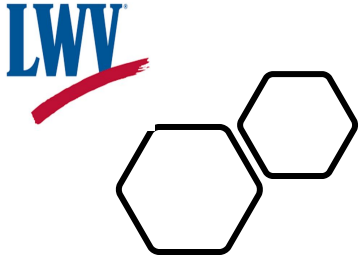




So You are Thinking of Running for Office

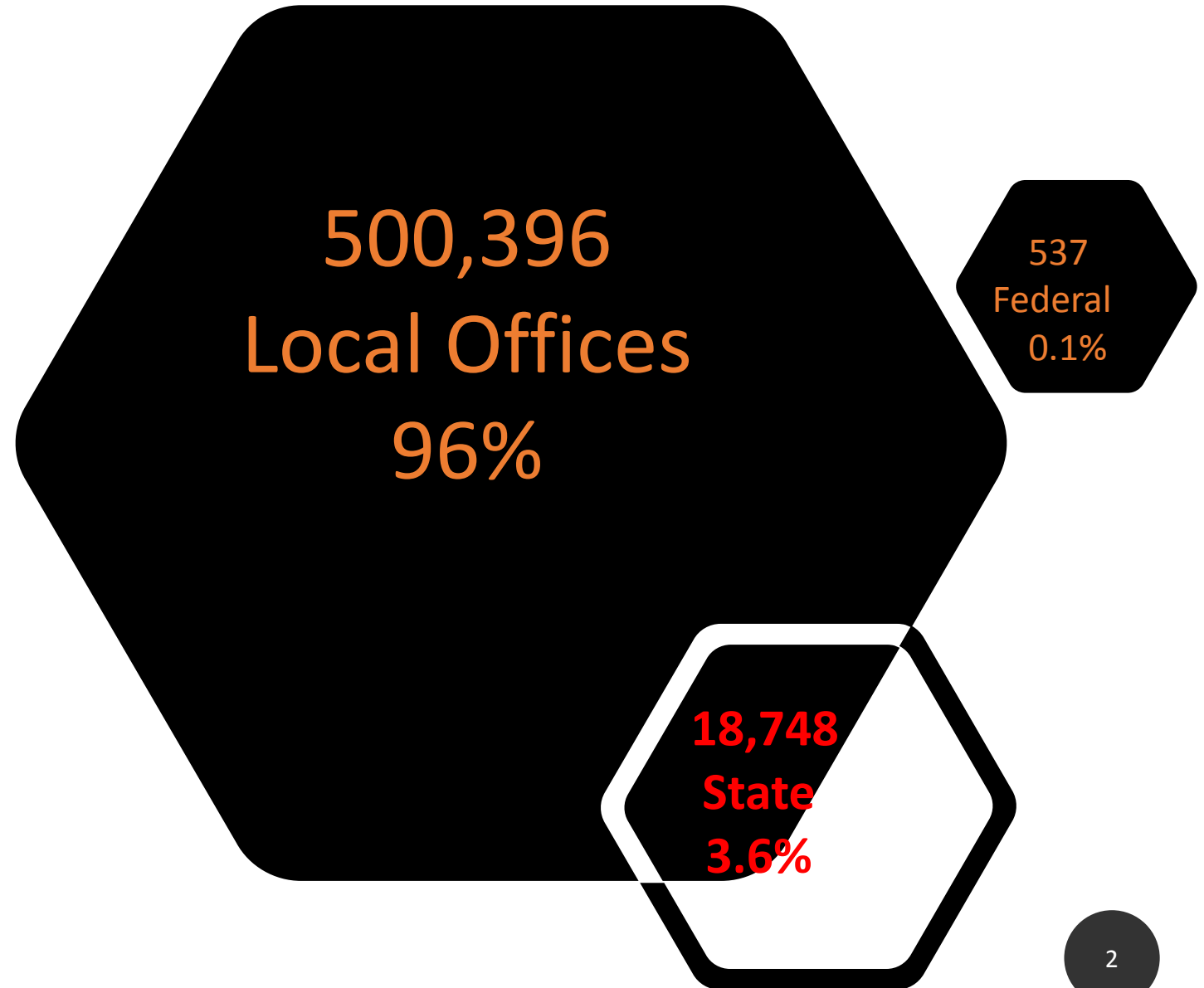
Presenter: Jeri O. Cabot, Ph.D.



