



# GETTING TO THE GATE

An Equal Voice Guide  
for Women Interested in  
Running for Political Office









# A LETTER FROM EQUAL VOICE





WE WANT TO  
**THANK YOU**



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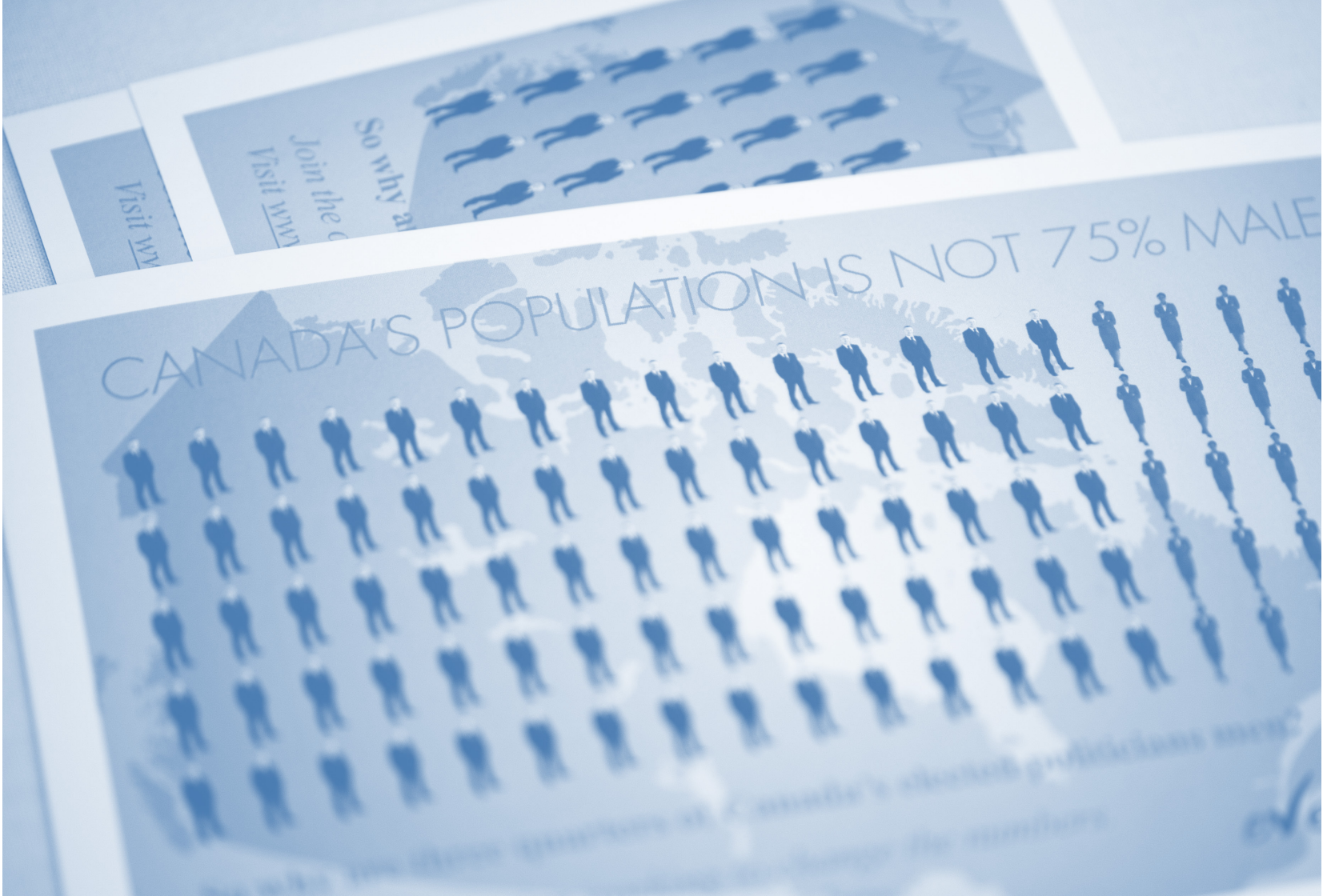
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# STEP 1: LAYING THE FOUNDATION

This section will lay the foundation for your involvement in politics. You will learn how many women are — or are not — elected representatives and why this democratic deficit threatens the potential of governments around the world. You will engage with solutions to this deficit, and see how these solutions can effectively bridge the current gender gap and ultimately change the culture of politics. Most importantly, you will discover how you — as a strong, female leader — can use politics to make a difference in your community.





# THE GENDER GAP

Women represent more than 50-percent of the world's population but yet they are consistently underrepresented in the political sphere. Worldwide statistics reveal a significant gap between elected male and female representatives. Despite the steady advances of female elected representatives, the gender gap persists in the political arena, affecting the quality of our political processes.

## ... INTERNATIONALLY

There is great variability in women's participation in parliaments around the world. Recent statistics measure women's participation anywhere from 0-percent to 56-percent of elected governments. Scandinavian countries, such as Sweden, Finland and Iceland, continue to increase the number of elected women in their governments and currently rank in the top ten governments with the highest percentage of elected women in the world. The highest percentage of elected women is seen in Rwanda, which has maintained over 50-percent elected women for the last ten years.

The drive to promote women in decision-making positions worldwide gained momentum during the 1980s and early 1990s through a series of international conferences. Further impetus came from the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing, China, in 1995, which called for a minimum of 30-percent representation by women in national governments. The movement continued in 2000 at the UN Millennium Summit in New York, where world leaders pledged to promote gender equality and women's empowerment as effective ways to combat poverty, hunger and disease and to stimulate development that is truly sustainable. At that meeting, world leaders adopted gender equality as one of the Millennium Development Goals. Since then, the number of women in leadership positions has been rising.

## ... IN CANADA

Canada, despite being internationally recognized for equality and democracy, has not entirely escaped the gender gap. Although 52-percent of the population is female, approximately 25-percent of all elected leaders and only three out of every ten candidates for elected office are women.

Notably, Canada has seen the election of six female premiers. As a result of this historic achievement, approximately 87% of Canadians are governed by a woman. For every one of these women premiers, this achievement represents a culmination of the extraordinary time and energy that they themselves, and the women who came before them, have invested in the political process.

Polls have consistently demonstrated that Canadians want more women in politics as they believe it leads to more effective and balanced government. And while no two women leaders are the same, their presence as Premiers, Ministers and MLAs can improve the dialogue and enhance public policy making.

*"None of us have made it,  
until all of us have made it."*

Rosemary Brown  
Former MLA, British Columbia







## WHY THE GENDER GAP NEEDS TO BE CLOSED

In order for a political system to be truly democratic, all citizens must be equally and fairly represented by their elected leaders. On top of this, all citizens — especially women — must have equal opportunity to speak and be heard. Women's voices in particular can strengthen public policy debates by bringing to the fore issues of direct concern to many women, such as wage parity, reproductive rights, childcare, and violence against women. A broad representation of women is necessary since their varied experiences will expand the information base upon which decisions are made — resulting in higher quality decisions.

The absence of equal representation in government reinforces barriers to entry by maintaining a political arena that is inhospitable to equitable power sharing between genders. By closing the gender gap more opportunities will open for female citizens to run for political office.

