



CANDIDATE

— SCHOOL —

Everyday Heroes Who Lead Differently

The Candidate Campaign Checklist

YOUR PERSONAL GUIDE TO
GETTING STARTED

WWW.CANDIDATESCHOOL.INFO

Welcome!

Get ready to have more clarity, more connection, and more impact... coupled with maybe the hardest work you've ever done! Use this workbook to *get in the game*.

Diana

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"MAKE IT OFFICIAL" CHECKLIST

Determine Eligibility Requirements

Verify age, residency, and other requirements for the office you are seeking.

Check with your local election office or state election board for specific criteria.

File the Necessary Paperwork

Submit a Candidate Filing Form with the election office.

File a Declaration of Candidacy (if required).

Gather and submit nomination signatures if necessary.

Pay any filing fees associated with your candidacy.

Establish a Campaign Committee & Bank Account

File a Statement of Organization to create your campaign committee.

Open a separate bank account for campaign funds.

Appoint a campaign treasurer and designate financial oversight roles.

Understand & Comply with Election Laws

Research campaign finance laws and contribution limits.

Learn about reporting requirements for donations and expenditures.

Complete any required ethics or financial disclosure statements.

Confirm Ballot Access

Verify that all required paperwork has been submitted correctly.

Review deadlines for ballot access and confirm official placement.

Attend Candidate Orientation (if available)

Participate in any official candidate briefings or orientation sessions. Familiarize yourself with local election procedures, debates, and requirements.

PREPARING TO RUN LIST

Assess Your Readiness

Define your "WHY" for running and your core campaign message.

Consider your commitment level, time availability, and personal energy.

Evaluate Financial Preparedness

Assess personal financial stability, as campaigning may require time away from work. Prepare for fundraising efforts and create a campaign budget. Research costs associated with running a campaign (advertising, staff, travel, etc.).

Discuss with Family & Close Circle

Talk with family and close friends about the demands of running for office. Consider how your personal and family life may be affected.

Build a Support Network

Identify key advisors and trusted mentors in politics or community leadership. Begin assembling a volunteer team to assist with campaign efforts. Strengthen relationships with local community leaders and organizations.

Audit Your Personal & Professional History

Review your social media presence and remove any problematic content.

Prepare to address any past controversies, legal matters, or challenges.

Gather testimonials and endorsements that support your candidacy.

PREPARING TO RUN LIST

Prepare for Public Scrutiny & Media Attention

Develop a consistent personal brand and message.

Practice handling tough questions and public speaking engagements.

Consider hiring a media or PR consultant for guidance.

Plan Your First Steps

Draft your campaign strategy and timeline.

Prepare an announcement speech and plan your campaign launch.

Outline key policy positions and identify priority issues

MINDSET

Personal Preparation

We start with mindset, because without the proper mindset even the most qualified candidate cannot win. I've struggled throughout my career with self-doubt and feelings of being crushed under the expectations of others. I had to find ways to manage these very natural thoughts and so I studied as many mindset theories as could get my hands on. In the end, staying the course mentally is what delivered my campaign win.

Cultivating a Winning Mindset Every Day

What speaks to you when it comes to practicing healthy thoughts? Chances are you already practice some kind of mindset management, even if it's not a formal theory.

My challenge to you is to identify the tools you already have in place and decide if adding a new mindset practice will strengthen your ability to face the road ahead and remain focused and positive.

GATHER SUPPORT

Build a Trusted Inner Circle: Identify a small group of people you trust to provide honest feedback, encouragement, and advice. This might include campaign staff, mentors, or close friends and family.

Surrounding Yourself with a Supportive Team: A supportive team not only helps with the workload but also provides emotional support, encouragement, and accountability, which are crucial during the highs and lows of a campaign. My biggest supporter and best resource was my best friend, she was an absolute powerhouse and I know I could never have accomplished all that I did without her by my side. Who is that for you on a personal level? Who is that for you on a professional level?

Delegate Effectively: Don't try to do everything yourself. Delegate tasks to your team members based on their strengths, and trust them to execute.

Celebrate Small Wins: Regularly acknowledge and celebrate the small victories along the way, both individually and as a team. This boosts morale and keeps everyone motivated.

Communicate Openly: Maintain open and transparent communication with your supporters. Regular check-ins help address concerns, share progress, and keep everyone aligned with the campaign's goals. Schedule regular meetings where everyone can share their thoughts and experiences. This fosters a sense of community and collaboration.

Coaching: Who are you asking to be on your team? List personal friends, business associates, and potential organizations to partner with. Make a note next to each with a plan of how and when you will approach each party with your formal request for support.

GET VISIBLE

Your personal brand is your political identity. It's how voters connect with you. Today, we'll dive into creating a brand that reflects your values and resonates with your constituents.

Your authenticity will draw voters in—never underestimate the power of your unique story.

Your personal brand is the heart of your political identity. It's how voters see, understand, and connect with you. A strong, authentic brand can distinguish you from other candidates and create a deep, lasting connection with your constituents. Your brand should reflect your values and resonate with the people you aim to serve. Remember, your unique story is your greatest asset—never underestimate its power.

INTERNET AUDIT

The internet is telling the world who you are. Whether we like it or not the internet tells a kind of story about us with the things people can and cannot find. Do the following searches and observe the results, don't get too wrapped up in this, just be aware of what's out there.

First, search your name in Google images or other search engines.

Next, do a name search with all the variations of your name to see what might come up, even from your youth, before the internet!

Then take a peek at the people finder listings to see what kind of information they have listed for you, and who they associate with you. Your campaign will do these things, but you need eyes on this information so you can craft your narrative.

