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How to Plan a Run for Office With a Disability

Check out the Bellingham, MA website for forms, documents, community links, and other local resources.

People with disabilities are the largest minority group in the country. According to the latest figures from the CDC, one in four U.S. adults have a disability that impacts their life in major ways. Despite the size of this population, there is very little representation of this group in local, state, and federal governments. Fortunately, this is beginning to change. Advancements in assistive technology and movements to destigmatize disability have opened the door to people with disabilities who want to take part in politics.

Are you considering a run for office? Let's explore a few steps you can take to prepare for your campaign and increase your chances of success!

Understand Local Laws and Regulations

Running for office is a big decision, so you want to possess as much knowledge about the process as possible before you begin. As you start to formulate your campaign, spend some time researching the local laws, regulations, and guidelines political candidates must follow; this includes restrictions related to campaigning and fundraising. Failing to adhere to these guidelines could put a quick and unfortunate end to your campaign, so it's best to understand everything before getting started. Fortunately, there's a wealth of information to be found online.

Advance Your Education

Running for office requires a number of critical skills. Besides being politically savvy, you also have to be skilled in networking, managing people, communicating your thoughts, critical thinking, and influencing others. Going back to school could be a great way to build these skills and prepare yourself for the road ahead.

Earning an advanced degree is also a great way to add to your credentials and show voters that you're qualified to work in politics. For example, a doctorate degree can distinguish you as an expert in your field. Online degree programs are ideal for people with disabilities. Look for online programs from universities that will enable you to learn on your own time.

Assemble a Supportive Team

Your campaign team will shoulder many responsibilities during your run for office. Be sure to hire people who will support you and offer assistance when you need it. Try to assemble a mix of people who know you well and understand politics. First and foremost, you will need a campaign manager who you feel comfortable around. You will be working with this person day-in and day-out, so it's important that you have a personal connection with them.

Your campaign team will also consist of many volunteers. How do you convert supporters into volunteers? CallHub suggests reaching out to groups and communities that align with your political values. Disability advocacy groups are a great place to start!

Build an Online Presence

Taking your campaign online is a great way to avoid accessibility barriers along the campaign trail. At the same time, building a strong online presence can help you connect with voters and assemble a community of supporters who believe in your cause. Start with an attractive and engaging campaign website. You don't have to spend a lot on this—Candidate Boot Camp explains that you can get a website up and running for as little as $50!

Besides hosting an informative website, try to be active on [social media](). You might even want to hire a social media manager to handle your social media accounts and interact with supporters online. Just make sure you hire someone who is familiar with newer social media platforms like TikTok so you can connect with younger voters.

Plan Accessible Fundraisers and Events

Live events play an important role in political campaigns. However, attending these live events can be challenging if you have a disability. Be sure to plan [accessible events]() so both you and your supporters can participate comfortably. Refer to an accessibility checklist when selecting sites for your events, ensure people can access your event with the use of mobility devices, and check that event registration and online information is easily accessible to people with a wide variety of disabilities.

Your disability shouldn't hold you back from running for office. If you want to enact positive change in your community and society as a whole, don't let anything stop you! With access to the right training, professionals, and online resources, anyone can plan a successful run for office.