may have some room to negotiate on price and terms. Even if you are pretty sure about which vendor you want to pick, get at least two bids. This will allow you to compare prices and service, and give you more negotiating leverage. Remember, you are in the strongest position while you are negotiating a purchase.

- **Be Reasonable, But Demand Quality.** The most important factor to success in List Enhancement Projects is data quality. The best vendors will offer you high quality data and services at a fair price.

4.5 Managing the Price/Quality Trade-off

When you are ready to choose your data sources, give careful consideration to all the factors involved. Some types of data may be difficult to obtain, but might be worth it for specific projects.

For example, suppose that you are setting up a List Enhancement Project, and you have already lined up a number of participating groups and some potential data sources. You know that Citizens for Clean Water is preparing to circulate a new ballot measure petition, and their highest priority enhancements are voter registration, absentee status and voter history. On the other hand, the Native Fish Foundation tells you they are planning a major membership drive where age and gender listings are the most important to get. Other groups have also told you some of their proposed uses for the enhanced data, all of which you are reviewing in your project notes.

Let's say you have a good voter file vendor in mind to supply the data enhancements and do your file match, but you know that the age and gender information in their file isn't very good. Although the clean water group may not care as much, it might be worth going to another source for age and gender data to help the native fish group with their recruiting. In

this case, you might decide to get *both* high quality voter data from the voter file, and age/gender information from another source such as the state driver's license file.

Sometimes a data enhancement may seem like a good idea, but the cost is simply too high. For example, let's say one of your groups has an important campaign requiring up-to-date phone numbers. Your voter file vendor might have phones between six months and a year old, but your budget can't support the cost of buying better up-to-date numbers from the local phone company. Here is a case where a group with a specific need should take it upon themselves to acquire the phone update directly. The research you have done may benefit them a great deal in finding the best phone number for data sources and making arrangements.

4.6 Working With Data Vendors

Ongoing contact with your voter file and other data vendors is critical to project success. Questions and problems *always* arise in data projects, but good vendors are prepared to deal with them as they occur. You should never hesitate to raise issues as they come along. The earlier you do, the easier it is to fix them.

Your project programmer needs to be in constant communication with key programming staff at your voter file vendor or other data source. Making sure all the details are worked out at the beginning of the project will save a great deal of frustration and delay. Allowing a bad relationship with a key vendor contact to develop is almost certainly the sign of constant problems ahead with your enhanced data.

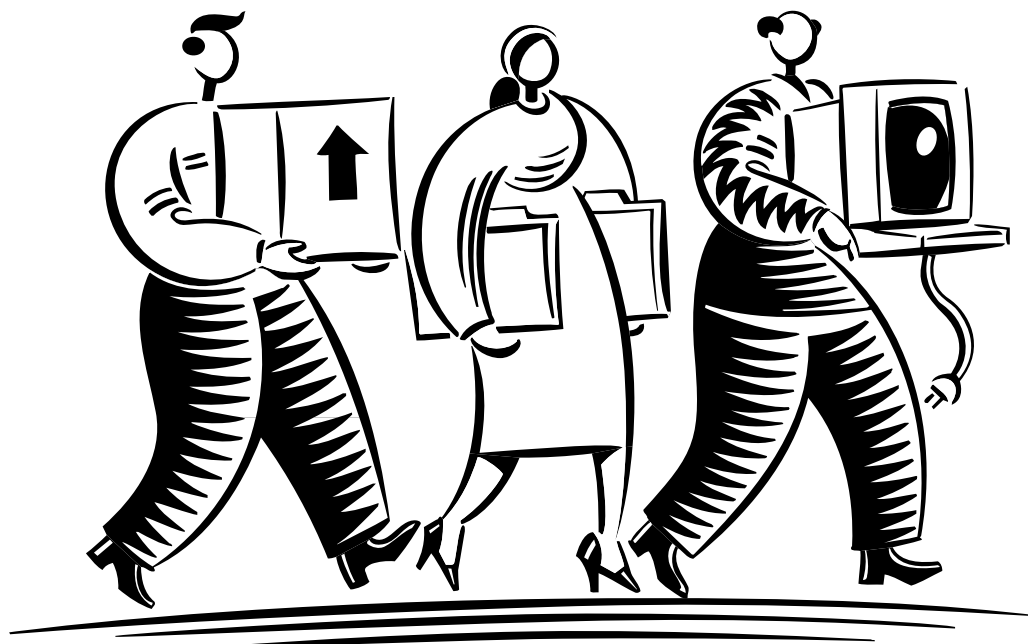
One extremely important factor to think about when scheduling your enhancements with a vendor is when the vendor does their updates. Make sure to schedule your match *after* their most recent update, if possible, to increase the accuracy of the data.

TECHNICAL RESOURCES

While it might be possible to have a voter file vendor do all the work on your project, all of the List Enhancement Projects to date have kept master list preparation under their direct control and let the voter file vendor focus on the list matching. This section describes how to acquire the equipment and consulting services you need to manage your master file.

5.1 Purchase a Project Computer and Software

It is a good idea to purchase a separate, dedicated computer system for your voter file project. List projects are technically complex and require a concentrated effort with sufficient equipment and software. A shared computer in a busy office will reduce your programmer's productivity and put your project timeline at serious risk. A separate system will also increase your group's ability to ensure the security of the lists.



WHAT SHOULD YOU BUY?

A couple of years ago, a properly sized computer for a List Enhancement Project was a significant investment. Today, a \$1,000 system can handle all but the largest projects without any additional equipment. Your system should have at least these features:

- ❑ **Pentium-class CPU (central processing unit or main computer chip).** CPUs are generally measured by clock or system speed. Most systems today are made with speeds of 200 MegaHertz (MHz) and up. This is generally sufficient for almost any size of project – even half a million records. It is not important whether you pick Intel, AMD or Cyrix/IBM. Also, you can use a Macintosh or Unix-based system if your programmer prefers. Just be sure it's powerful enough to handle the job.
- ❑ **RAM (random access memory).** This is the working memory of the system. Memory prices have come down considerably so you should get at least 32 megabytes (MB).
- ❑ **Hard Drive.** This is the permanent storage for your system, like a file cabinet. As a rule of thumb, allow 4 megabytes for every 1,000 records you expect to have in your project database. That includes space for the database itself, backup copies, working files and the original files sent by participating organizations. Thus, a project with 200,000 records needs 800 MB of space, which is readily available on a standard PC (which now usually come with a 2,000 MB or larger hard drive). Disk drives are cheap, though, so buy a larger drive if you can afford it.
- ❑ **Backup.** You should plan carefully for backing up the project data. There are many choices: backup tape drives, Iomega Zip disks, Jaz and Syquest removable drives, CD-writable drives and more. For most projects, a Zip drive for about \$125 and 100 MB Zip disks costing about \$12 each provide a very reasonable option. You may also find this handy for transferring large data sets to and from your voter file vendor or other data sources.
- ❑ **Database Software.** Spreadsheets like Excel, address managers like ACT and simple "flat file" data programs are just not up to the tasks involved in managing tens or hundreds of thousands of records. You need a full-scale relational data management (database) program. "Relational" means that you can relate one table of information directly to another – for example, an organization source list can be related to the project master file with a project ID number.

The choice of database software is one of the key decisions affecting project productivity, so don't trim this part of your budget. Some of the main ones include Foxpro, Access, Filemaker, R:Base and Paradox. The most important factors are whether the database can handle the workload and whether your programmer is thoroughly familiar with it.

5.2 Select a Computer Consultant

The computer consultant or programmer for a List Enhancement Project has a demanding role. You need someone who understands the big picture, but knows how to paint all the small details and put them together.