Number of Elected Offices in the US- Many opportunities

Disclaimer: This presentation is primarily geared to those who have not run for office before. All are welcomed and feedback is appreciated.

•Number of politicians retrieved from Poliengine.com





With local elections in full swing, campaign workers were becoming more and more brazen about placing signs.



Focus of
presentation
on the
decision to
run or not
and factors to
consider

- Outline of the Presentation

- Think hard about what you care about
- Initial research and homework areas to help you decide
- Know the candidate-related regs
- Considering partisan and non-partisan races
- Mention of the fundamentals of a campaign operation and fundraising
- Resources

A goal for today – show you that a lot of the information you need is easy to obtain

Basic Questions

Which office should I run for?

What do I do to get started?

Think impact. Start local.

Start small? Start local. Pick the problem you want to solve and pick the office that best matches the scope of govt authority. Think about what it is that you want to change and use that to figure out what office you want to run for.

Running for office can be a rewarding opportunity to spur change and serve your community, whether you win or not. You are gathering experience.



Introspection Exercise – Write down your answers

Think about
what concerns
you have– what
gets you mad,
sad,
disappointed.

What do you
notice and think
about as you
navigate your
day?

What issues do
you want to say
that you worked
on changing and
made some
improvement?

Who do you
respect and why
for their
community
contributions?





Go from mad to action

Run for Something says you should answer three questions

- Why do I want to run or what is the problem I can help solving?
- How is the office I want to run for going to give one the space to solve the problem?
- Why voters should want me to win?

Is there space locally for something you can do – for example, affecting zoning codes, recycling options, access for individuals with disabilities, budget cuts, policing, etc.

- **“You don't have to know everything before you run. And you don't need to be rich.”**
- What matters is that you care enough to run. "There will always be people in any arena who will know less and know more than you," "The question is, do I care enough? And am I willing to do more of both. More caring and more learning." NPR, *How to Run for Office*

What do you
care a lot
about?

Running to Represent the Underrepresented

If do not like either party and you care about democracy, think about running.

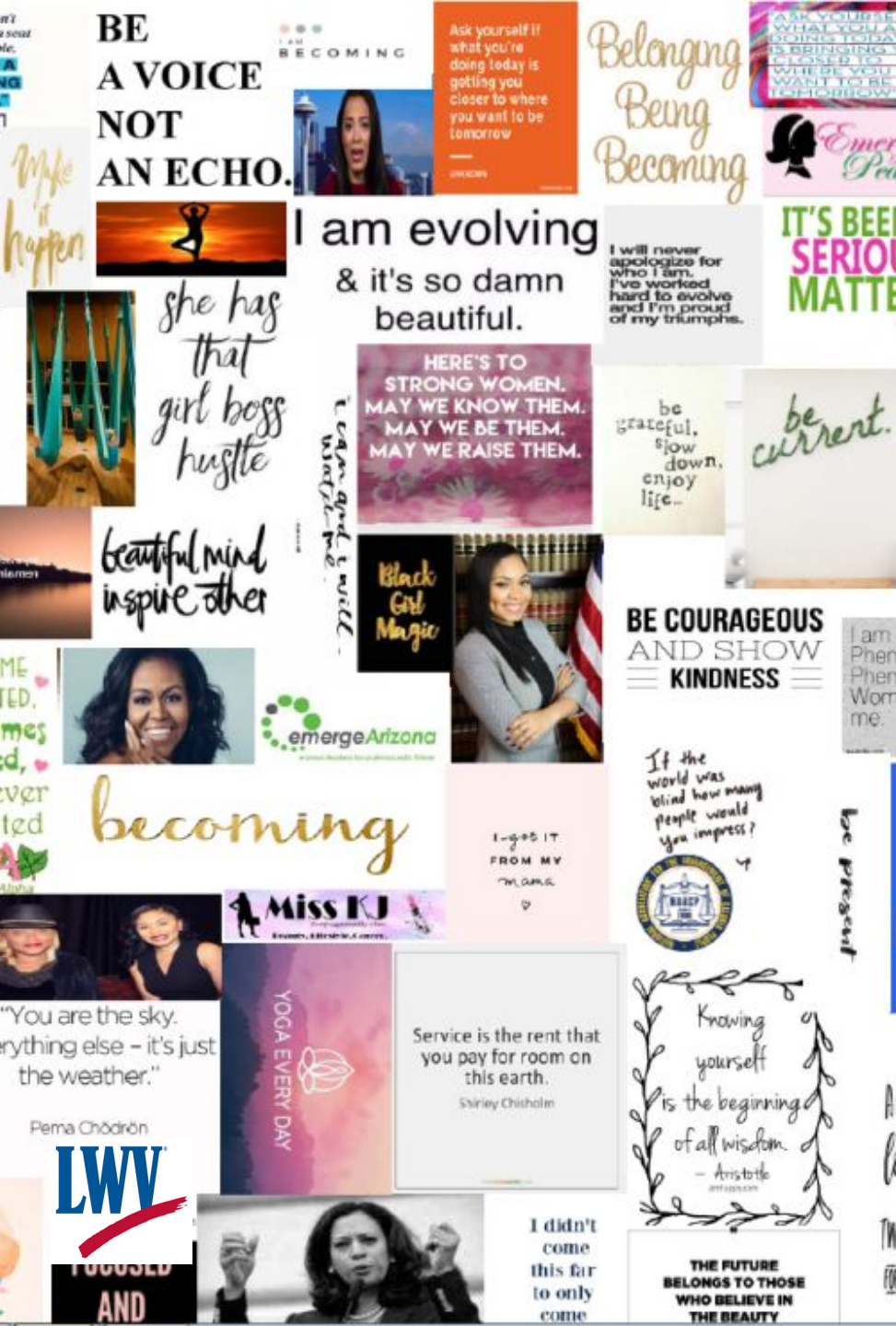
Study how to get on the ballot. The two major parties make it difficult.