*“If you want equality, you have to have equal responsibility.”*

Betty Friedman  
Author, *The Feminine Mystique*

Study after study has shown that when women are sufficiently represented at the legislative and business tables, policy outcomes and political culture can shift, often significantly. This is because women politicians bring their own life experiences— and those of women around them— to an arena that has been largely male dominated.

Across the country, organizations are working to guarantee that women are equally represented by our government. Through encouraging electoral reforms that address the election of more women, and investigating equity increasing initiatives, such as proportional representation and political party quotas, these groups actively combat the gender gap.





# CRITICAL MASS

When the demographics in elected positions mirror that of society's demographics, a country's full social capital is realized. Implementing a critical mass of women in politics — electing a proportionate amount of women based on the population — would change the culture of politics and provide a better democratic environment for women and men.

Drude Dahlerup of the Aarhus Institute of Political Science in Denmark presented groundbreaking research on the notion of a critical mass in 1988. This research sets the critical mass at 30- to 33-percent and concludes that a critical mass will ultimately lead to changes in political culture and practices and to the further empowerment of women.

Equal representation by women in the political arena would ensure women's voices, opinions and experiences are effectively used to influence and develop policy that is truly reflective of the entire population.

The Honourable Monique Bégin, sociologist, academic and former politician, supports Dahlerup's findings, but is careful to state that not all elected women would naturally work to advance women's issues. Bégin advises caution with respect to a strictly numeric definition of the critical mass concept, as it is unlikely that electing 30-percent women who are not committed to women's issues would affect public policies that apply to women.

However, the importance of imposing a significant measure to ensure equal representation in the political arena is recognized by academics and public officials alike. A critical mass would ensure women gain strength through numbers in

government, and as their numbers increase women will be able to work more effectively together to influence and promote policy and legislation.

Over time, with the political arena more easily accessible, women will be able to work together to develop policies that effectively address women's issues and concerns.

*"I had an initiative that I wanted very much to pass. It had to do with low wage redress, for both men and women. It was turned down twice at the Treasury Board. I asked to come back on what happened to be a day where women made up one-third of the government. The women voted yes, the men no. The men asked to vote on it three times. Three times the women's vote carried the policy. This is a powerful example of what happens when you have like-minded people at the table. Critical mass does make a difference!"*

**Penny Priddy**  
Former Minister, British Columbia





## **Dahlerup's groundbreaking research outlines the influence a critical mass could have on the culture of politics and the experience of women running for elected office:**

### **Changes in the reaction to women in politics.**

A critical mass of elected women in governments results in the disappearance of open resistance to elected women in general. Sexist remarks towards elected women are silenced, stereotyping ceases to exist, and exclusionary practices are discontinued.

### **Changes in the performance and efficiency of women politicians.**

The so-called 'failure rate' and high turnover of women in politics proves to be non-existent when a critical mass is implemented. However, women continued to report that they had not gained equal opportunity to carry out their work as politicians to the same extent as male politicians.

### **Changes in political culture.**

Political norms, social conventions, underlying procedures and meetings are all influenced by the presence of a critical mass of elected women. Rigidity and formalism disappear, relationships become egalitarian and the tone of discussion is reported to be softer. Familial obligations are considered in the planning of events.

### **Changes in the political discourse.**

A critical mass of elected women influences the discussions that are held within governments — 'women' as a subject now enter the political arena and are on the electoral agenda. The issues they face in their lives because of their unequal status in society become legitimate topics of public policy and debate.

### **Change in policy.**

When women comprise one-third or more of legislative assemblies, the political agenda begins to include issues of interest to women (for example, pay equity and social support systems for families). Although the research was less concrete about the extent to which this change in policy occurs, it strongly suggests that its occurrence is inevitable.







# POLITICS AND YOU

Knowledge of the gender gap that plagues the political arena and the influences a critical mass of elected women will make to political culture and policy decisions may cause you to reflect on the role that you could play in politics. You may have a desire to become politically involved and address the issues you view as essential to improving the lives of citizens.

## YOU CAN AFFECT CHANGE

One of the main reasons people enter the political arena is to participate in the decision-making process on public policies that have an impact on society in a broad and sustained way. Whether it is this motivation, or another, everyone has their own reasons for choosing politics.

*Politics is about wanting to make a difference.*

Remember a time when you felt that some action you took made a difference that was positive, even if the positive impact occurred later.

What happened?  
How did you feel?  
Who was involved?  
What was the setting?

Now, think about your motives for entering the political arena. What is your goal? What is most important to you that you could improve or further support through better legislation or policies?

*"It is individuals who change society, give birth to ideas; who, standing out against the tides of opinion, change them."*

**Doris Lessing**  
Novelist



Most importantly, consider your vision for the future. When developing your vision, imagine what it looks like when you are successful in your political life. Imagine the changes you could make, and how you could make them. Your vision will be key in communicating with your supporters about how you will improve their lives.

Politics is about making a difference — that difference will be easier made if you have a clear understanding of how your personal goals and vision will influence your political path. Don't worry - if you are still developing your vision, use this module to solidify your focus and interests.

*"I ran because I believed in our cause, I thought I had the skills to contribute, and I wanted to make a difference. I believed we needed more women. Most importantly, I ran just to see if I had what it took! I never regretted it."*

**Janet Ecker**  
Former MLA, Ontario





## In the spotlight: Louise McKinney

On Election Day 1917 in Alberta, Louise Crummy McKinney made Canadian political history. A fervent public speaker and leader of the temperance movement, McKinney became the first woman in the entire British Empire to take a seat in a legislature when she won a seat in the Alberta provincial legislature. Her victory, celebrated by women across the county, came only one short year after women's right to run and vote in provincial legislatures was recognized. McKinney staked women's place in Canadian politics and showcased the value women leaders bring to government.

McKinney garnered her leadership experience through her involvement with the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU). Beginning in North Dakota in 1893, McKinney worked as an organizer to establish local chapters until she resettled with her family in Alberta in 1903. There, she quickly established the first temperance local and soon became its president — a position she held for twenty-five years — as well as the president of the national WCTU and vice-president of the international WCTU. A tenacious leader, McKinney established more than forty WCTU chapters in Alberta and Saskatchewan in less than ten years. She travelled often and spoke passionately about the evils of alcohol. In 1915, her tireless campaigning brought the WCTU a long-awaited victory: Alberta had voted 'yes' to prohibition. McKinney and the WCTU are also attributed with playing a significant role in securing women's right to vote in Alberta in 1916.

Support from the WCTU would prove essential for McKinney's victory in 1917. Her strong leadership and debate abilities, along with her prohibition platform and promise to strengthen liquor control laws and women's rights, led to her

election as an Independent in the 1917 Alberta provincial election. While an elected representative, McKinney fought ferociously for stricter liquor laws and policies to better support immigrants, widows and separated women. A significant part of her political legacy was the Dower Act, a policy which guarantees widow's a portion of their husband's estate. McKinney served only one term in the Alberta provincial legislature, although she campaigned unsuccessfully for re-election in 1921.