Use your personal and organizational contacts to find potential consultants for your project, if you don't already have a qualified staff member. Send out a request for qualifications (RFQ) to all your participating groups and local email networks.

The most important factor for selecting a computer consultant is previous experience with large data projects. This is not the position to throw at someone who only has experience with small data files or is a specialist in another programming area.

Your programmer should be thoroughly familiar with and strongly recommend a single database program for the project. It is also helpful to be competent in a programming language such as C or Perl, since some work is done more efficiently outside a database. Another plus is knowledge of different file formats. Familiarity with both organizational membership data and voter data is obviously helpful. It is also important for your consultant to be competent in the use of the Internet, which is becoming a standard channel for file transfers.

Your consultant needs to be a good communicator, not only so you can understand and manage the work as it progresses, but so the consultant can provide effective assistance to participating groups in integrating and using their enhanced data.

Unless you already have a staff member for the project, you will want to negotiate a contract with your computer consultant. This can be tricky because this kind of project is somewhat difficult to predict. However, a competent consultant can provide reasonable estimates. Be careful of consultants who promise everything or make commitments that are too broad. Every consultant wants to get the job and please the client, but only those with real experience will acknowledge the uncertainty involved in a data project and be prepared for it.

Remember that the project timeline may vary depending on the tasks involved and unexpected hitches. You may want to make an arrangement with your consultant to work up to a set number of hours or total dollars, and then be prepared to negotiate further work if necessary. Your consultant should be responsible for notifying you when things are taking longer or more problems are cropping up than anticipated.

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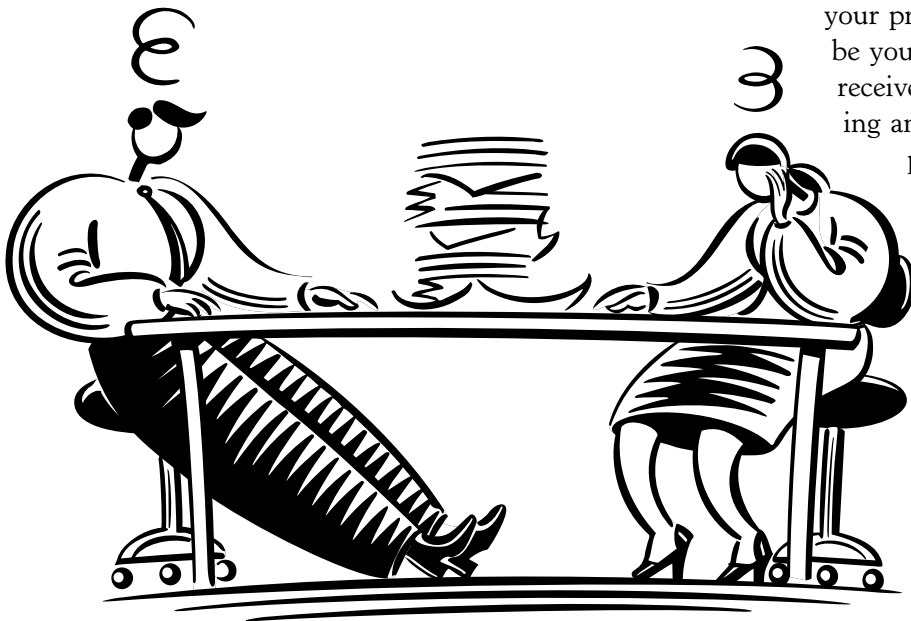
LIST MATCHING

So, your List Enhancement Project has a group of participating organizations, written agreements, a programmer/consultant, and a voter file vendor or other main list enhancement source. Now the lists from your participating organizations start arriving. What do you do next?

In this phase, most of the processing will be done by your programmer and your list vendors. But that doesn't mean it's time to relax! You must keep closely in touch with the work as it progresses, help coordinate tasks, and make decisions when needed. Don't get discouraged if things seem to be going slowly at first. Progress in technical projects like this is sometimes hard to judge. Expect your programmer to spend a lot of time in preparation, including running test data through the entire process. Once these routines are all in place, the actual data processing should go smoothly and quickly. Remember the old saying: "If you don't have time to do it right, you will have to find time to do it over!"

The description below is an overview of the list matching process, but it by no means covers all of the factors involved. The LCV Education Fund can provide additional technical resources to help your programmer with the fine details. Every programmer is likely to go about the process in a somewhat different way. What matters is that you get what you need at the end of the process, on time and within budget.

Data preparation is an important factor for your project's success, and data quality should be your key concern from the moment you receive the first organization's list for processing and enhancement. In every step of the process, the quality of the data will either improve or decline, based on how much attention is paid to the details.



6.1 Create a Master File Structure

The master file for your project will combine all of the participating organization records into one common format. The master file can then be enhanced with voter file and other data. Finally, the enhanced records can be extracted and sent back to each group.

Your programmer should create a file layout or “data dictionary” for the master file early on. This is a list of the fields for each record, including the field name, type (such as text or numeric), and length. The database structure needs to incorporate several elements:

- A project ID number to identify each record uniquely within the project as a whole
- A standard list of fields to hold the relevant data from the original lists. Usually this includes ID number, name, address, city, state, ZIP Code, phone and email
- Fields to hold additional data enhancements, such as age, gender, county, precinct, voter ID, jurisdictions, voter history, etc.
- Temporary working fields

Each programmer will have a somewhat different way of setting up the database structure. The LCV Education Fund has suggested a list of standardized data fields and types, based on the experience of numerous previous projects (see *Appendix F*). This is especially important if your project incorporates national organizations who have experience from participating in LCV Education Fund List Enhancement Projects and are accustomed to getting their data back in specific ways.

The database structure can be changed somewhat as the project goes on, but it’s important to minimize those modifications once you start working with “live” data.

6.2 Prepare Incoming Lists

Participating groups will send lists to you in various forms (e.g., floppy diskettes, Zip disks and magnetic tapes). Sometimes it may be necessary to get a vendor to convert the data. For example, some national organizations supply data only on old-fashioned magnetic tape reels. Service bureaus and direct mail houses can be found in most cities to convert them for about \$100 to \$200 per tape.

Once the data is in your project computer, the programmer needs to convert it from the various file formats that are used (e.g., comma-delimited or fixed-length text, or dBase, Excel, Access or Filemaker files). Most database programs have excellent conversion routines for these formats.

Now the relevant details must be extracted from the source files. Each organization will have a different format. Some will just supply name, address, city, state and ZIP code. Others will add phone numbers and email addresses. *Make sure that each group supplies a unique ID number for each of their records.* This makes it much easier to put data back into their original lists.

Even though it is usually pretty obvious from looking at the data, it helps if each organization provides a file layout. This should show the name, type and length of each data field in order, and the total number of records.

6.3 Clean and Standardize Original Lists

The next step is to clean and standardize each source file you receive from a participating organization.

Cleaning a list means fixing data entry errors, such as address information in the wrong fields, removing unnecessary punctuation, converting entries to uppercase, fixing misspelled words and abbreviations, and taking other steps to create a clean, workable file.

Standardizing a list means inserting each record into a standard data format ready for the master file. Since the voter file and other list sources have one name per record, remember to split apart records with multiple names.

6.4 Address Standardization (CASS)

Once the working data is cleaned up and standardized, you should run it through address standardization. The easiest method is to use the CASS software we discussed in Section 4.2. This makes file matching much more effective, since records for the same address on both sides of a data match will be exactly the same. For example, the various abbreviations for *Street* will all end up as *St*.

