

Considering A Run For Office? Tips For People With Disabilities



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Are you thinking about running for office during the next election season? If you are full of ideas, have a lot of passion, and can bring a solid work ethic to the table, it might be time to follow your heart and make this your year.

Although people with disabilities are underrepresented in public office, there is plenty of evidence to suggest that their voices are just as important. Icons like [Tammy Duckworth](#) (a senator for Illinois and the first woman with a disability elected to Congress) have made progress for people with disabilities, but still, only [one in 10](#) elected officials can count among their number according to Gender on the Ballot. It's time to see more people with disabilities holding office -- and it just might be you.

Here are a few ideas from the [City of Portland, Indiana](#), you should keep in mind as you build your campaign strategy and begin to plan your journey forward:

Get involved in the community

Any veteran campaign manager will tell you: Folks running for office need to be visible in the community in which they're trying to get elected. People won't vote for a name they don't recognize, so getting as much press and facetime as possible is critical.

Getting involved can look like a lot of different things, depending on where you live and what your community is like. One great way to get yourself noticed in your area is to [volunteer](#) with nonprofit organizations and publicly support [local civics programs](#) for youths. No matter where you get your name out there, it's important to always be on brand and on message; when someone asks you what you stand for and what you'll be able to do for the community, you need to answer honestly and with the same passion that got you into politics in the first place.

Build your brand

Along with community visibility, you'll need an online platform that will help you get information out there about who you are and what you stand for. You may even consider hiring a graphic designer to ensure your site is conveying an appropriate message and attracting a wide audience. Use online job platforms to find a designer; this way, you can see reviews of past work, price, and how long it takes to deliver a finished product. (Prices vary for freelance designers depending on experience, but generally they charge on the average [\\$31.25 an hour](#).)

Building your brand also includes your social media channels. Say what you want about social media -- but it's a great way to communicate your platform to potential constituents and engage with folks on a personal level. Just make sure you [clean up your profiles](#) and stay positive with your messaging.

If it sounds like you're running a business when you're running for office, you're exactly right! A lot of moving parts call for brushing up on your management and leadership skills, and taking [coursework online](#) is a great way to do so. Going back to school and earning an online degree in business allows you to learn about management, accounting, entrepreneurship and much more. Getting that elusive degree also adds to your credibility, and completing classes and tests online allows you to continue working on your campaign without having to attend in person.

Gather the right team

Involving the right people from the beginning is a serious boon to every successful political campaign. According to MasterClass, you will [need](#) (and not in this order):

- Campaign manager

- Marketing consultant / social media manager (sometimes this can be more than one person, for larger campaigns)
- Budget officer
- Communications director

These are the folks you will turn to for advice, sympathy, and campaign strategy as the next few months ramp up. You can't do it alone!

Get out there

These are only a few ways for you to get ready for your political campaign. Be sure to familiarize yourself not only with the issues you're passionate about, but the ones that are important for your area as well. It's time that more people with disabilities ran for office. Good luck with your campaign!

For information, community resources, and a calendar of events for the City of Portland, Indiana, please visit thecityofportland.net.