Are you motivated because you want to represent those who are underrepresented? This is another reason to run. For example, independents, young people, working class people, renters, people of color, LGBTQ+

What is Your Political Vision?

- Create a vision board for your pursuit – short term and long term areas.
- Never forget your why. Your brand?
- Put something from your vision board everywhere – place of work, car, home, workout space – once you decide to run (even if not for this election cycle).

- Recommended by Eva Pusteri, Political Consultant
- Vision Board Image:
<https://kenneshajackson.com/2019/06/12/digital-vision-board-6th-month-progress/>





Opening research

Start with your city, county or state's election website. It should have information about specific requirements for holding office and filing deadline. Check residency, age, criminal history and other requirements for any position you're considering.

Open Seat or Not: You'll want to consider who your likely competitors will be and whether you think you could beat an incumbent if they were to run for reelection.

Quick source: <https://www.scvotes.gov/candidate-qualifications>

https://ballotpedia.org/How_to_run_for_office_in_South_Carolina

Look at the Demographics in the Area and Election Results

<https://www.census.gov/data.html> +
https://www.charlestoncounty.org/departments/bevr/files/11032020_PrecinctReport.pdf



Try out our new way to explore data

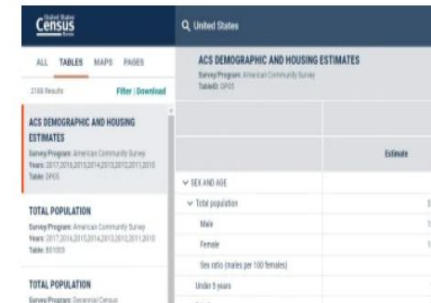
[GO TO DATA.CENSUS.GOV](https://data.census.gov)

What is data.census.gov?



Data Profiles

View statistics across a variety of topics for your state, county or town.



Tables and Maps

Dynamically add geographies, topics, or filters to get the data tables and maps you need.

Data from the 2020 Census impact communities across country for the next 10 years





2020 Census Data

Sign up to receive updates as more 2020 Census data becomes available.