However, McKinney's political legacy did not end upon her exit from elected office. Alongside four other prominent Albertan women, including Nellie McClung, McKinney is recognized as a member of the Famous Five. Together with these women, McKinney travelled to the Privy Council in Britain in order to secure women's recognition as persons under the Canadian constitution. On October 18, 1929, the Famous Five marked a victory for the Persons Case — now 'persons', Canadian women were eligible to sit on the senate and participate in high-level policy decisions.

Long after her death at the age of 63 on July 10, 1931, McKinney is remembered and celebrated for her contributions to Canada's political arena. A trailblazer for her time, Louise McKinney's political legacy remains an inspiration for women leaders across the country.





## BE INSPIRED!

Elected women are making a difference and affecting change at all levels of government. They overcome countless hurdles, execute their clear visions and work hard to attain their goals. Here are a few stories of triumph from some women who have been or are still elected representatives.

“I felt a particular sense of triumph, as a woman, when as Conservative Minister of Energy Mines and Resources, I negotiated the Atlantic Accord with Newfoundland and Labrador Premier Brian Peckford, which enabled the development of the offshore oil and gas resources which are on stream. Former Liberal Energy Minister Jean Chretien, later Prime Minister, failed in this task.”

Pat Carney  
*Former Canadian Senator*

“As an elected female representative, my greatest accomplishment would have to be the passage of one of my bills in the legislature that will affect the citizens of this province for many years to come...The Accessibility Act is legislation that is about empowerment and inclusion. The Bill allows for a fully accessible society in Ontario by the year 2020, so that every Ontarian will have the opportunity to participate to their fullest potential... I will never forget the day the bill passed, standing in the legislature with tears in my eyes, watching the groups who had waited so long for a bill like this who had travelled from as far as Thunder Bay to watch the historic moment in the legislature. It truly was and will be my greatest achievement as a politician.”

Marie Bountrogianni  
*Former MLA, Ontario*

“The first moment I felt a particular sense of triumph, as a woman, was when I was first elected as an MPP, having defeated a ten-year incumbent (male) who was considered unbeatable... It felt good to pull it off, particularly since the member I defeated had gained some infamy by telling Sheila Copps to ‘go back to the kitchen’.”

Lyn McLeod  
*First woman party leader, Ontario*

“I completely reformed the child welfare system, everything from new legislation and training standards to a new funding model and increased revenue... I also created a new early reading and literacy program in schools, established tough new rules to protect students from sexual abuse, established a new professional development and performance appraisal system for teachers and established new tax support for families caring for disabled children. I can’t think of many jobs where you can have as much of an impact as you can in politics.”

Janet Ecker  
*Former MLA, Ontario*







## ADVICE FROM ROLE MODELS

At this point, you may be asking yourself a number of questions regarding your entrance into the political race. Luckily, there are many strong, successful female political leaders to lend you words of wisdom.

*“Is it really the right time for me to run?”*

*“Who knows [when it is the right time for women to run]? For me it was in my 50s. I had the freedom and financial support, my husband was supportive, and I had no other family commitments. [Earlier], it’s tough. You need a very supportive family and extended family or independent financial means for babysitters and the emotional capacity to accept not having the chance to put your children to bed for years.”*

Susan Freeman  
County Warden. Ontario

*“I did not run for provincial office until my last two children were in high school... It worked, but I found the separation difficult. A supportive home base, however it is worked out, was essential for me, and, even then, I would not have taken on the provincial role when my children were younger.”*

Lyn McLeod  
First woman party leader, Ontario

*“Provincial politics worked for me. I chose a constituency where I lived and which was 15 minutes from the Legislature, and my children were young. By 1994, when I moved to the federal scene, the girls had graduated from university and my husband had taken early retirement and was prepared to move to Ottawa.”*

Senator Sharon Carstairs  
First woman to lead Official Opposition Manitoba

*“Should I run against another woman in a nomination contest or an election?”*

*“Of course a woman should run against another woman – men do it all the time!”*

Senator Sharon Carstairs  
First woman to lead Official Opposition Manitoba

*“In my own political life, I have avoided it on several occasions, because I think there are too few women in the system and I hate to see another woman knocked off. I have always used my own rule – give the other woman a break, if you can. [However], I think there is going to be a great deal more emphasis placed on running woman against woman, and I suppose we’re going to have to go along with it, because at least that way we’ll get some women into office.”*

The Hon. Iona Campagnolo  
Former Lieutenant Governor, British Columbia

*“Riding Associations will always be encouraging the strongest possible field of candidates. If a woman won’t run against another woman, we will keep losing contested nominations because a single female candidate may not emerge as the best of a strong field.”*

Lyn McLeod  
First woman party leader, Ontario





*“Should I accept a nomination to run in an ‘unwinnable’ riding?”*

*“I ran successfully in what was considered an ‘unwinnable’ riding. Women should contest nominations in any and every riding where interested women are found.”*

**Lyn McLeod**

First woman party leader, Ontario

*“Should I speak up on women’s issues once I am elected?”*

*“I am concerned that when women do attain power, they are pressured not to advocate issues of concern to women... The pressure on you not to talk about the issues that concern you are very great. So when women who have fought to enhance other women do achieve their goals, I believe all of us are called upon to doubly support them, because pressure on them not to speak, not to act, is enormous, and growing stronger.”*