6.5 Mark Duplicate and Incomplete Records

Most groups keep pretty good track of their membership lists, but duplicates inevitably creep in. If you compare the list to itself once the addresses have been standardized, it is easy to mark any duplicates you find. You should also mark incomplete records (ones with missing name, address or other elements) and out-of-state addresses. These can be held back from the voter file match to save on costs.

6.6 Merge Records into the Master File

Once each list has been thoroughly cleaned, standardized and de-duplicated, you can add it to the project master file. Each record should be marked to show which source list it came from.

As you add records to the master file, merge the ones with multiple memberships that match from previous lists. This will save the cost of submitting duplicate records for a file match, and also give you a very useful measure: the number of groups each person belongs to. For example, analysis of the results from many List Enhancement Projects shows that people who belong to two or more groups are likely to be more frequent voters.

6.7 Submit Master File to List Sources for Matching

When you have finished combining all the lists into the master file, you are finally ready to send it out for matching and enhancements. During this stage it is very important for your programmer and the technical staff at the vendor to be in close contact.

For reasons of list security and efficiency, you should supply only the fields the vendor needs to do the match: your master list ID number, name, address, city, state, ZIP code and phone. Other fields, particularly those including source codes or individual list ID numbers, should not be sent.

6.8 Validate and Re-Merge the Enhanced Data to the Master File

Once the match has been done, your list vendor should return the enhanced data, including your master list ID number and all the fields they contracted to provide. A status code indicating the type or quality of match from the vendor is very helpful (full match, address-only match, etc.).

When you get back the enhanced file, the first and most important step is to stop and take a very close look at the data. **This quality checking phase is probably the most critical step in the List Enhancement Project!**

When the data has been validated — and only then — you can reincorporate the enhancements back into your master file. Once again, check the enhanced master list extensively to ensure that your programming steps are correct.

6.9 Prepare Enhanced Lists

When all the enhancements to your master file are complete, you can extract individual enhanced lists and prepare to send them back to each participating group. It is usually best to do this in a simple, but easily usable, file format like ASCII comma-delimited, with a standard set of fields. Don't forget to include complete documentation with each file (see *Section 8* for details).

Just as you did with the data you received from the voter file vendor, you should thoroughly check each file you create before you send it back to the originating group. Compare a sample of each enhanced list against the original list, if at all possible. The best approach is to have someone who has not been directly involved in managing the data take a look at the files for inconsistencies and errors.

Finally, if significant problems are found later on by the organizations receiving their enhanced lists, be prepared to fix them immediately.

In *Section 8*, we'll talk about the steps involved in returning the enhanced lists back to each participating organization.

6.10 Data Matching Issues

List matching raises a lot of concerns. Why do some list matches turn out better than others? Why do incorrect matches sometimes come through, and what can be done about them?

Both the quality of a vendor's program and the characteristics of the files influence how many successful matches are made. Every enhanced list will have some "false negatives" (matches that should have been made and weren't), and "false positives" (incorrect matches).

QUALITY CHECKLIST FOR VOTER FILE MATCH

- Count and examine the records to make sure they match what you sent, and that all the fields you ordered are included.
- Spot-check a sample of the records to make sure that the enhanced data seems reasonable. For example, look up some of the phone numbers provided.
- Ask several people you know about their address, phone, precinct, legislative district and voter history, and compare it to the enhanced data you received. This will catch many of the errors that could crop up in time to fix mistakes before the data goes back to the end users.
- If you find problems during the checking phase, select some more samples and see if you can find a pattern. Then get in touch with your vendor to review your findings. A good vendor will make every effort to fix problems immediately.

Today's high-speed computers make automated matching of large lists possible, but this depends on a program or algorithm to compare the names, addresses and phone numbers. Because of variations in data entry, perfect matches are never possible. A high-quality matching program will increase the number of accurate matches and minimize both false positives and false negatives, but it can't eliminate them. Here are the main reasons why:

- Data entry differences or errors can prevent matches from being made. For example, some people may be listed under their formal name in the voter file, but under a different nickname or initials in a membership file (Elizabeth can also be Liz, Beth, Betsy, Betty or Liza).

- As time goes on and people move, addresses and phones change and decrease the potential match.

- Some people prefer to use business or mailing addresses and phone numbers for their memberships, but these will not match to voter residence records.

- Finally, some people aren't registered to vote.

In terms of ensuring the highest possible match rate, the only part of the enhancement process you can control directly is the quality of the data in your master file. That is why cleaning, standardization, and quality checking are so crucial to the match percentage and the overall value of the List Enhancement Project itself. The greater the emphasis you place on data quality, the better the results will be in the end.

ANALYSIS

List Enhancement Projects provide the opportunity to develop interesting and important data analyses. All of the statewide List Enhancement Projects so far have provided considerable insight from analyzing the enhanced files.

7.1 Developing the Analysis

Your project can offer a valuable service by providing a standardized set of reports. The analysis doesn't have to be "rocket science." Instead, use simple summary listings and crosstabulations to provide the foundation. You can put together a profile showing how each group compares to the list project as a whole and to your entire state.

These statistics also provide the basis for summary graphs. This is a good way to "tell the story" revealed by the enhanced data to organizational managers, board members and others. Experience has shown that this is the best way to motivate organizations to use their enhanced files.

Expect to give your standard set of tables and graphs a great deal of attention and to go through many revisions and proof copies. Focus on developing a simple approach that works well with organizations of different size and conveys a clear message about the underlying data. Finally, remember to remove or code the names of organizations on any comparison tables or graphs that are seen by others.



7.2 Preparing Tables and Graphs

There are several types of tables and graphs you can prepare for your project analysis.

- **Frequency distributions** (or just “frequencies”) are simple tabulations of elements and counts for a given column – for example, counts by city, county, ZIP code, age, gender, congressional district, legislative district, voter registration, absentee status and voting history.

- **Crosstabulations** (or “crosstabs”) are two-way data comparisons. This is the familiar summary table you see with one variable on the horizontal axis and another on the vertical. Any two elements from your list of key variables can be crosstabbed, and you probably will want to try a lot of them.

Where frequencies tell you about the relative number or importance of groups within the total population, crosstabs tell you something about the relationships between variables. For example, one of the most interesting crosstabs is age by gender. From this you can tell whether a particular group tends to have older or younger people and more females or males than the entire project or the state as a whole.

- **Filters.** You can also filter records for frequencies and crosstabs based on important variables. For example, List Enhancement Projects often compare the voting record of absentee and non-absentee voters, using the absentee status variable as a filter.

- **Voting Index and List Membership Index.** Two additional variables merit special attention: the voting index (usually a 0-to-4 index for votes cast in the previous four elections), and the number of memberships for each person. The membership index typically shows that only 15 percent to 20 percent of all people in a master file have multiple memberships.

- **Graphs.** Numerous types of graphs can be created from the underlying data in the enhanced files. You can prepare bar charts, line charts, scatterplots, histograms, and many others, but be careful not to get carried away! The best graphs are simple and communicate a clear message. Refer the viewer to the underlying tables if they want more details.

- **Creating Organization-Specific Tables and Graphs.** Once you have worked out a set of tables and graphs for your master file as a whole, you can apply those formats to each group in turn. Set up a “shell” or template spreadsheet that has all the values and chart settings you need, and then copy that to separate files for each group. Then you can plug in the values for each group in turn and print out the results consistently.

LIST RETURN, TRAINING & SUPPORT

Now you have completed the list enhancements and analysis, and it is time to return the lists to each of the participating organizations. At this point, some project managers have opted simply to put the enhanced information on disk and, along with the written reports, drop it in the mail. This could very well mark the end of the project. You could wipe your hands, pat yourself on the back, and celebrate the completion of the project. Chances are, however, that the enhanced information would never be put to use by the participating organizations.