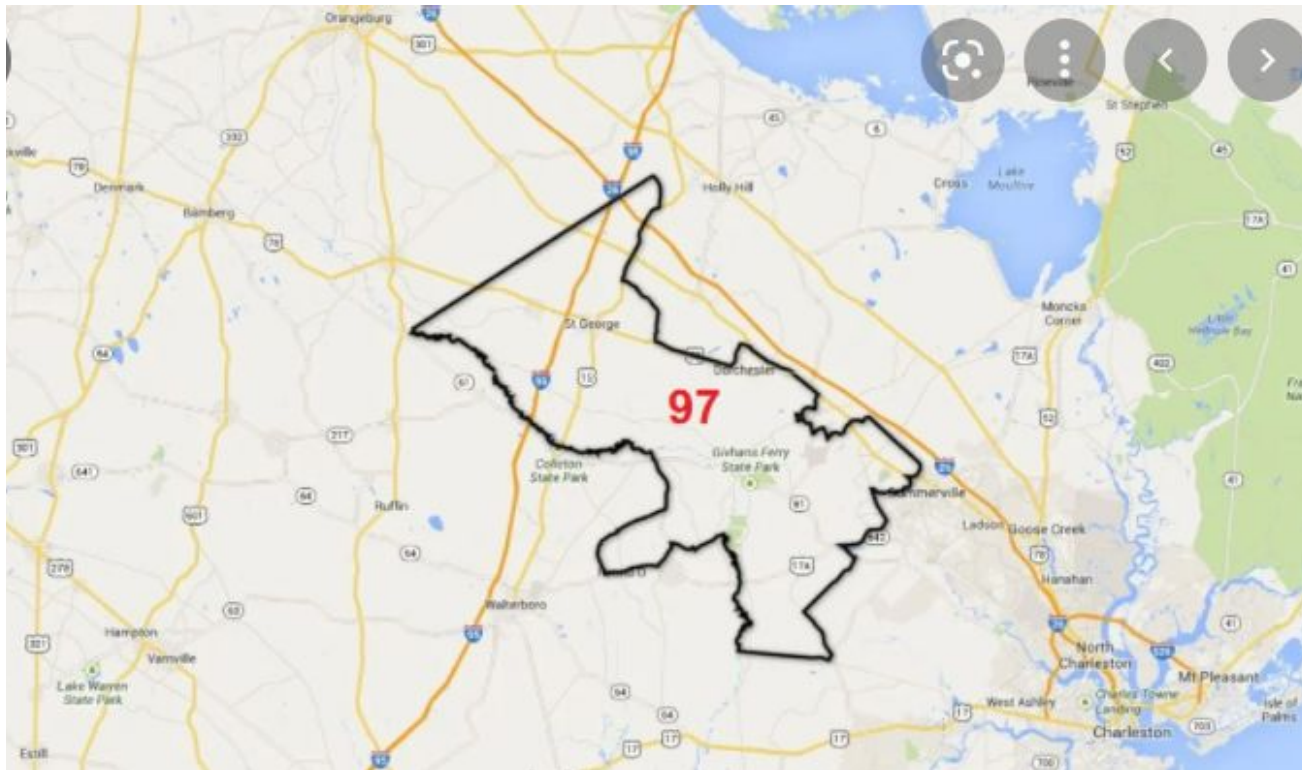
North Charleston P...iba

Go to Settings to ad

Talk to those who won and lost

- You should spend time asking questions — to people who have run before, expert staff at your board of elections, people who have done the job, people who worked on others' campaigns, even the person who currently holds the office. How comfortable are you making such calls?
 - What was their day-to-day like while campaigning? How big was their campaign team? How much money did they raise? How did they canvas? Is the election a partisan race? Take notes.
 - <https://www.npr.org/2019/10/15/770332855/how-to-run-for-office>
- 
- 
- 
- 

Get the Map!!



- Examine the boundaries.
<https://rfa.sc.gov/mapping>
- SC Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office
- Go to city webpages to find city council district maps



Family Check-In

Kitchen table conversation: Check with your family, friends and others whose opinion you value to sense their support for a campaign.

“Although most elected positions at the local and state level are part-time roles, the commitment associated with campaigning and holding office rarely fit into a family’s existing schedule or financial plans without compromise.” *NPR How to Run for Office*



Ask the boss

- You may also need to alert your employer—or get permission to run.
- Many of the positions at both the local and state level, if paid, come with only a modest salary. Can you afford to quit your current job(s)?



First the Filing Fees – Amount varies by position



Berkeley County, for example. Checks made out to party if partisan race.

- Position Salary Filing Fee

Position	Salary	Filing Fee
State House of Representatives	10,400.00	208.00
Sheriff	160,710.00	6,428.40
Probate Judge	109,069.17	4,362.77
Clerk of Court	113,386.62	535.46
Coroner	86,699.59	3,467.98
County Supervisor	185,400.00	7,416.00
County Council Dist (Partisan)	13,982.19	559.29
Register of Deeds	97,065.39	3,882.62

City Council of Charleston and Mt. Pleasant Town Council – Filing fee is \$150

• <https://scvotes.gov/sites/default/files/2022-02-17%20Filing%20Fee%20Schedule.pdf>

Personal Financial Information made Public through the Mandatory Statement of Economic Interests.