**The Hon. Iona Campagnolo**

Former Lieutenant Governor, British Columbia

*“Can I afford to lose?”*

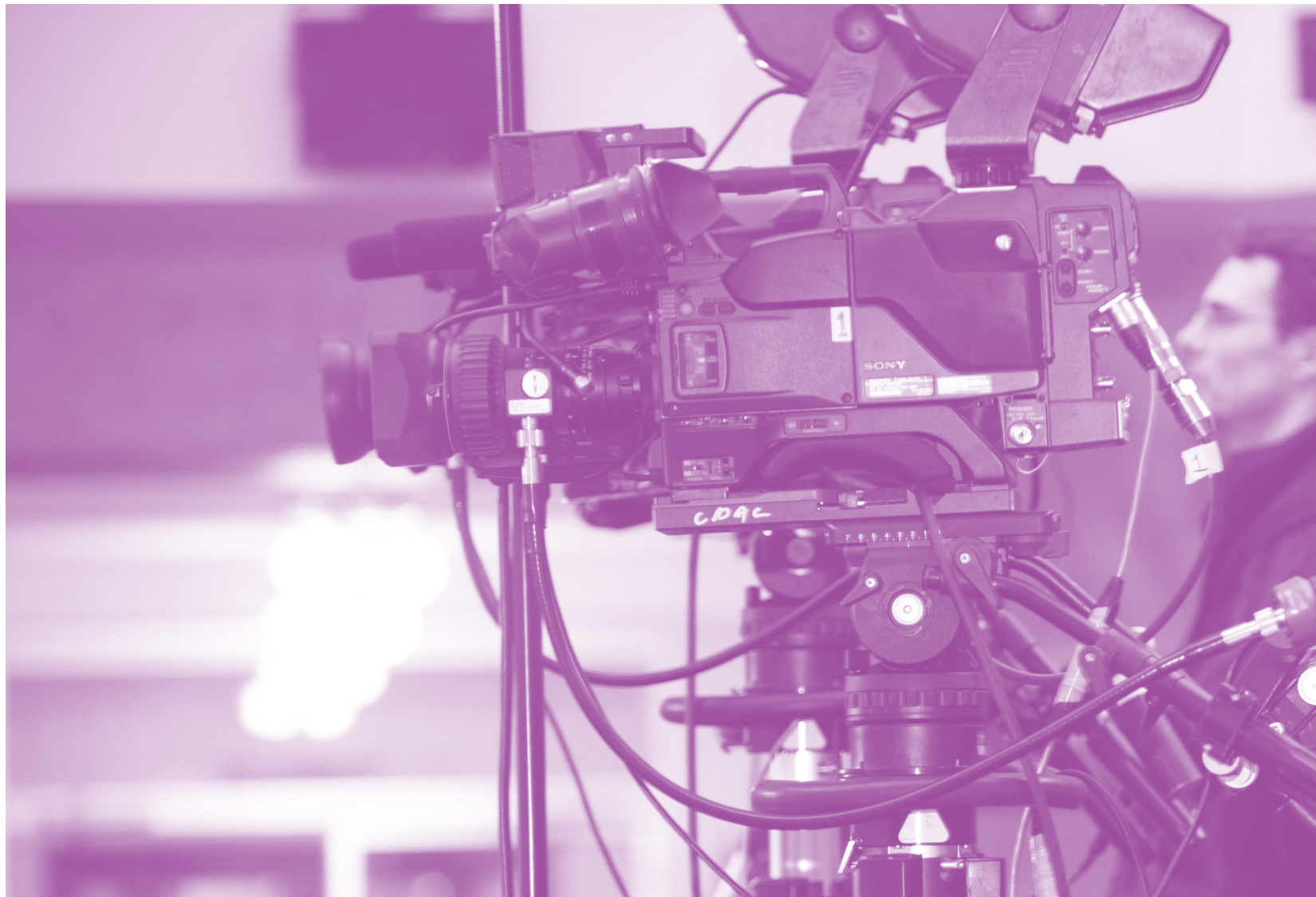
*“I’m fairly certain there will be a ‘next time’, but I will be better prepared on what to expect, what I need to do (and not do) and how to go about winning. I have experience now in areas that were formerly “outside my comfort zone”. I have pushed those boundaries and realize that I really like the personal contact (door-to-door canvassing) with members of my community.”*

**Darla Campbell**

President, Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women’s Clubs

## TIPS TO NEVER FORGET

- You must never forget that all eyes are on you.
- You must clearly understand why you are running.
- You must know how to ask for help.
- You must be and remain confident.
- You must be ready to put in long hours.
- You must always schedule time for your family.
- You must remain enthusiastic.
- You must inspire your team.
- You must know your supporters.
- You must know your opponents.
- You must never forget to say thank you.
- You must be gracious both in winning and in defeat.







## STEP 2: SETTING THE STAGE

This section will show you how to set the stage for your involvement in politics through closely examining internal and external factors. You will identify your personal strengths and weaknesses, and uncover how these traits can lead you to success. You will look closely at the world of politics and understand what your role will be once elected, and what barriers you may encounter along the way. Lastly, you will discover the importance of strategic thinking and how careful analysis, courage and a strong support base will be invaluable throughout your political journey.



# KNOW YOURSELF

Preparing for a campaign can be a challenging process. The best way to prepare yourself for success is to really know yourself. Creating a list of your strengths and weaknesses, as elementary as it may sound, is a concrete way to identify where you will succeed, and where you may need extra support from your team. You will also need to prepare for inevitable personal attacks. These attacks can pose a risk to your character — and platform. Knowing how to prepare against these attacks will be useful throughout your political journey.

## ASSESS YOUR STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

“Doing this kind of exercise can truly be an eye-opener for you,” explains Penny Priddy, who counts 20 years as an elected official on a school board and six portfolios as MLA in British Columbia, “Find your five best truthful friends and ask them to write down all they think you are really good at and all the things they think you still have to learn. This helped me understand how people perceive my strengths. Sometimes there were things I didn’t see as strengths ... I am very cautious and saw that as a weakness, but it has kept me out of trouble sometimes.”

Taking an inventory of your personal skills and personality traits can also be used to better prepare your team for working together. When a team has a solid understanding of who they are working with, and for, everyone will be able to respond appropriately to unique personality traits. Ultimately this will create a more positive — and productive — work environment.

“I also tend to have a flip sense of humour, which doesn’t work everywhere,” recounts Penny Priddy, “This is particularly true when I’m tired or when I’m stressed. So, when I realize I am acting this way, I know I need to take a break.”

And I always make my team aware of this aspect of me, so that they know that if I become flippant, I am tired or stressed, and they don’t take it personally.”

Use the following exercise to assess your readiness for the political arena. Many women tend to downplay their skills and experience, and as a result you may rate yourself poorly in this exercise. Thus, it is suggested that you do this exercise with a candid friend or mentor who can objectively comment on your character. Keep in mind that many of the skills you may be lacking can be learned or acquired.

The results of the assessment will help you generate discussion with your team as to any strengths or weaknesses you have uncovered. Together, you will be able to develop a plan to capitalize on your strengths and fortify your weaknesses.



## SELF ASSESSEMENT EXERCISE

Rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being weak and 5 being strong.

This exercise has been provided courtesy of the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women.

### PATIENCE LEVEL

1 2 3 4 5

Reporters and constituents may ask you inappropriate questions. You may be asked the same question many times. Can you remain calm when dealing with people on a regular basis whom you find annoying or frustrating?

### LEADERSHIP SKILLS

1 2 3 4 5

Do you like working with people? Are you able to delegate responsibility effectively and to openly demonstrate your appreciation for the hard work and loyalty of your supporters?

### PUBLIC SPEAKING

1 2 3 4 5

Can you speak easily in front of diverse groups and to the media? Are you articulate? Does it take you a long time to practice a speech before you feel comfortable, or do you need only to read it once or twice to ensure you remember the salient points? Are you able to handle unanticipated questions effectively?

### STRESS MANAGEMENT SKILLS

1 2 3 4 5

Can you deal with the highs and lows of your campaign with a fairly even temperament? Are you able to do many different tasks at once, or are you easily overwhelmed by disorganization and confusion?

### STAMINA/ ENDURANCE

1 2 3 4 5

Are you able to work long hours under stressful conditions? Can you pace yourself? Are you able to schedule your activities so you don't burn out? Are you able to stop and say no before you become completely exhausted?

### IMPACT ON PERSONAL LIFE

1 2 3 4 5

Does your family support the idea of your getting involved in politics? Can you modify or take leave from your work/volunteer/family commitments during the campaign? Could you, when necessary, put the needs of your constituents ahead of your own?

### POLITICAL KNOW-HOW

1 2 3 4 5

Do you know the intricacies of how governments work? Do you have adequate knowledge and understanding of the issues? Do you know how to play the "game" of politics? Do you know what resources are available to help you become informed?

### EXPERIENCE

1 2 3 4 5

Have you served on agencies, boards or commissions? Have you served on volunteer committees in your community? If you are involved in partisan politics, were you active in the party before seeking the nomination? Have you ever been actively involved in working for another candidate's campaign?