The LCV Education Fund and others who have managed successful List Enhancement Projects have found that a great deal more follow-through needs to be done if organizations are truly going to benefit from their new information. Continuing support is the key. We have found that the return of the enhanced lists is best done in a multi-step process.

8.1 Returning Enhanced Lists

First, the project manager should return a package of information to each participating organization, including a disk with the enhanced data and a document with detailed instructions on how to open the disk and outlining the new fields that have been attached.

This can be sent through the regular mail, although using Federal Express or UPS is not a bad idea for tracking purposes.



A few days after sending out the enhanced data package, you should call each organization and check “to see how things are going.” This call serves many purposes: (1) you can see if the data has arrived; (2) you can find out whether anything has been done with the data (often it may still be sitting there unopened); (3) you can offer verbal support and instructions on how to access the data in case of any difficulties; and (4) you can set up a meeting with the organization to talk through both the technical and strategic details of their new data.

We have found that follow-up meetings should be set as close as possible to when organizations actually receive the data to insure that inertia doesn’t set in. Opening the disks and exploring the new data is an exciting prospect, especially when the data is “fresh.”

8.2 Technical Assistance

As we all know, most nonprofit organizations need all the computer and technical assistance they can get. In the initial follow-up calls and meetings for list projects, we found that most participating organizations, especially smaller ones, really appreciate technical assistance in dealing with this new, sophisticated information.

Some organizations may not have a “computer person,” so the job of reintegrating the many new fields provided by the project is left to staff people who are also dealing with lobbying, fundraising or membership outreach. Taking the time to walk through the many technical questions they may have is the key to ensuring that the enhanced information is examined and ultimately put to use. Ideally, a visit is made to each organization by both the project manager and the computer consultant.

WEAVE developed the idea of a “circuit rider” who spends time with each organization working out the technical details of integrating the enhanced lists into their existing databases. The circuit rider was WEAVE’s response to a critical need in the project process. If organizations don’t have access to detailed technical assistance, the enhanced information often goes completely unused. Your project might not be able to offer participants the services of a dedicated circuit rider, but the technical assistance you *can* provide is sure to be appreciated and translated directly into day-to-day list use.

8.3 List Enhancement Summit Meeting, Round Two

Another important aspect to the list return process that you may want to consider is convening a second group “summit meeting.” Bringing participants together again at the end of the project is a good way to disseminate information, provide training, answer questions and get folks excited about putting the enhanced lists to work. Many organizations share similar obstacles to using the data, and everyone can benefit if these are handled in a workshop format.

The second list summit meeting is also an opportunity to go over the field structure of the enhanced data, and introduce or expand upon the many possibilities for using it. Materials that you may want to consider distributing at this meeting include the LCV Education Fund legal guide, *Maximize Your Grassroots Power*, and WEAVE’s *Help Wanted* manual, which is a collection of stories documenting the ways groups have used their enhanced lists. WEAVE’s manual also includes an appendix of contacts to use as a resource in developing new projects.

8.4 Wrapping Up the List Enhancement Project

After the data and analysis have been delivered and all of the trainings are complete, you should continue to assess the progress that participating groups are making with their enhanced lists. Are they actually using their list? If so, how? What obstacles have they encountered? Your data and analysis consultants should be available to help with ongoing issues and questions.

Finally, you may wish to put together a program review or evaluation. Did the program meet its objectives? How many organizations participated? How many records were contributed to the master file, and what was the voter file match percentage? Did the project adhere to the established timeline, and if not, what did you do to address delays? How are the organizations using their data?

The evaluation doesn't have to be extensive, but it will provide a valuable summation of the program, including resources and lessons learned, and help build the long-term capability for extending the reach and sophistication of organizational data management.

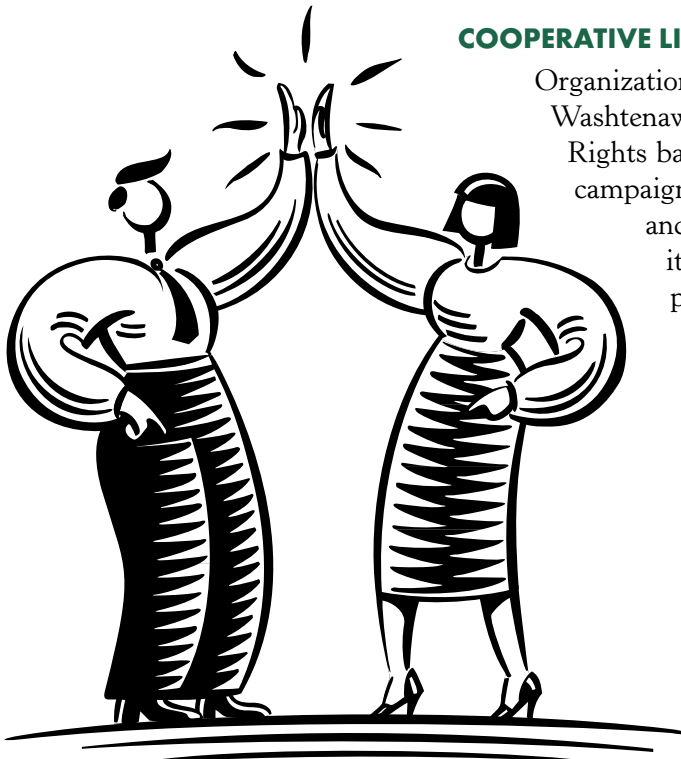
9.

BEYOND THE BASICS OF LIST ENHANCEMENT

We are still early in the development of List Enhancement Projects, but we now have solid accomplishments and a lengthy set of lessons learned. In this section, we will review some of those lessons, as well as look into the future.

9.1 Stories and Results

Organizations participating in List Enhancement Projects are doing amazing things with their new enhanced lists. The examples in this section highlight some of these possibilities. For more examples, and a more detailed look at the possibilities, please refer to WEAVE's *Help Wanted* manual.



COOPERATIVE LIST USE FOR A MICHIGAN BALLOT MEASURE

Organizations in Michigan used their enhanced lists in Washtenaw County to support the Purchase of Development Rights ballot measure in the November 1998 election. This campaign was of great importance to the environmental and conservation community. If the measure passed it would have set a precedent for farmland preservation throughout the state.

Knowing that the LCV Education Fund List Enhancement Project could provide a strong support base for the issue, the campaign decided to approach each participating organization with a request to use their membership list to contact voters about the measure. Strict use limitations were defined in contract form to ensure each organization that the lists would be used only for issue education and “get out the vote” (GOTV), and not for fundraising.

The plan was to target motivated and semi-motivated voters (voting in two of four or more of the last four elections), send them two pieces of educational mail, and call them twice to remind them to vote.

EMAIL/FAX ACTION ALERT SYSTEMS IN COLORADO AND MICHIGAN

Starting in 1997, the LCV Education Fund joined with the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) to create state-based email action alert systems in Colorado and Michigan, using the List Enhancement Project as the foundation. Organizations that participated in the list project were contacted to be part of this effort.

Motivated voters (3-of-4 and 4-of-4 voters with phone numbers) were contacted by a telemarketing firm and included in the action network if they had email and were willing to participate. In Michigan, the gender and age data from the List Enhancement Project were also used to focus the effort, since in the test run it was determined that women in their 40s seemed more willing to join the project.

A steering committee of the participating groups decides the focus of email action alert messages. EDF manages a sophisticated system that sends the approved action alert messages to recipients, tracks their responses, and converts them into faxes that are then sent to the targets.

In Colorado, the first state to get this project off the ground, the Colorado Action Network (CAN) caused the fax machines at the state capital to be turned off with the volume generated by their first few alerts. CAN then hand-delivered incoming messages directly to the legislators’ offices.