All candidates for public office (excluding Federal offices) must file. Fined but not disqualified.

Abridged list of questions from form:

- Name, address, phone number of the filer;
- Source, type, and amount or value of income received from a governmental entity by the filer or a member of the filer's immediate family;
- Source (salary, wages, etc.) and type of any private income in the previous year by the filer or a member of the filer's immediate family.
- Description, value, & location of any real property owned & options to purchase real property by the filer or a member of the filer's immediate family;
- Name of each organization which paid for or reimbursed any expenses of the filer for speaking before a public/private group;
- Identity of each business or entity in which the filer or a member of the filer's immediate family held/controlled, in the aggregate, securities or interests constituting 5% or more of the total issued AND which constitute a value of \$100,000.00 or more;
- List name/address of each creditor to whom the filer or member of the filer's immediate family owed a debt in excess of \$500.00 at any time during the reporting period if the creditor is subject to regulation by the filer's agency or department. This does not include credit card installments, mortgage payments, or automobile payments;
- The name of any lobbyist who is a member of the filer's immediate family;
- Any compensation received from an individual or business which contracts with the governmental entity with which the filer serves or is employed; and
- Any gifts received during the previous calendar from any person if the gift was believed to be given because of the filer's position or if the gift is given in hopes of seeking a contractual, business, or financial relationship with the filer's agency.

Compensation - SC Legislature + Municipal Examples

Mayor of N Charleston	\$193,880
Mayor of Charleston	\$ 185,440
Berkeley County Sup	\$185,400
Mt PI Town Council	\$ 15,000
Columbia Town Coun	\$ 15,177
James Island Council	\$ 8,500
Edisto Beach Council	\$ 3,600



- Annual pay **South Carolina's part-time House and Senate** members receive is \$10,400.
- All House and Senate members are paid more because of income coming in the form of \$1,000-a-month payments for “in-district expenses” that are, in fact, treated as taxable income and are counted toward lawmakers’ pensions.
- So, they really receive \$22,400 as a baseline, with the House speaker and Senate president receiving an extra \$11,000. Then lawmakers are paid another \$173 each day the Legislature is in session. The session is roughly five months, running from early January to the first Thursday in June.
- The \$173-per-day payments are called per-diems or subsistence payments, rather than compensation
- The salary, in-district expenses and per-diem money can add up to about \$30,000. Then lawmakers get an extra \$600 if they head any of the more than two dozen committees, \$600 for postage and mileage money for one round-trip to Columbia each week of the session — roughly \$120 per trip for a Charleston-area lawmaker.
- <https://publicintegrity.org/politics/state-politics/salary-only-part-of-s-c-lawmakers-compensation/>
- <https://apps.masc.sc/CompensationSurvey/Reports/>

Think about
how your story
will play

- It's prudent to think about anything in your past that an opponent, or the press, could discover. How will you talk about your experiences and how they shaped your passions.
- Also consider how your family would handle a shift into the campaign orbit.



Is there an old
tweet.....a
photo.....

- Voters will forgive a lot if authentic about who you are
- Own it and incorporate it into your story
- Do not lie about it
- How will it impact your governing, if at all....



Charlene Kingston

@SocialMediaDIY



Think twice before adding your tweets to your LinkedIn profile. Random topics and rants can put you in a negative light there.

25 Feb 12

← Reply ↻ Retweet ★ Favorite



Insurance Questions

- **Do you have the right type of insurance?**
- Before you run for public office, check in with your home, auto and umbrella insurance providers to ask about your coverage if you were to run for or serve in elected office.
- A Personal Injury endorsement is a common rider that can be added to many homeowner policies and provides coverage if a third party accuses you of libel and/or slander (whether you are guilty or not).
- Another option: If your campaign is affiliated with your local political party's organization, you may have liability coverage through the party.