In 1982, Margaret Mitchell, NDP MP, stood up in the House of Commons and declared concern about violence against women. She was met with laughter. Women everywhere responded with outrage and brought the issue to national attention. Today, her strong conviction and brave action paved the way for policies to protect women.

One day as Agnes McPhail, the first woman MP, was sitting in the House of Commons, one of the gentlemen on the other side of the House got up and said: “Agnes, don’t you wish you were a man?” She stood up, thought about it for a moment, and said: “No, but I’ll bet you do.”





## DOING IT DIFFERENTLY

Female elected representatives come to politics with an array of experiences that are unique to women. These experiences influence how women perceive the political arena, as well as how they govern and make decisions regarding policy.

It is possible to use your experiences — professional and personal — to transform the halls of parliament. As Flora MacDonald advises, use your women-unique experiences to your advantage — initiate new and compelling approaches. For example, instead of hosting a party for the delegates of a leadership convention, Flora MacDonald redirected funds to initiate a soup kitchen for delegates. “That hot and substantive soup,” she recalls, “was appreciated by delegates coming in off the busses and streets of Ottawa on cold February days.”

*Most importantly, do not allow others to belittle the fact that you are a female candidate.*

You may be labeled as ‘less credible’ or ‘less important’ by some people, or given ‘softer’ responsibilities, but your knowledge and insights are much needed. Do not let gender-based criticisms keep you from doing politics how you believe they should be done.

*“Women must realize that the experience they acquire as mothers, as volunteers, or in the workforce, can be transformed to the political field.”*

**Louise Poirier**  
Ward Councillor, Quebec

Remember all the places where you’ve gained unique skills and knowledge:

- Committees (both professional and personal)
- Union positions
- Volunteer work
- Community projects
- Lobbying efforts (e.g. neighbourhood watch)
- Community/agency boards
- Service clubs
- Political campaigns
- City-wide event planning
- Municipal consultation processes
- Media work
- School councils and newspapers

Your unique experiences as a woman will be useful in the political arena. Actively make your knowledge known and put your skills to use. Not only will they help you stand out as a politician, but they will also contribute to a more thorough and balanced democratic system.





# THINK STRATEGICALLY

If you decide to run, don't wing it! Plan your success. A political expedition requires acute planning, preparation and strategic thinking — much of which must occur long before your name is put on the ballot. Here are three key tactics that you should keep in mind when planning your route to elected office.

## SEIZE OPPORTUNITIES

An essential part of your strategy should be to seize the opportunity to run when it arises. Many successful female politicians begin their political career as a result of seizing the opportunity to become involved when it is offered to them. Stay alert for opportune moments to put your name on the ballot — they may come unexpectedly, but remember that the opportunity may be fleeting and may only come once. Prepare yourself well so you are ready to benefit from the opportunity — not shy away from it — when it does come your way.

Remember, make those around you (supporters, family, friends) aware of your interest to be an elected representative. They could know of opportunities that would be beneficial to you and could help you develop a strategy for seizing them. While you are waiting for the opportune moment, make the most of your time. Keep your network of supporters ready — when the opportunity to be on the ballot comes around, you will all need to hit the ground running.

*"...I had received a telegram stating that my colleagues had decided to put my name forward as a candidate in the federal riding of Kingston and the Islands, and they hoped I agreed. I gave it considerable thought and in the end said to myself, 'Why not?'"*

**The Hon. Flora MacDonald**  
Former MLA, Ontario

*"Any human anywhere will blossom in an hundred unexpected talents and capacities simply by being given the opportunity to do so."*

**Doris Lessing**  
Novelist

## ANALYZE AND STRATEGIZE

Strategic thinking and analysis are extremely beneficial tactics that, when employed correctly, will bring you closer to your goal and success. Learn to stop and think things through as often as possible. Analyze your emotions and their roots and take the time to determine how you will respond. Trust your intuition, but ensure that your intuition can be supported by fact.

*"Planning means being clear about your objectives and how you intend to reach them."*

**The Hon. Joan Kirner & Moira Rayner**  
Former Premier, Australia  
Former Commissioner for Equal Opportunity, Australia

Just as in business, sports or education, you will need to determine a precise goal (for example, winning your nomination or election), analyze the situation and set a timeframe for reaching that goal. When you are developing your strategic plan, visualize a road map — with the final destination represented by your goal achieved.



## CREATE A POWER BASE

Building a power base can be seen as networking at the next level. When entering politics, you likely have an existing network of individuals from previous business or community work — consider these your natural constituencies. To build your power base, you will need to reach out to these constituencies and garner their support. Think of your power base as people power — the more people supporting you, the stronger your campaign will be. A strong campaign will be essential to your success at the polls.

*Strategize with your team to develop a plan for reaching out to your networks and building your support base.*

Useful tactics involve making yourself publicly visible: attend events, generate photo ops, and canvass door-to-door regularly. The more you are in the public eye, the more people you will reach with your message — resulting in more opportunity to earn supporters.

## CONNECT WITH YOUR CONSTITUENCY

Connecting with your constituency will be crucial to building your power base. These are the individuals that reside within your riding — who's lives you will directly impact with your policy — and should be your first supporters. With the support of your constituency, becoming an elected representative is much more attainable.

In order to feel connected to you, your constituency must see your personal investment in their community. Do you volunteer with any community organizations? Are you a representative for any grassroots initiatives within the community? Do you know the intricacies of your communities' internal politics, or conflicts between ethnic groups? The members of your

constituency will be looking for a candidate that they see as someone who truly represents — and cares about — their community. Your active presence in the community will be a key factor in how well your constituency connects with you — and how well they see you as a viable candidate.

*“To be good in politics you have to be able to reach out and touch people in some personal way, give of yourself in some way that will connect with them.”*

**Janet Ecker**  
Former MLA, Ontario

Libby Davis' re-election to the House of Commons in 2004 is a useful example of the importance of being truly connected to your riding's constituency. Davis represents the citizens of Vancouver East Side, known as the Downtown East Side (D.E.S.), the poorest urban riding in Canada. To reach this disenfranchised community, Davis rented a vacant storefront in the heart of the D.E.S. where, on advance polling days, lawyers swore in people whose personal identification had been lost or stolen. This small act had immense consequences. Not only did Davis win the re-election, but the people of the D.E.S. were given the ability to vote. They were connected, if only briefly, to the outside world. Most importantly, they felt empowered. Davis' campaign gave the people of the D.E.S. a way to fight back — a way to feel some power. The result was a power base — a people power — that allowed Davis to defeat her opponent and be re-elected.







According to the Honourable Barbara McDougall, there are three key components in establishing a winning plan. Each of these components, when used strategically, can lead you to political success.

### **CREDIBILITY**

Your credibility as a community member will earn you the respect and trust of your constituency. Advertise your credibility to your constituency and they will realize that your skills, education and perspectives are exactly what they seek in a political candidate. Build upon your credibility through advancing your education, or obtaining training to master the techniques of your job.

### **INITIATIVE**

Look around for strategic opportunities to increase your responsibilities and get ahead. When it comes to getting ahead, most women still wait to be asked to take on greater responsibilities. Don't wait to be asked. Taking initiative will pay off during your political career — your constituency will see you as a go-getter and you will be able to become increasingly involved in political processes.