The Michigan Action Project (MAP) came into existence shortly after CAN, sending out seven alerts in the first seven months of operation. One of these alerts focused on the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) and a corporation based in Detroit that requested MDEQ to allow modification of a conservation easement protecting the last remnant of Great Lakes coastal marsh on the Michigan mainland of the Detroit River. The MDEQ announced in December 1998 that the permit application was denied and the island portion of the easement will remain intact. As this manual goes to print, the MDEQ is still undecided about the easement that protects the mainland, but their initial decision is a positive step in the right direction. MAP was an essential part of getting the environmental message heard.

TARGETED TURNOUT IN OREGON

The Northwest Coalition for Alternatives to Pesticides (NCAP) and the Oregon Environmental Council (OEC) have been holding joint meetings around the state to recruit activists to work on a pesticide right-to-know law. They combined their organization records from the voter file data in Oregon’s most recent List Enhancement Project, which was coordinated by the Oregon League of Conservation Voters Education Fund, to mail and phone their members who are frequent voters in the targeted legislative districts where the meetings were being held.

At the same time, the OEC organized a forum on drinking water in the city of Tigard, Oregon. They secured the agreement of several organizations to pull their data from the List Enhancement Project, and invited their most frequent (3- and 4-of-4 voters) to the forum.

ENHANCED LIST BECOMES ESSENTIAL IN NEW YORK

In 1996, the New York Conservation Education Fund (NYCEF) successfully implemented the initial New York Voter File Project, enlisting participation from 15 national, state and regional environmental organizations and yielding an enhanced voter list of 110,000 environmentalists statewide. The entire list, and portions of it, have become an integral part of NYCEF and other organizations' campaigns. Here are just a few examples:

- In 1996, NYCEF used the entire enhanced list to do voter education about the Clean Water/Clean Air Bond Act. Simultaneously, the New York League of Conservation Voters (NYLCV) used the enhanced list to pass the Vote YES Campaign for the Clean Water/Clean Air Bond Act.

- In 1997, Environmental Advocates of NY used the enhanced list to increase participation in their Earth Day Lobby Day. NYLCV used the list that year to distribute their Citizen Guides in New York City, Long Island, Westchester, and Erie.

- In 1998, NYLCV used the enhanced list to inform politicians about the number of voting environmental activists in their districts, and Sierra Club used the enhanced list to lobby the Empire State Development Corporation to develop the former Kings Park Psychiatric Center as parkland.

9.2 Data Ethics and Privacy

As the use of computerized and networked data continues to expand, issues of data ethics and privacy are emerging rapidly. Some of these areas have been addressed previously in this manual. The concerns organizations have about combining their lists into a master file should be addressed with project participation agreements, security measures, and written confirmations for list use.

The addition of enhancements to ordinary membership lists raises concern as well. For example, some legal experts advise that 501(c)(3) organizations should not include political party affiliation in their membership records because of the possibility of running afoul of restrictions on "electioneering" that might occur if lists are targeted by party membership.

Beyond that, however, is the basic issue of how and when to use personal information about anyone on an enhanced list. Most data involved in List Enhancement Projects derives from public sources (such as voter files). However, many people are surprised to find that those files may contain personal information they did not expect to be public, such as voting history, age or even phone numbers. In general, there is a lot of concern about the use of personal information for marketing purposes.

The long-run success of List Enhancement Projects depends on the confidence and support of the people whose records we manage. Most people whose records are included in a List Enhancement Project will support the intended purposes, as long as they understand what they are.

GUIDELINES TO HELP LIST PROJECT MANAGERS AND PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

1. The data used in List Enhancement Projects is being managed in trust for the people represented in the records. Only data needed for specific purposes should be collected. Data should not be used for purposes other than its originally intended uses.
2. Members should be informed of the purposes and activities related to the project.
3. Use of data records by outside parties should be permitted only with written authorization by the source organization.
4. Materials produced and contacts made from enhanced list data should identify the sponsoring organization(s) so that members have confidence that the uses are authorized.
5. Those with records in enhanced lists should have the opportunity to view and correct them, if necessary.
6. There should be provisions to restrict or exclude records from shared lists, at the option of the individuals involved. Each organization should have a “no trade,” “no mail” and “no phoning” policy with regard to their own lists, and honor those obligations when participating in a List Enhancement Project.

9.3 The Future of List Enhancement

List Enhancement Projects began as an adjunct to organizing work by environmental organizations. This early focus immediately began expanding in scope to become the leading edge of a new approach to organizational data management. Very soon, it became clear that the effort involved in list enhancements would not be worth much if the data wasn't used effectively. Thus, the data processing for these projects is now only part of a larger package of training, support and long-term capacity building.

This mirrors similar developments in business, where “one-to-one marketing,” data warehouses and an increased commitment to customer service are important trends. The limitations of mass media-based marketing are being addressed with more carefully focused and productive contacts designed to build longer-term relationships, whether it's in direct mail, telemarketing or on the Internet through email and the World Wide Web.

These changes in the commercial world suggest important new opportunities for environmental and other organizations. Although it will take a lot of effort, the prospect of tailoring membership services, outreach, programs and political activity to the rapidly evolving needs of our members is an exciting challenge.

The computer and the network are not simply devices for keeping track of names and addresses, sending out appeals and newsletters, and recording contributions. They are becoming vital tools in a collaborative effort in which members increasingly let their organizations know what they need. But organizations must make the choice to use computers and networks as collaborative tools, rather than just ways of automating data. The steps ahead can only be imagined at this writing — and they are in your hands!

APPENDIX A

PROJECT RESOURCES

LEAGUE OF CONSERVATION VOTERS EDUCATION FUND (LCV Education Fund)

1707 L Street NW, Suite 750
Washington, DC 20036
202/785-0730 (phone)
202/835-0491 (fax)
ed_fund@lcv.org

Contacts:

Elizabeth Sullivan, Executive Director
Ann Riley, National Field Director

Regional Coordinators:

Teresa Purcell (Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming)

206/256-9858

lcvwa@igc.org

Mike Coumbe (Alaska)

907/258-2020

mike@servcom.com

Elise Jones (Rocky Mountain Region)

303/442-6986,

lcvrm@igc.org

Lisa Wozniak (Great Lakes Region)

734/485-1162

lcvmi@igc.org

Lori Glidewell (Georgia)

404/609-9883

lglidewell@mindspring.com

The LCV Education Fund sponsors List Enhancement Projects in several states, provides information and referrals, coordinates list enhancement activities with several national organizations, and holds an annual List Summit.

GRASSROOTS ORGANIZATIONS ACCESSING LEGISLATURES (GOAL)

1707 L Street NW, Suite 750
Washington, DC 20036
202/785-0730 (phone)
202/835-0491 (fax)
ed_fund@lcv.org

The GOAL project provides congressional and legislative district data enhancements for lists. For more details, see Appendix E.

WASHINGTON ENVIRONMENTAL ALLIANCE FOR VOTER EDUCATION (WEAVE)

300 Lenora Street, Suite B364
Seattle, Washington 98121
206/374-0634 (phone)
206/374-0858 (fax)
weave@weave.org

Contact:

Ed Zuckerman, Executive Director

WEAVE has sponsored several statewide list enhancement projects, developed an extensive training curriculum, developed and sponsored a circuit rider on-site training program, and published the Help Wanted manual, a look at the many possible ways groups can use enhanced lists to move their organizations forward and build their capacity to affect change.