Oakville Images

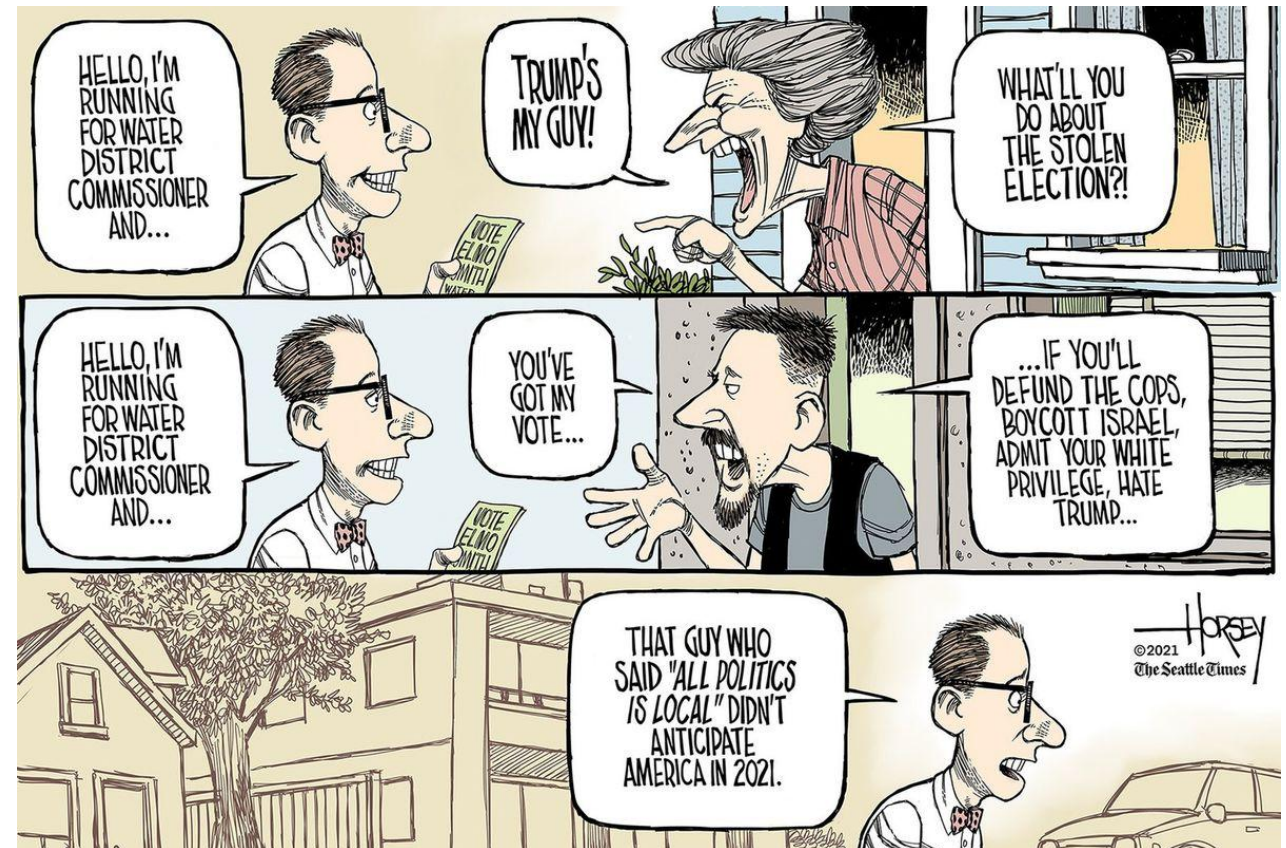
Party Connections?

- If you belong to a political party, think about sitting down with someone from your county committee to talk about your candidacy. The party will know of training programs, as well as access to voter demographics, historical data, and e-mail and address lists. You may also be able to find out how to formally announce your campaign, get your name on the ballot and how to gather volunteers.
- Another option: Connect with local politicians whom you respect, especially those who are currently in office and may be willing to offer you advice or even an endorsement and attend party events (check their websites).

What is a non-partisan election?

- Nonpartisan election means -
 - (1) An election in which none of the candidates is to be nominated or elected as representing a political party; no party affiliations are listed next to candidates' names on ballot or
 - (2) An election involving a question or issue which is not specifically identified with a political party, such as a constitutional amendment, referendum, approval of a municipal ordinance, or any question or issue of a similar character.

The Nationalization of Local Politics



The Virginian Pilot

Building a Team

- Think small and tight: First-time candidates running for local office often tap friends, family and other people they already know so they can build a tight group of trusted advisers. Will you raise enough money to hire paid positions?
- Tap your networks.
- Most candidates bring on a campaign manager, a volunteer coordinator, and a treasurer or finance director (fundraising). There are still plenty of smaller but important tasks to dole out to volunteers, from creating Tik Tok videos and making calls to canvassing.
- Use a consultant? SC Women Lead compiled list of SC Consultants: <https://scwomenlead.net/resources-list-consulting-firms/> By base city and specialization.