### **COURAGE**

Oftentimes to take initiative, you need to take risks. And to take risks you need courage. This courage will allow you to step confidently in to uncharted waters, show your supporters you are committed to your promises and intend to stay true to your platform. Being courageous — especially at strategic or opportune moments — will be a vital tactic to gaining support, earning credibility and achieving success in the political arena.





# RAISE YOUR PROFILE

Raising your profile and making yourself well-known around your constituency will be essential to your political success. Here are some tried and true methods that will build your visibility and credibility — prior to Election Day — and lead you to successfully contest a nomination or run as a candidate.

## **GET INVOLVED IN YOUR COMMUNITY.**

Choose a group or organization that aligns with your beliefs. Go after the leadership positions such as chair or spokesperson. Never shy away from the finance jobs — they are roles of power and influence.

## **RUN FOR SOMETHING AT HOME.**

Politics happens everywhere there are elections e.g. school councils, health boards, ratepayers associations. Even if the process lacks an official election, get yourself nominated for a position.

## **GET INVOLVED WITH LOCAL MEDIA.**

Write letters to the editor. If you have a particular area of expertise that the local TV station might welcome in community programming, offer it.

## **JOIN A POLITICAL PARTY.**

Volunteer to be on the finance committee or other influential role.

## **WORK ON AN ELECTION CAMPAIGN.**

Volunteer to be the campaign manager. This role not only hones your leadership skills, it exposes you to the legislative process and to how government policies are made.

## **JOIN YOUR RIDING ASSOCIATION.**

The longer you are involved in the riding association, the more you learn about the nominations process, the more you get to test your leadership skills and the more visibility you have with members.

## **PARTICIPATE IN MUNICIPAL ADVISORY COMMITTEES OR CONSULTATION PROCESSES.**

These activities will deepen your understanding of issues, of local decision-making processes and of the various community positions on issues.

## **VOLUNTEER FOR A TASKFORCE.**

Taskforces exist for local, provincial and federal issues. For example, you might be interested in health policy, which is under provincial jurisdiction. If you participated in the local taskforce trying to recruit more doctors to the community, you would gain insight into health human resource planning.

## **WORK WITH A MENTOR.**

Female politicians are known for their capacity to support one another in a non-partisan way. Look around you. Very likely there will be an experienced female politician nearby willing to mentor you through these critical beginning stages.

## **GET INVOLVED IN ORGANIZED LABOUR.**

The world of organized labour mirrors in many ways the world of politics and provides good schooling for women who want to test the waters and develop some of that 'thick skin' needed to succeed in politics.







## STEP 3: PICKING YOUR PODIUM

This section will provide you with the nuts and bolts you need to know in order to pick your podium — your decision to run at the municipal, provincial/territorial or federal level should be well-informed. Take this opportunity to learn about each level — what powers they hold, how they are structured, and the amount of time your elected position will require from you — and then decide which level best suits your life at this point in time. Choosing a level of government that will fit your life — including your expectations and goals — is a great way to prepare yourself for its demands, and your success.





# THE MUNICIPAL LEVEL

Municipal governments represent the order of government that is closest to the people. As a councillor, reeve, warden or mayor you are elected by the people who's lives you will impact directly — your influence is tremendous.

You can make an incredible difference at the municipal level. Susan Freeman, Deputy Reeve of Tay Valley Township, Councillor of Sherbrooke Ward and Warden of Lanark County in Eastern Ontario recalls, "Since I have been elected, I have been pushing decision-making on a number of important issues that had been sitting for five to ten years. I've also instituted policies on tightening councillor spending and initiated county-wide awards of excellence. Women can accomplish anything they choose at the local level."

The municipal level is widely perceived as the best entry level for women interested in becoming an elected representative.

Being an elected representative at the municipal level allows you not only to stay close to home — your family — but also to connect more often with your constituency. Spending time with your voters will help you develop a clear understanding of their concerns and wishes for your community. With this information, you can begin to implement policies and decisions that are a direct reflection of your constituency's desires. As a potential first-timer in politics, you should seek to foster a strong rapport with your constituency — listening to their concerns will help you do this. A strong rapport will help carry you throughout your political career.

The municipal level will also provide you with a notable stepping stone for entering other levels

of government. With the experience you will gain from being an elected representative at the municipal level, you will be able to confidently put your name forward on a ballot at the provincial/territorial, and even federal, levels. On top of this, the connections and networks you have established — including your power base — will follow you on to the next level.

## POWERS

Municipalities are created by legislation that is enacted by their province or territory. The provinces and territories then delegate responsibilities to the municipal governing body. Typically, these responsibilities include:

- managing police and fire stations;
- addressing local transportation concerns;
- funding education and school boards;
- planning and developing industrial, commercial and residential zones;
- and providing public utilities and other services.

Property taxes are the primary source of revenue for municipalities although most also rely on financing from other levels of government.

Municipal governments' power to enact legislation is dependent on approval from the province. However, recent changes to the provincial-municipal relationship allows municipalities to be more responsive to their citizens.





*“The process we envision starts locally,  
one community at a time...”*

**Ann MacLean**

First female mayor of New Glasgow, NS



## STRUCTURE

The exact structure of a municipal government council depends on its size, its population and whether or not there is more than one level of local government involved. Some rural areas have two-tier governments comprised of a federation of local municipalities within the boundaries of a county or region that encompasses more than one township.

Townships and villages are generally headed by a reeve or mayor, while county or regional governments are headed by a warden. The method of election varies from one municipality to another. Councillors may be elected at large, or by ward. County councils are formed by elected members from the lower tier municipalities who then select a warden. Mayors are usually elected at large by all the voters in the municipality.

In city governments, the mayor presides over the Council where councillors from the different wards meet to adopt by-laws, approve budgets and set policies. Committees of Council are struck to pursue policies and monitor projects when the council is not meeting. Each council and committee of council sets its own agenda and schedule.

## TIME COMMITMENTS

At the municipal level, your government is close to home — you won't be required to spend a lot of time traveling to meetings. However, there will still be responsibilities you must fulfill that will require time in your schedule.

- In addition to regular Council meetings – usually weekly for municipal councils and monthly for regional boards – you may be asked to sit on special committees, boards, commissions or agencies that require a significant time commitment.
- Council and board members are expected to attend every meeting, although this is not mandatory. A councillor or board member who is absent from meetings for a period of 60 consecutive days or four consecutive regularly scheduled meetings, without permission, will be disqualified from office in some provinces.
- You will be expected to attend conferences, conventions, seminars and workshops.
- You will be required to attend many social events promoting your municipality.



# THE PROVINCIAL/ TERRITORIAL LEVEL

Being an elected representative at the provincial/territorial level will allow you to represent the concerns of your constituents with respect to provincial responsibilities to the provincial Legislature. As a Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP) or Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA), you will have the opportunity to affect legislation on a grander scale.