FRED HEUTTE Sunlight Data Systems

310 SW 4th, Suite 434
Portland, Oregon 97204
503/222-9572 (phone and fax)
phred@teleport.com

Fred Heutte has provided development and computer consulting services for numerous List Enhancement Projects, and is the host of the list-builders email discussion list for those interested in list projects and data management issues. He is available for consulting on the data and technical issues involved in developing List Enhancement Projects and is the co-author of this manual.

HEIDI ZABIK ZDS, Inc.

P.O. Box 807
Lakeland, Michigan 48143
810/231-0999 (phone)
810/231-1054 (fax)
zdsnich@ismi.net

Heidi Zabik is the computer consultant for the LCV Education Fund List Enhancement Project in Michigan. She has created a standard file layout for List Enhancement Projects, and manages distribution of lists to and from national organizations involved in state list projects. ZDS is also a full service mail house assisting both list projects and other organizations with direct mail.

DESKTOP ASSISTANCE

324 Fuller Avenue, Suite C2
Helena, Montana 59601
509/442-3696
mmayer@desktop.org

Contact:

Marshall Mayer, Executive Director

Desktop Assistance provides consulting services to make use of electronic networking and the Internet, database management systems, and geographic information systems to enable nonprofit organizations to succeed in their strategies to develop and service their constituencies. Desktop Assistance prepared the Conservation Database Report for the Rockefeller Family Foundation on the uses and potential of List Enhancement Projects (<http://www.rffund.org/camp/report.html>).

They have also coordinated list projects for groups in the Mountain West. Their most current initiative is ebase, a comprehensive database management package available free to qualifying groups (www.ebase.org). ebase will directly incorporate data from List Enhancement Projects.

ALLIANCE FOR JUSTICE Nonprofit Advocacy Project

2000 P Street NW, Suite 712
Washington, DC 20036
202/822-6070 (phone)
202/822-6068 (fax)
www.afj.org

The Alliance for Justice provides outstanding legal training concerning the opportunities and legal constraints relating to List Enhancement Projects for groups organized under IRS 501c(3) and 501c(4) and political action committees (PACs). Their legal guide, *The Rules of the Game: An Election Year Legal Guide for Nonprofit Organizations*, is an

essential resource for organizations involved in list projects and political advocacy.

GAIL M. HARMON Harmon, Curran, & Spielberg

2001 S Street NW, Suite 430
Washington, DC 20009
202/328-3500 (phone)
202/328-6918 (fax)

Gail Harmon is an attorney who specializes in nonprofit law and has provided legal guidance for LCV Education Fund's List Enhancement Projects. She and Elizabeth J. Kingsley are co-authors of LCV Education Fund's legal guide for list projects and political activities, *Maximize Your Grassroots Power*.

GREGORY C. COLVIN Silk, Adler & Colvin

235 Montgomery Street
San Francisco, California 94104
415/421-7555

Greg Colvin is a specialist in nonprofit law and has provided extensive legal research to the LCV Education Fund, WEAVE and other organizations involved with List Enhancement Projects. He is the author of *How to Get Involved in a Ballot Measure Campaign Without Risking Your Tax-Exempt Status*.

ALEC BRECHER

223 Percival Street NW
Olympia, Washington 98502
360/943-7903
catalyst@olywa.net

Alec Brecher served as WEAVE's first circuit rider and has since provided on-site training and services for participating organizations in List Enhancement Projects in several states.

ISSUE PAPERS

Americans for the Environment, "Online Resources: Permissible Electoral Activities, A Basic Guide for Grassroots Environmental Groups," <http://www.ewg.org/pub/home/afe/permisbl.htm>

Americans for the Environment, "The 1995 Takings Referendum Campaign in Washington State: A Case Study," <http://www.ewg.org/pub/home/afe/no48.htm>

APPENDIX B

SAMPLE PROJECT AGREEMENT

The League of Conservation Voters Education Fund is conducting a program to enhance the membership lists of regional environmental organizations with information including but not limited to voter history, jurisdictional information, other membership affiliations, and updated telephone numbers.

_____ agrees to make its membership list available to LCV Education Fund for these purposes.

LCV Education Fund agrees to return to _____ its membership list with enhancements added.

LCV Education Fund agrees to take all reasonable precautions to protect the confidentiality of _____'s list. It will install the list promptly on its computer system. It will develop a password system which limits access to the list. LCV Education Fund will take steps to ensure that names which are unique to _____ will not be used by LCV Education Fund or any other organization for fundraising purposes and/or member solicitation. LCV Education Fund may retain a password-protected copy of the enhanced list but will not use it without written permission of its owner.

After the membership list is returned, LCV Education Fund will provide technical assistance to _____ as requested.

Signed this _____ day of _____, 1999

By:

By:

(PARTICIPATING GROUP)

LCV Education Fund

APPENDIX C

SAMPLE TRACKING FORM

ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE

ORGANIZATION NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

WEBSITE: _____

ORGANIZATIONAL CONTACT: _____

TECHNICAL CONTACT: _____

PHONE: _____ FAX: _____

PHONE: _____ FAX: _____

EMAIL: _____

EMAIL: _____

SERVICE BUREAU – If your list is managed by an outside contractor, vendor or service bureau, please provide the following information:

BUREAU NAME: _____ CONTACT: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

PHONE: _____ FAX: _____ EMAIL: _____

DATABASE INFORMATION

DELIVERY FORMAT

- Email to computer consultant
- PC diskette (3.5)
- Macintosh diskette
- Iomega Zip disk
- 1600 BPI magnetic tape
- Other: _____

RECORD FORMAT

- ASCII delimited (commas, tabs)
- ASCII fixed column/flat file
- dBase
- FileMaker Pro
- MS Excel
- MS Access
- Other: _____

NAME OF FIELDS SUBMITTED IN DATABASE

- ID number
- First and last name
- Complete address
- City
- State
- Zip code
- Phone number
- Email address
- Other: _____

RETURN FORMAT

- Macintosh diskette
- PC diskette

COMPOSITION OF LIST (CURRENT MEMBERS, LAPSED MEMBERS, PROSPECTS, VOLUNTEERS, ETC.):

APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF RECORDS IN LIST:

APPENDIX D

SAMPLE BUDGET

Preparing a budget for a List Enhancement Project can be somewhat difficult if your state has not done a previous project. In addition, the scope of list projects varies dramatically depending on the number of groups involved and the size of their memberships, the availability of voter file and other data, and the extent of the training you offer. Therefore, your budget should allow for some variance as the project continues. As part of getting funding or budget approval, you may want to prepare “scenario” budgets (low, medium, high) to provide a range of alternatives. The LCV Education Fund projects have varied in cost significantly from state to state. In North Carolina in 1996, for example, the total cost for the voter file vendor, computer consultant and some travel/shipping was \$5,900, while in Colorado in 1997 the same services cost \$14,500.

In this section we review some of the elements that you should include in your budget. The amounts shown here are only estimates based on the projects LCV Education Fund has run in different states, and you should focus on determining the actual costs to come up with solid figures.

1. PROJECT MANAGEMENT

This should include all of your time as the project manager, plus any other staff work to coordinate the collection of lists, organize training seminars, oversight of the technical work and so on. Make a list of all the major tasks involved, and assign preliminary estimates of hours to each of them. Then multiply the total by an estimated hourly rate (including overhead if necessary):

Project research (identifying potential organizational participants; sources of voter file and other data; searching for a computer consultant and other technical resources)	_____	hours
Preparing project descriptions, agreements and other materials.....	_____	hours
Organization recruitment	_____	hours
Oversight of computer consultant	_____	hours
Preparation for training program.....	_____	hours
Documentation, budgeting and reports:	_____	hours
	_____	TOTAL HOURS
	x RATE \$ _____	= SUBTOTAL \$ _____

2. DATA SOURCES

You may have one single data source (for example, a voter file vendor), or several. Data costs usually break down into a setup charge of some type and a per-record fee. For example, setup costs for a voter file match may be \$1,000, and the data cost might be three cents per record. If you have a project with 100,000 records, this works out to about \$4,000 for the match. The voter file vendor costs incurred by the various LCV Education Fund projects have ranged from \$2,400 (North Carolina in 1996) to \$5,838 (Colorado in 1997).