Figure out your win number and your vote goal

- You're running to win, but that doesn't mean you don't need to get *everyone* to vote for you. You just need more votes than your competitor(s). How many votes is that?
- Here's one way calculate: Find the turnout numbers from the last few similar elections and average them. Then multiply that number by the number of registered voters in your jurisdiction. You'll want to aim for more than 50% of whatever that number is.
- The candidate training organization American Majority has a worksheet you can use to calculate it.

American Majority's vote goal calculations

Step 1: Project the Turnout

Avg % turnout in last 3 similar
elecs* X Current no. of registered
voters

= Projected Turnout

*Don't forget recent redistricting

Step 2: Set Your Goals

Projected Turnout + 1 = Win No.

2

Projected turnout X .52 = Vote Goal

Thinking about costs

- A direct way to get a general estimate of how much your campaign will cost is to review campaign disclosures from previous successful campaigns for the position. Request campaign finance disclosure filings for similar elections from your county or state elections board. Past spending can be a useful guide, but you'll also need to adjust the figures based on other factors. For example, if you're running against an incumbent who has run unopposed in recent years or someone with great name recognition.
- <https://ethicsfiling.sc.gov/public/candidates-public-officials>
- <https://www.followthemoney.org/show-me?y=2019,2020&c-r-ot=H&s=SC&gro=c-t-id> Amounts raised by candidate/election cycle

Learn the money rules!

- Before you start raising funds, check campaign finance laws of SC to see how much you can raise, how much an individual can donate and how to report the donations and in-kind contributions you receive.
- To accept political donations, you'll also need to establish a checking account in your campaign's name and be prepared to track and report income and expenses.
- https://ballotpedia.org/Campaign_finance_requirements_in_South_Carolina
- <https://ethics.sc.gov/campaigns/election-material>
- <https://www.scvotes.gov/campaign-finance-ethics>

Fundraising

Fundraising isn't scary!

Fundraising can be the difference between a winning and a losing campaign. You might not think you need that much money, but think through your campaign calendar — from a secure website domain to getting out the vote — and set a goal for how much you need to raise.

Just ask.

“In general, people won't just offer you money, you're going to have to be the one to make the ask. But remember, you're not asking for money for yourself, you're asking for money to support change that you and the donor believe in.” *Run For Something*



Rehearse and then Keep Asking

1

Build a budget based on the number of voters you need to reach.

2

“Talk to every person you ever met and ask them to invest in their community by investing in you. Give them a chance to do something good for their community.”

<https://www.npr.org/2019/10/15/770332855/how-to-run-for-office>

3

Just do it. Do it over and over again. The first yes will be empowering. You will be deeply disappointed in who says maybe or no and surprised by who says yes. Peoples’ relationship with their money is complicated. We all understand this.

Sample Budget Worksheet

	Month 1	Month 2	Month 3	Month 4
Operations				
Salaries				
Voter Files/ Database				
Website				
Gas				
Office Space (Include Internet, Rent, Heating exc)				
Fees (Bank, Payment Processing Exc)				
Office Supplies				
Voter Contact				
Direct Mail				
Radio				
Radio Production				
Digital Advertisement				
Live & Automated Calls				
Palm Cards/ Business Cards				
Yard Signs				
Large Campaign Road Signs				
U-Posts/Poles and Zip ties for Road Signs				
Banner				
Newspaper Ads				
Volunteer Expenses				
Canvassing (Door to Door)				
Community Meetings				
Get Out the Vote (GOTV Operation)				
Fundraising				
Fundraising Events				
Printing				
Postage				
Letterhead/Envelopes				
Donation Cards				
TOTAL COST				

<https://callhub.io/creating-a-political-campaign-budget/>

Sample SC Candidate Disclosure

- Folly Beach Town Council
- Final report, July 2020



Final Report 2020

Filing Fee

Please Note: If the filing fee is greater than \$0, the filing fee was paid from personal funds and is the only expense for the campaign.

Amount of Filing Fee: \$25.00

Contributions	This Period	Election Cycle
Cash Contributions	\$0.00	\$100.00
In-kind Contributions	\$0.00	\$0.00
Debt Setoff Funds	\$0.00	\$0.00
Personal Contributions	\$0.00	\$25.00
Loans	\$0.00	\$2,000.00
Account Credits	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total	\$0.00	\$2,125.00

Expenditures	This Period	Election Cycle
Expenditures	\$25.00	\$1,911.76
Returned Contributions	\$0.00	\$0.00
In-Kind Expenditures	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total	\$238.24	\$2,125.00

Get Out the Vote! Every vote counts and who votes matters!