You will be responsible for debating, passing and amending laws on issues such as health care, taxation and education. On top of this, you may have the opportunity to take on increasing responsibilities in other political roles — such as House Leader, Party Whip or Cabinet Minister — that will increase your exposure as an active, engaged politician. When you are not at the legislative assembly, you will be able to return to your riding, meet with your constituents and proudly share with them the ways in which you are representing them at the table.

## HOUSE LEADER

As House Leader you will be responsible for the daily administrative tasks of your party in the Legislature, and will meet weekly with all other House Leaders to plan the business of the Legislature. The House Leader for the governing party is also responsible for announcing the daily order of House business.

## PARTY WHIP

As Whip, you will ensure the presence of party members in the Legislature or at committee meetings in order to maintain adequate representation in the event of a vote. You will also be responsible for arranging the business of your party in the House and informing party members of this business.

## POWERS

Provincial and territorial governments have jurisdiction over many aspects of daily life, such as primary and secondary education, health and social services, property and civil rights, provincial and municipal courts and municipal institutions.

Provinces have the legislative power to adopt and amend laws and regulations, establish policies and implement programs in their fields of jurisdiction, and also have the power to tax in order to raise money to fulfill their responsibilities.

The three territorial governments have more or less the same responsibilities as the provinces, but do not control land and natural resources. Also, the territories' legislative powers are granted by the federal government — rather than guaranteed in the Constitution — and so they are more easily changed.

Many areas of responsibility are shared — financially and legislatively — between the provincial and territorial governments and the federal government. However, when federal and provincial/territorial laws in these areas conflict, the federal law prevails.



## STRUCTURE

The legislative assembly, or House, functions according to a parliamentary system of government. Each province and territory has a legislative assembly which consists of elected members.

The majority of elected members form the governing party whose leader becomes the premier of the province or territory.

They then appoint members to the Cabinet or Executive Council who formulate government policies and are each responsible for the administration of a ministry of government. The Cabinet meets regularly to set the business the government will propose to the legislature.

The party with the second most elected members forms the Official Opposition.

Each opposition party leader appoints a shadow cabinet that mirrors the members of the governing party's Cabinet in order to scrutinize the programs and policies of the government department to which they are assigned.

## TIME COMMITMENTS

Politics at the provincial or territorial level will require a larger time commitment than at the municipal level. The House traditionally meets twice a year for the fall and spring sessions, each of which run for two to three months. Furthermore, all members also participate in meetings of the many Committees and Standing Committees that extend beyond the sessions of the House.

Given that the Legislative Assembly is located in the capital city of each province or territory, many MPPs and MLAs are required to spend a significant amount of time outside of their riding — away from their home and family. On top of the time spent away from home, many MPPs and MLAs spend an even larger amount of time traveling to and from their riding. This can rapidly add up if you are living in a rural area that is not easily reached by plane, or if you live in a more remote area where travel conditions are sometimes difficult.

On weekends, MPPs and MLAs are given the opportunity to return to their riding where they spend time meeting with their constituents. The time required for riding activities must not be underestimated. The citizens of your riding will come to you for a variety of reasons, and expect you to find a solution for them. Nor should this time commitment be undervalued, for it is through these activities that you will maintain and strengthen your power base in order to be re-elected in the next general election.





# THE FEDERAL LEVEL

Politics at the federal level is the most senior level of politics you can be involved in within Canada. As a Member of Parliament (MP), you will act as a legislator, negotiator, ombudsman, policy analyst, public speaker and diplomat.

At this level, you will communicate the concerns of your constituency with respect to federal responsibilities to Parliament. You will debate bills and other legislation within the House of Commons with your constituency's best interests in mind. As an MP, you will also sit on various committees that will provide opportunity for you to make a significant difference in the lives of Canadians.

## POWERS

The federal government in general is responsible for matters that concern all Canadians and that cross inter-provincial and international borders, such as:

- defense;
- foreign affairs;
- the regulation of inter-provincial and international trade and commerce;
- criminal law;
- citizenship;
- and central banking and monetary policy.

More specifically, the House of Commons and the Senate differ in their jurisdictions. The House of Commons is constitutionally authorized to introduce legislation related to the raising or spending of funds whereas the Senate possess all of the powers of the House of Commons except that of initiating financial legislation.

## STRUCTURE

Canada's Parliament consists of three parts: the Queen (represented by the Governor General), the Senate (also known as the Upper House) and the House of Commons (also known as the Lower House). The House of Commons consists of 308 Members who are elected to represent the people in their ridings. The Senate consists of 105 Senators appointed by the Governor General on the advice of the Prime Minister.

**A Parliament cannot last longer than a period of five years, after which a general election must be held.**

On Election Day, Canadians cast their votes for the MP of their choice. The political party that elects the most MPs becomes the governing party, and their leader steps in to the role of Prime Minister.







## STEP 4: ENTERING THE RACE

This section will provide you with the information you need to confidently enter the race. You will learn when to expect an election at each level of government and will review the necessary requirements to be qualified as a candidate. Through diving in to the nomination process, you will thoroughly understand each step required to get your name on the ballot. You will hear advice from female political leaders and gain strength from their wisdom and encouragements. You are about to enter the initial stages of your political career - congratulations!





# ARE YOU READY?

Once the election date is announced, you will need to hit the ground running — you will need to be prepared. It is in your best interests as a candidate to spend as much time as possible prior to the election preparing yourself — and your campaign — from every angle.

Begin building your financial support base, brainstorm a list of potential campaign volunteers, and do some investigating to learn more about your potential opponents.

Spend time educating yourself about the issues that are important in your riding — both local and national. Understanding where the public and public officials stand on important issues will help you tailor your campaign to best represent your constituents. Be prepared to address these issues with constituents when you request their signature on your nomination papers.

It is also a good idea to develop a profile for yourself that you can easily distribute to media, supporters, or your future campaign team. Be sure to include a photo with your profile, as this will help constituents easily identify you apart from other candidates.

*“You will not have the time once the campaign starts to do any kind of organization... Because I had taken Barbara McDougall’s advice to ‘run early, run hard and run scared’, I was way ahead of the four others.”*

**Gina Brannan**  
Former Candidate

## HOW TO: ANSWER TOUGH QUESTIONS

As you become increasingly involved in public life, you will have to answer many direct questions that are tough, difficult and relevant. You will need to provide a clear, clean answer. These questions may come from constituents, special interest groups, opponents, staff, people affected by your decisions and, of course, media.

In general, you will have very little time to answer adequately. You may have less than 10 seconds to make your point. Follow these three important steps to prepare short, effective and direct answers:

### STEP 1

Allot 3 seconds for your answer. It must be straightforward and honest.

### STEP 2

Allot 5 seconds for your message. Here is where you support your opening statement with crisp facts, explained in clear, simple language.

### STEP 3

Allot 2 seconds for your conclusion. This sentence wraps up the above and provides a punch line. It is the impact you want to have on a wider audience, beyond the questioner in front of you.







You must link each step with bridges such as “and”, “however” and “having said that”. All three steps are equally important since only one of them may be picked up by the questioner and used in print or online media, or spread by word of mouth.

Recall your research in to the issues that are important to your constituency and prepare answers for questions you are likely to be asked. Simulate the situation by having one or more team members act as an interviewer or member of your constituency.