DATA SOURCE 1

Setup charge..... \$ _____

Charge per record: \$ _____ x _____ records = \$ _____

DATA SOURCE 2

Setup charge..... \$ _____

Charge per record: \$ _____ x _____ records = \$ _____

SUBTOTAL \$ _____

3. COMPUTER CONSULTANT

If you have a staff person who can act as your project computer consultant, estimate their cost the same way you do for your own: number of hours times a standard rate.

For an outside consultant, expect fees ranging from \$35 to \$80 per hour, depending on experience and the scope of the project. An experienced consultant can give a fairly good estimate of the hours it will take to prepare the data for the voter file match and return it to the participating groups. Especially for a first-time project, expect a considerable amount of preparation time. Subsequent match projects can be done more quickly and add more features. A typical project with 15 organization lists and 50,000 to 150,000 records might take 100 to 150 hours of time. LCV Education Fund has paid between \$3,469 to \$8,325 for their computer consultants, depending on the size of the state and the scope of the project.

CONSULTANT HOURS: _____ x **RATE \$** _____ = **SUBTOTAL \$** _____

4. EQUIPMENT, SOFTWARE AND SUPPLIES

Your project may need a dedicated computer system, software and supplies such as diskettes, printing costs for training materials, postage, etc. Computer hardware and software costs LCV Education Fund approximately \$2,500 in each state. You should take the time to provide a reasonable estimate for these costs:

Computer system \$ _____

Software \$ _____

Supplies \$ _____

Printing \$ _____

Postage/Delivery \$ _____

SUBTOTAL \$ _____

5. LEGAL

You will almost certainly want to consult with experienced legal counsel on setting up, managing and documenting your List Enhancement Project and reviewing project, data vendor and computer consultant agreements. Although attorney hourly rates are high, usually between \$100 and \$200 per hour or even more, they provide essential assistance and may be willing to work for a reduced rate.

HOURS: _____ x RATE \$ _____ = SUBTOTAL \$ _____

6. TRAINING AND SUPPORT

Your training and support program will depend on your project objectives, the requirements of the participating organizations and, of course, available funds. This can range from supplying documentation with the files and on-call assistance in using them, to full-blown training programs covering all the legal, analysis, planning and usage aspects of enhanced lists. Each element below that you incorporate into your program should have its own detailed budget.

Follow-Up Support (on-call and/or circuit rider) \$ _____

Legal training \$ _____

Training on analysis and use of enhanced lists \$ _____

SUBTOTAL \$ _____

7. INCOME

Some List Enhancement Projects have experimented with charging small fees to participating organizations (in the \$50-\$100 range). While this defrays only a small fraction of the total costs, it also provides a signal that the services have real value and require a “buy-in” from each group.

Entry fees for participating groups: \$ _____

INCOME \$ _____

BUDGET SUMMARY

1. Project Management \$ _____

2. Data Sources \$ _____

3. Computer Consultant \$ _____

4. Equipment, Software & Supplies \$ _____

5. Legal \$ _____

6. Training & Support \$ _____

7. Income (\$ _____)

EXPENSES SUBTOTAL \$ _____

(INCOME) (\$ _____)

TOTAL BUDGET \$ _____

APPENDIX E

GOAL

The League of Conservation Voters Education Fund invites you to participate in Grassroots Organizations Accessing Legislators (GOAL). GOAL is a new legislative district matching program that gives environmental groups and allied constituencies the ability to identify state and federal legislative districts for each of their members.

GOAL enhances your membership list by running it through our program. This program adds four digits to your five digit ZIP code, and then appends your lists with three new fields: state upper house, state lower house, and congressional district. Your enhanced list is then returned to you.

ORIGINAL FIELDS IN YOUR LIST					NEW FIELDS ADDED		
UNIQUE ID #	ADDRESS	CITY	STATE	ZIP + 4	STATE HOUSE	STATE SENATE	CONG. DISTRICT
28658	3295 E Wood Valley Rd	Atlanta	GA	30327 -0343	100	6	10
977	PO Box 338	Jackson	GA	30233 -0338	24	36	8
994	357 Park Ave SE	Atlanta	GA	30312 -3334	32	2	5
2328	2800 Tower Pl	Atlanta	GA	30321 -3402	17	14	4
2499	102 Carne Island Cir	St Mary's	GA	31558 -3432	32	25	5

A NOTE ON SECURITY: The records in your list are appended according to the unique ID number assigned to each of your members. Since you do not send the actual names of your members, your list will be totally secure.

Once a membership list is processed through GOAL, the power to sort lists by districts, print reports showing geographical and statistical grassroots strength, and organize targeted constituencies will be available. GOAL provides the ability to organize and mobilize members based on accurate legislative and congressional district information.

FOR INFORMATION ON HOW TO PARTICIPATE IN GOAL, contact the League of Conservation Voters Education Fund by calling 202-785-0730 or via email at ed_fund@lcv.org.

APPENDIX F

SAMPLE MASTER FILE LAYOUT

The following table shows the Unified Field Structure used by the LCV Education Fund to exchange data for List Enhancement Projects. This structure can provide a useful guideline for setting up list projects.

FIELD	FIELD NAME	TYPE	WIDTH	DESCRIPTION
1	SOURCEID	Character	12	Organization's ID number, if provided
2	NATIONALID	Character	12	ID number added by the national computer consultant
3	STATEID	Character	7	ID number added by the state computer consultant
4	OTHERID	Character	10	Additional ID number (usually the list vendor's)
5	FNAME	Character	25	First name, including middle initial
6	LNAME	Character	25	Last name, including suffix
7	AREACODE	Character	3	Area code
8	PHONE	Character	7	Phone number, no formatting
9	ADDRESS_1	Character	40	Address Line 1
10	ADDRESS_2	Character	40	Address Line 2, if needed
11	CITY	Character	25	City
12	STATE	Character	2	State
13	ZIP	Character	5	Zip Code, 5 digits
14	ZIP4	Character	4	4 digit add on to zip code
15	LEGCONGR	Character	3	Congressional District number
16	LEGSENATE	Character	3	State Senate District number
17	LEGHOUSE	Character	3	State House District number
18	LEGOTHER	Character	3	Other district (county, city, etc.)
19	COUNTYNAME	Character	20	County
20	COUNTYCODE	Character	3	County code (FIPS)
21	PRECINCT	Character	10	Sometimes a number, sometimes descriptive
22	MUNIC_NAME	Character	30	Precinct or municipality name, if used
23	STATUS	Character	2	V=Voter Match, N=No Match, etc.
24	NUMLISTS	Numeric	2	Indicates how many memberships the person holds
25	PARTY	Character	1	
26	ABSENTEE	Character	1	
27	YRBORN	Numeric	2	Year of birth (YY), when available
28	GENDER	Character	1	M=Male, F=Female, U or blank=not known
29	YR_REG	Character	2	Year registered to vote (YY), when available
30	LASTGEN	Character	1	1996 General Election Voter History
31	LASTPRI	Character	1	1996 Primary Election History
32	PREVGEN	Character	1	1994 General Election Voter History
33	PREVPRI	Character	1	1994 Primary Election History
34	VOTE_INDEX	Numeric	1	0 to 4 scale, representing how many times this person voted during the last four elections

These additional fields may be useful for a List Enhancement Project but are not part of the LCV Education Fund Unified Field Structure:

#	SOURCES	Character	26	Source codes for each list (A-Z)
#	EMAIL	Character	50	Electronic mail address
#	DOB	Date	10	Date of Birth
#	AGE	Numeric	3	
#	AGEGROUP	Character	8	For example: 18-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, 65+

APPENDIX G

DATA ETHICS AND PRIVACY RESOURCES

Direct Marketing Association, 120 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10036-6700, 212-768-7277, www.the-dma.org.