YOUR PATH TO PUBLIC OFFICE STARTS HERE!

You've taken the first step by preparing to run for office—now it's time to get the winning strategy you need to succeed.

Most first-time candidates struggle with where to start, how to build support, and what it really takes to win. Candidate School is designed to eliminate the guesswork and give you a clear, **step-by-step plan to launch your campaign with confidence.**

Do any of these statements apply to you?

"I'm Thinking About Running"

"I've Decided to Run"

"I'm Newly Elected"

"I Want to Become a Stronger Leader"

"I Want to Make a Bigger Difference"

Leadership isn't one moment. It's a journey—and every leader enters that journey from a different place.

Register today and take the first step toward making a real impact!

Enroll Today



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Ten Myths of Modern Political Campaigns

1) The "Political Insider" Myth

You must be a seasoned political insider with elite political credentials to run for office.



Why it exists: Observers look at long-serving, high-profile officials and assume that deep political backgrounds are a prerequisite for entry.

The reality: Your everyday professional, workplace, and personal lived experiences are highly transferable assets. Managing a household budget, collaborating with workplace teams, organizing community events, or stewarding volunteers are the exact training grounds that prepare you for the resourcefulness, delegation, and adaptability required in governance.

2) The "Personal Wealth" Myth

You must be wealthy or have access to wealthy donors to run a viable campaign



Why it exists: Modern campaigns carry high financial thresholds, and systemic wealth gaps can make entering the race feel mathematically impossible for candidates from underrepresented backgrounds.

The reality: Campaigns require resources, but candidates do not always finance them personally. Depending on the race, viable campaigns can be built through grassroots fundraising, small-dollar donors, volunteers, community relationships, and public financing where available

3) The "Traditional Candidate Profile" Myth

Successful candidates are usually men, wealthy, well-connected, older, or drawn from a narrow set of professions. This means you need a perfect background, a spotless record, and an answer for everything.



Why it exists: Public scrutiny is relentless, and candidates fear that admitting to an error will be instantly weaponized by their opponents or the media.

The reality: People of different genders, races, ages, professions, income levels, and lived experiences serve in public office. Structural barriers are real, but identity or background does not determine whether someone is qualified or capable of building a viable candidacy.

4) The "Solo Leader" Myth

A strong candidate must handle everything personally to show competence and maintain absolute control.



Why it exists: Candidates often face overwhelming expectations from supporters and worry that delegating or asking for help will look like a sign of weakness.

The reality: Relying on a collaborative network is a proven strategy for sustainable leadership, not a weakness. Successful candidates surround themselves with a trusted network, delegate tasks, and lean on mentors and advisors—such as a "Kitchen Cabinet"—to prevent personal burnout and keep their teams operating efficiently.

5) The "Self-Care is a Luxury" Myth

Personal grounding routines and self-care are time-consuming activities only for candidates with plenty of free time.



Why it exists: The intense, non-stop nature of a political campaign makes any pause feel like a step backward or a waste of valuable time.

The reality: Grounding routines do not have to be rigid or time-consuming. Even small, simple habits—such as a brief mindful walk, deep abdominal breathing, or a strategic pause—act as vital anchors that reduce stress, enhance mental focus, and build the physical stamina needed to sustain a demanding campaign.



6) The "Necessary Compromise" Myth

To win under intense political pressure, you must give in to your core values or alter your campaign message.

Why it exists: Heavy pressure from donors, media, and party gatekeepers can make candidates feel that compromising their principles is the only path to survival.

The reality: Pressure is inevitable, but compromise is not. Voters are highly sensitive to inconsistency, and they are far more likely to trust and support candidates whose platforms consistently align with their authentic core values.



7) The "Women of Color" Myth

Diverse candidates (like Latinas) face a "double disadvantage" of race and gender that makes successful fundraising and viability nearly impossible.

Why it exists: Diverse candidates face real systemic barriers, smaller starting professional networks, and a historical lack of early seed money from traditional PACs.

The reality: Research explicitly debunks this as a myth, showing that Latina candidates successfully leverage their intersecting identities to build diverse coalitions and secure highly competitive campaign funding.



8) The "Chaos is Inevitable" Myth

A political campaign is so chaotic that you must accept constant work-family conflict and domestic distress as part of the job.

Why it exists: Campaigning demands long, unpredictable hours and frequent travel, which naturally strain personal relationships and domestic routines.

The reality: Balance is entirely possible through intentional systems. Utilizing "Schedule Control" (such as time-blocking, sharing calendars, and setting clear boundaries) can reduce work-family conflict by 30%, protecting the well-being of both the candidate and their staff.



9) The "Transaction and Slogan" Myth

Voter trust is built primarily through transactional political favors, focus-grouped slogans, and over-polished rhetoric.

Why it exists: Traditional campaign strategy often heavily emphasizes polished messaging, scripts, and trading reciprocal political favors behind the scenes.

The reality: Voters are 2.5 times more likely to support a candidate they perceive as authentic—even if they disagree with some of their policies—over one who seems focus-grouped. Real trust is built over time through consistent, transparent actions, empathetic listening, and follow-through on promises.



10) The "Know and Solve Everything" Myth

A credible candidate must have an immediate solution and detailed position on every community issue.

Why it exists: First-time candidates often experience an "action imperative," feeling pressured to solve all problems immediately to appease supporters.

The reality: Candidates should be informed and responsive, but credibility also comes from identifying priorities, listening to affected communities, and explaining how decisions will be made. A focused agenda is generally more actionable than an unfocused promise to fix everything.