

WHAT OFFICE SHOULD I RUN FOR?

Version 1.0

 **VOTE**
 **RUN**
 **LEAD**

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“Democracy can only work if it accurately reflects the people it is supposed to represent... We must expand the electorate to change the electorate.”

- Minnesota Lt. Gov. Peggy Flanagan

Studies show women are more collaborative, effective, and work on policies that benefit the common good and vulnerable populations. There are thousands of seats in the statehouse that are waiting for you. It is where today's top issues are being fought. This guide will help you answer some critical questions and zone in on the right office you should run for.

Who are You: Why are You Running?

- **Issues:** what policy are you passionate about?
- **Resonance:** how does what you care about connect with your community?
- **Difference:** what distinguishes you from other candidates?
- **Value:** what do you add to the position or the body?

Walking in Your Truth: Being Authentically You!

- **Honesty:** Be true to who you are and take time to know yourself.
- **Action:** Your actions matter more than your words - what you say should come out of what you've done.
- **Stories:** Describe your values in anecdotes that draw on your experiences in a relatable way.
- **Personality:** Let it shine. Be you. Use empathy, humor, and tap into your natural charm.

Pro-Tip: You are not a resume or a list of passions!

Issue Development: Turning Problems into Policy

- **Problems:** Something that is wrong or causing people pain.
- **Solutions:** The different ways to address the problem or resolve the pain point.
- **Issues:** The policy solution selected for the campaign (i.e. campaign platform).
- **Goals:** The particular components of the solution that will be achieved.

Key Questions to Ask Yourself:

- What are the most important problems my community faces?
- Who are the constituents most affected by each issue?
- What are the root causes of these problems?
- What are the things that keep these problems from being solved in a real way?
- How do you get others on board to also care about these issues?

Pro-Tip: Examine how else these problems have been addressed in the past - why they failed or why they worked.

What Office Best Suits Me?

Where Do Your Top Issues Get Legislated?

- **WHO:** Who (or what office) has power and/or jurisdiction over your core issues?
- **WHAT:** What is their current agenda?
 - What laws or ordinances have been passed before and who decided that?
- **WHERE:** What level is most effective for what you care about?

Align Issues & Policies with Elected Office

- Consider the issues and policies you want to advocate for and the jurisdiction they fall within
 - ex. transportation access, code enforcement, common core standards

Levels of Office

Local Level	State Level	Federal Level
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● School● City Council● Commission● Mayor● Judge● District Attorney● County Executive● Community Boards● Etc	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Assembly● Senate● Attorney General● Governor● Lt. Governor● Treasurer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● House of Representatives● U.S. Senate● President● Supreme Court

Why the State Legislature is Particularly Powerful

- Research, write and bring forth legislations that you are passionate about
- Vote for and against issues you care strongly about
- Receive more resources from the state to effect changes
- Vote for the state budget and appropriate such funds for the operations of the government and its agencies
- Consider the kind of impact you want to make - your works on the state legislature impacts the constituency of the entire state
- Close the gender gap in the state legislature - let's get to 51% representation!
 - Nevada is the only state that has a woman majority in the state legislature, at this rate, it will take at least 60 years to achieve reflective representation in our statehouses - we cannot wait

The Lay of the Land

- PEERS: Other elected members within that level of office.
- PARTY LEADERS: Do I know who the leaders in my party are?
- QUEEN MAKERS: Community leaders that possess convening powers!
- Establish connections and/or strengthen existing relationships.
- ELECTIONS CALENDAR: What is the next race? What's available in your area— you have to run where you live!
- TIMING: Are you willing to wait, is there a special election, or should you jump in now?

Does it Fit My Life?

- How often do they meet?
- How are their meetings run? and for how long?
- How do I want my position to operate?
- Am I willing to travel?
- What changes do I need to make in my life to make this work for me?
- What, if any, is the supplemental income?
- How can this advance other areas of my life!

Go Deeper - Find the details of the seat you're looking at

- INCUMBENCY: Who holds that seat now?
- COMPETITION: Will it be an open seat or will you face a weak or strong incumbent?
- PRIMARY: Will you have to go through a primary?
- VOTER TURNOUT: What was the voter turnout in the previous election(s)?
- HOT BUTTON ISSUES: Has there been a spike in activism that could swing your race?
- MONEY SPENT: How much money was raised (for your seat of interest) in the previous election?

Go Deeper - Find the details of the seat you're looking at

Consider What Your Win Will Mean for Your Community

- Are you running to legislate a specific new law or policy?
- Are you running to change the debate?
- Are you running for name recognition & future success?

Examples

- Ex 1: Suzanne is a stay at home mom who can't drive back and forth to the capitol, lives 2 hours outside of the city, and cares about clean water access. How can she become involved with this issue?
- Ex 2: Tomika knows there is a State Senate race coming up but everyone tells her she is too young, inexperienced, and needs a lot of money. What advice should we offer her?
- Ex 3: City Council races are coming up this year and there is an open seat -- -but Julie really cares about school-related policy. Could this be for Julie?

PEOPLE: Mapping Your Connections

We often feel like we don't know people that we can reach out to and involve in our campaign efforts.

- Think about all of your *roles*
- Think about all the individuals and organizations you come in *contact* with within these roles!
- For every organization, identify *subgroups* of that organization.
- For every individual, think about and research *other connections* they may have to other communities and groups

Take the Leap: Run As You Are!

- You do not need to have an extensive background in politics to run - run to ignite change and for issues you care about
- You know what you care about.
- You know what races are coming up and have done a lay of the land.
- Narrow it down to two offices you could run for.
- You are the change your community has been waiting for!!
- Self-care is critical and required (personal and work-life balance)
- Maintain a support network that helps to keep you grounded and connected
- Build and work your network - your network is a great source of support (they want to see you succeed!) and can introduce you to a bigger network of people