Electronic Privacy Information Center, 666 Pennsylvania Ave., SE, Suite 301, Washington, DC 20003, 202-544-9240, www.epic.org.

Oscar H. Gandy, Jr., *The Panoptic Sort: A Political Economy of Personal Information*, Westview Press, 1993.

Mike Godwin, *Cyber Rights: Defending Free Speech in the Digital Age*, Times Books, 1998.

Thomas P. Novak, Donna L. Hoffman and Marcos A. Peralta, "Information Privacy in the Marketspace: Implications for the Commercial Uses of Anonymity on the Web," Discussion Paper prepared for the conference "Anonymous Communications on the Internet: Uses and Abuses," University of California Irvine, November 21-23, 1997, www2000.ogsm.vanderbilt.edu/papers/anonymity/anonymity2_nov10.htm.

Privacy Rights Clearinghouse, 717 Kettner Ave. Suite 105, San Diego, CA 92101, 619-298-3396, www.privacyrights.org. Maintains a series of fact sheets on privacy issues.

www.consumer.net Extensive resources on database marketing and privacy issues.

GLOSSARY

ABSENTEE STATUS: When a voter is ill, disabled, on military duty, in college or traveling on business, and cannot cast a ballot at their precinct, they may vote by mail ballot. A single election request gives the voter *temporary absentee status*, or they may request *permanent absentee status*. In recent years, some states have allowed voters to register with permanent absentee status for convenience. See *Vote By Mail*. A voter's absentee status is indicated in their registration record in the *Voter File*.

ASCII: American Standard Code for Information Interchange. ASCII is the universal coding scheme for storing data in modern computers (an older system called EBCDIC is still used in some mainframe computers). ASCII is an 8-bit code allowing 256 characters, numbers and symbols. Files are often referred to as being in ASCII Fixed Field format (where each record is the same length and the *Fields* line up vertically) or ASCII Delimited format, where each field is separated by commas and quote marks, tabs, or other characters.

CASS: Coding Accuracy Support System. This is one of the main U.S. Postal Service procedures for insuring consistent addresses for standardized (bulk) mail. CASS software checks each address and changes it to the U.S. Postal Service standards for street names and

abbreviations, and marks records that are outside the range of addresses for a street or are incomplete.

CENSUS DATA: The U.S. Census Bureau makes the results of the decennial census available to the public. The standard data includes hundreds of variables including household size, age ranges, income, educational levels and many others. Households are not identified individually but are reported in small groups of several dozen or hundred called census tracts and census blocks. See www.census.gov for additional information.

CIRCUIT RIDER: A program to provide on-site technical assistance and training to groups participating in List Enhancement Projects.

COLUMN: An element of data in a record; see *Field*.

CROSSTABS: A crosstabulation is a table with one variable on one axis, and another variable on the other axis. Each cell is a count of the elements in a set which have the value for the corresponding variables.

DATA DICTIONARY: A list of tables and fields in a *Database*, showing their names, *Field* types and lengths, and other details.

DATABASE: An electronic file for data entry, storage, sorting,

selection and retrieval, usually containing information in records (rows) and fields (columns).

DELIVERY POINT BARCODE SYSTEM: A U.S. Postal Service system consisting of ZIP Code, ZIP+4 and Delivery Point data which is barcoded on mailing pieces to allow sorting directly to specific addresses.

DIRECT MAIL HOUSES: Firms offering services to prepare bulk and postal discount mail.

END USER: The intended user of a database or other computer program.

FALSE NEGATIVES, FALSE POSITIVES: Errors occurring in statistical and matching techniques. A false negative is an element which is incorrectly excluded from a group. A false positive is an element which should not be included in a group. False negatives and false positives occur because of variations in data and the limitations of matching algorithms.

FIELD: A characteristic or element of a data record.

FILE FORMAT: The structure of a data file, such as ASCII text, Excel, dBase, Access, etc.

FILE LAYOUT: The list or data dictionary of a database, including the names, types and lengths of each field.

FILTER: A method for selecting a defined set of data from a database.

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION: A list of the number of occurrences of each different value in a data field.

GEOCODING: Geographic identification of an address, usually by latitude/longitude or census tract.

ID NUMBER: A unique number identifying a specific record in a database table.

LIST ENHANCEMENT

PROJECT: A project to add additional data fields to supplement the name, address and phone information in membership and other lists.

MASTER FILE: The combined file of all organization lists in a List Enhancement Project.

MEMBERSHIP INDEX: The number of organizations in a List Enhancement Project that a particular person belongs to.

MERGE AND PURGE: A process to combine two or more lists, and eliminate duplicate records.

NCOA: The U.S. Postal Service National Change of Address database, which compiles change of addresses submitted by people who move. NCOA data is available for a fee from U.S. Postal Service certified vendors.

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY DATA SOURCES: A primary data source is one that collects

and makes available public data, such as a county elections office, state motor vehicle agency, or telephone company. A secondary data source acquires primary sources and resells them in standardized formats.

RAM: Random access memory, the “working memory” of a computer.

RECORD: The information relating to a specific person or other entity in a database. A record is composed of fields (columns) representing specific characteristics for that record, such as first name, last name, address, etc.

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ): An informal request for consultants or vendors to describe their experience and services. Does not require the elaborate response of a Request for Proposals (RFP).

SERVICE BUREAU: A vendor offering services to manage computerized data, including data conversion between different media (disks, tape, etc.).

SOURCE CODE: The original “human-readable” code for a computer program. To run as a program, the source code is either “interpreted” by the computer or “compiled” into object (executable) code for use by the computer.

SOURCE FILES: In a List Enhancement Project, the membership files provided by participating organizations for enhancement.

STATUS CODE: A field in a database record indicating the status of that record; for example: Voter, Not Matched, or Out of State.

VOTE BY MAIL: A system under which states offer open access to absentee registration so that voters can cast their ballots from home by mail.

VOTER FILE VENDOR: A firm offering voter data for a particular state or area on a commercial basis.

VOTER FILE: A database containing records for voter registrations from a particular state or elections district. Voter files generally contain a voter affidavit (ID) number, name, residence address, mailing address (if any), county, precinct, party, gender, age, congressional, legislative and local jurisdictions, and voter history.

VOTER HISTORY: The part of a voter file record indicating whether a voter participated in one or more elections.

VOTING INDEX: A measure of voter participation, based on voter history. Often expressed on a 0 to 4 scale, with 0-of-4 representing no votes in the four most recent elections, and 4-of-4 being a “perfect” voter.

A thank you to our donors

It is because of the long-range vision, commitment, and leadership of our funders that we have been able to undertake list enhancement projects across the country. We are very grateful.

Those listed below have supported our grassroots program, including list enhancement work, with grants of \$1,000 or more since 1997.

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<i>American Sportfishing Association</i>	<i>Natural Resources Defense Council</i>
<i>American Zoo and Aquarium Association</i>	<i>New-Land Foundation, Inc.</i>
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	<i>Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation</i>

While we make every effort to keep our records accurate and up-to-date, we apologize for any errors or omissions. Please notify our development office about any records that need to be updated.