



So, You Want to Run for Office?

Knowledge is Power.

Do you want to make a change in your community? Do you have ideas you'd like to bring to life? Or problems you'd like to help solve? You should consider running for elected office!

Running to be an elected official is a great way to bring change to your community.



Get Smart, Prepare, Take Action!

Get Smart

- The **first step** in the process of holding office is learning how the policymaking process works and what position might help you accomplish your goals.
- **Familiarize yourself with the political process.** Review our 'Beginners Guide to Advocacy' for tips on how to start this process.
- **Identify a good-fit position.** Think about your experiences and skills and pursue a role that aligns with your interests, passions, and abilities. Some positions may require a lot of time, attention, and funding, while others like precinct committee member, may be less intensive. Pick a role that works for you!
- **Confirm your eligibility.** Elected positions usually have eligibility requirements such as age restrictions and residency requirements. Research the eligibility requirements for the position you are interested in pursuing so you know if you are eligible before you begin your pursuits.

TIP: Holding office requires passion, confidence, strong public speaking skills, and an in-depth knowledge of the community you will represent. Develop these skills prior to putting your name on a ballot.

Prepare

- **Work on your own personal and professional development.** Sign up for leadership training programming like those available in the Cleveland Leadership Center which will help you improve your network, critical thinking skills and public speaking abilities. Also, consider applying for an election training program that help people run for office like She Should Run or The BLUE Institute.
- **Get to know your community.** This can happen through a job that interfaces with the community or by attending community events like local block club meetings.. In doing so, you can begin to develop a clear understanding of the issues your community is facing and what is, or is not, being done to address them.

TIP: Now that you have a clear idea of the position you hope to hold, knowledge of the problems you hope to solve, the right skills, and a deep network, begin the process of running for office.

Take Action

- **Meet the Requirements.** This may include gathering signatures, paying fees and filling out forms. Have a plan for how you will gather the support you need and keep track of the deadlines for turning in the proper registration.
- **Raise Money.** Most elected positions require some fundraising. Consult with fundraising experts, and other people who have run for office, on the best way to reach you fundraising goals.
- **Continue to Engage with your Community.** Ask yourself, what are the community assets and how can those assets help where there's a deficit? What do residents need and what do they want to see? What do you want to see in your community? By considering these questions, you will be able to confidently communicate with your voters and develop a policy agenda that meets the needs of the people you will serve.