- “Not only is turnout for local elections low, but it is likely to be less representative of the income, age and ethnicity of the community. Affluent voters have 30-50 percent higher turnout in local elections than low income voters. Those 65+ are seven times more likely to vote in local elections than voters aged 18 to 34. The median age of local election voters is in the 60s.. Whites vote at rates 20 percent higher in local elections than non-white voters. The overall impact is that local elected officials and policy are disproportionately influenced by older affluent white voters, undermining our representative democracy and the effectiveness of local governments. Recent research found that less representative elections contribute to poorer outcomes for minorities, including uneven prioritization of public spending.”
- The Nation <https://www.nationalcivicleague.org/ncr-article/increasing-voter-turnout-in-local-elections/> al Civic League



“Something tells me they’re expecting a low voter turnout.”

Knock on doors

- Experts say that a personal touch by a candidate on the voter is the most important factor in getting a person to the polls.



Attend a candidate bootcamp?

Programs and boot camps generally cover the basics of setting up a campaign, strategies for targeting voters, digital media, building a team of supporters and volunteers, and fundraising. Many of the programs will also connect you with a network of people and consultants. Some available via the web.

They usually cost something, but some are free

- Ready to Run (Center for American Women & Politics)
- Run for Something – (focus on those under 35)
- Empower SC (focus on women)
- Leadership Institute (conservative focused)

Get Ready to Lose

Loses are public. Do you have thick enough skin?

Incredible lesson in resiliency. 60-65% candidates will run again (*Run for Something*).

A losing campaign can still push an issue forward and hold incumbents accountable.



Not ready yet,
that's OK

Volunteer for a local candidate

Join League of Women Voters

Watch those who seem to making a difference in any sphere. Watch local government through the web.

Thinking and acting locally are more sustainable than being solely focused on national politics no matter what form





TheDay.com

Questions?



Works Cited and Resources

- https://cawp.rutgers.edu/programs/ready-to-run?utm_source=SC+Women%27s+Leadership+Network&utm_campaign Free campaign webinars
- https://www.americanmajority.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/American_Majority_Campaign_Vote_Goal_Worksheet.pdf
- https://ballotpedia.org/Campaign_finance_requirements_in_South_Carolina
- <https://ethics.sc.gov/campaigns/election-material> Calendar of what to file as a candidate
- <https://www.scvotes.gov/campaign-finance-ethics>

Works Cited and Resources

- <https://www.census.gov/data.html> Go to Quick Facts
- <https://ethicsfiling.sc.gov/public/candidates-public-officials> Forms
- <https://scvotes.gov/filing-fees> - 2022 filing fees by county
- <https://www.followthemoney.org/show-me?y=2019,2020&c-r-ot=H&s=SC&gro=c-t-id> Amounts raised by candidate/election cycle
- https://docs.google.com/document/d/1J2BpwHO5h_txtEpwHs9DsGqT_UPcssCDzMKJ-jDP0g/edit Run For Something Action Fund, RJS Running for Office: Phase 1 Beginner's Guide
- <https://www.npr.org/2019/10/15/770332855/how-to-run-for-office>

Works Cited and Resources

- <https://publicintegrity.org/politics/state-politics/salary-only-part-of-s-c-lawmakers-compensation/>
- <https://www.scvotes.gov/candidate-qualifications>
- [https://ballotpedia.org/How to run for office in South Carolina](https://ballotpedia.org/How_to_run_for_office_in_South_Carolina)
- <https://numero.ai/blog/how-to-run-for-office/>
- <https://scwomenlead.net/resources-list-consulting-firms/>
- <https://www.sccounties.org/news/2022-wage-and-salary-report-now-available-online>

Works Cited and Resources

- <https://www.masc.sc/SiteCollectionDocuments/Election%20Administration/Election%20Handbook.pdf> Municipal Elections Handbook
- <https://apps.masc.sc/CompensationSurvey/Reports/> Municipal Association of SC completes a compensation survey for participating municipalities
- https://www.charlestoncounty.org/departments/bevr/files/11032020_PrecinctReport.pdf 2020 Election results by precinct
- <https://candidatebootcamp.com/lp/sample-political-campaign-budget/> - Free resource