*Always remember to build your answer on solid, verifiable content.*

## HOW TO: CLARIFY VAGUE QUESTIONS

Watch out for those who are going fishing! If somebody broaches you as a public figure with a question based on a statment or an accusation, or wrapped in hazy or unclear wording, BEWARE! These come from both friends and foes, either innocently or by design.

What to do in such a situation? CLARIFY! If you don't, your answer will probably end up being irrelevant at best or damaging at worst.

The way for you to clarify a question before answering it is to put it to the test of the five quetions good reporters always use, also known as the 5Ws.

Keep in mind, and project the image, that you are genuinely seeking information to be able to provide a proper answer. Listen carefully to the answers you are provided. You should then be ready to zoom in and ask for some specific examples.

Start your response by restating the question or issue in question form. Get your questionner to confirm that you got it right. Then answer the question using your 10-second clip technique.

You have the right to know what you are being asked. You have the responsibility to find out what you are being asked before answering.

These steps will help you avoid getting trapped into providing an answer to a question that you do not understand.

### STEP 1

Recognize the question is not clear; determine if this is coming from a friend or a foe.

### STEP 2

Use the 5Ws (Who? What? Where? When? Why? and How?) to clarify the question. Listen carefully to the answers you are given; the real focus of the question put to you will emerge.

### STEP 3

Ask for some specific examples.

### STEP 4

Start your response by restating the question or issue in question form.

### STEP 5

Get your questionner to confirm that you you have correctly identified the question being asked.

### STEP 6

Answer the question using the 10-second clip format.

*Don't panic. Project an image of confidence and interest. Always take the time you need to clarify the question.*





## HOW TO: MAINTAIN YOUR CREDIBILITY UNDER PRESSURE

The following techniques are designed to help you defuse exchanges that are confrontational so that they won't get out of hand.

There are three main techniques to deal with these situations and you can use them either separately or together. Use these techniques, then respond with your 10-second clip technique.

### TECHNIQUE 1: THE EXPLOSIVE AND/OR EMOTIONAL EXCHANGE

There is a slight difference between these two exchanges. The explosive question will likely be thrown at you by an adversary. The emotional question, which is just as dangerous, is likely to come from somebody who is genuinely frightened, angry or upset. In a public setting you could be bombarded with both. They will both use trigger words that provide the explosive and/or emotional tone.

First, you boil down the question or preamble and rephrase it in a statement from which you have removed the trigger words. Then proceed immediately and assertively with your answer.

The goal is to defuse the question or statement by taking the emotion out of it. In doing so, you should be reducing the level of rhetoric. To do so you must 1) keep your cool; 2) listen carefully; 3) be fair and accurate in your rephrasing. You are boiling down the question, not watering it down.

### TECHNIQUE 2: SORTING OUR FACT FROM FICTION

You will most certainly face questions or statements that, by accident or design, contain both fact and fiction. In such a case, concede what is fact, which should help you to then set the record straight on the fiction, so you can tell your own story.

By conceding to the fact you should be able to achieve two goals: 1) take the sting out of your opponent's assault; 2) heighten your own credibility by demonstrating your capacity to listen as well as be balanced, honest and generous. As the saying goes: concede to succeed.

### TECHNIQUE 3: BLATANT DISTORTION

You may be faced with questions or assertions that contain blatant distortions of the facts and/or direct attacks on your personal credibility. Do not let these distortions pass unchallenged. You must respond immediately and unequivocally. It is not only your right, but your responsibility to set the record straight with a firm denial and a very clear correction. You must turn the question to your advantage.

Whoever the person or group you are facing may be, you must listen very carefully. You will be surprised at how often you will hear what you need to in order to turn the situation in your favour.



# WHAT KIND OF CANDIDATE ARE YOU?

In general, any Canadian Citizen over the age of 18 who is qualified as an elector can run as a candidate. You are not always required to be a registered elector or reside in the riding that you are competing to represent. However, in order to qualify as a candidate at the municipal level you must have resided in that municipality for approximately six months prior to the election.

Review this Candidate Self-Appraisal checklist to see what kind of candidate you are before you enter the race.. Consider the qualities you mark ‘Strong’ as your strengths, and those you mark ‘Weak’ as areas for improvement.

- | Strong                   | Weak                     |                               |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Good speaking voice           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Capacity for listening        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Average social skills         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Reasonable memory             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Ability to think quickly      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Awareness of community issues |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Involvement in the community  |

- | Strong                   | Weak                     |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Flexible work schedules                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Emotionally<br>(can deal with conflict) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Public speaking skills                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Physically fit                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Well organized                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Can cope with stress                    |



## MUNICIPAL ELECTION DATES

### Alberta

Election Term: 4 years  
Election Date: 3rd Monday of October for all municipalities, except summer villages where elections take place in July and August

### British Columbia

Election Term: 3 years  
Election Date: 3rd Saturday of November

### Manitoba

Election Term: 4 years  
Election Date: 4th Wednesday of October; Village of Dunnottar, Victoria Beach and Winnipeg Beach must hold elections on the 4th Friday of July

### New Brunswick

Election Term: 4 years  
Election Date: 2nd Monday of May

### Newfoundland and Labrador

Election Term: 4 years  
Election Date: Last Tuesday of September

### Northwest Territories

Election Term: 2 or 3 years (depending on local bylaw)  
Election Date: *For a city, town or village and municipal taxing authority: 3rd Friday of October*  
*For a hamlet: 2nd Monday of December*  
*For a Ticho community government: 2nd Monday of June*  
*For settlement communities of chartered communities: date set by charter*

### Nova Scotia

Election Term: 4 years  
Election Date: 3rd Saturday of October

### Nunavut

Election Term: 2 or 3 years (depending on local bylaw)  
Election Date: *For a city, town or village or municipal taxing authority: 3rd Monday of October*  
*For a hamlet: 2nd Monday of December*  
*For a Ticho community government: 2nd Monday of June*  
*For settlement communities or chartered communities: date set by charter*

### Ontario

Election Term: 4 years  
Election Date: 4th Monday of October

### Prince Edward Island

Election Term: 4 years  
Election Date: 1st Monday of November

### Quebec

Election Term: 4 years  
Election Date: 1st Sunday of November

### Saskatchewan

Election Term: 4 years  
Election Date: *For cities and southern towns and villages: 4 Wednesday of October*  
*For Resort Villages: 5th Saturday following nomination day*  
*For northern municipalities: the second last Wednesday of September; the last Wednesday of September; or the first Wednesday of October*

### Yukon

Election Term: 3 years  
Election Date: 3rd Thursday of October







Knowing the date of Election Day will eliminate any element of surprise in the initial stages on your campaign. By being aware of when an election could be called, you will be able to better organize yourself — and your team — for your political entrance. Election dates vary depending on the level of government, but all are fairly predictable.

## MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

Municipal election dates are the easiest to predict since their timing is set by the Municipal Elections Act. Elections happen regularly at an interval of three to four years, depending on the municipality. The municipal campaign period lasts approximately eight weeks. See the opposite page for an outline of municipal election dates by province.

## PROVINCIAL/ TERRITORIAL ELECTIONS

**The privilege of setting an election date at the provincial/ territorial level lies with the party that formed the government. If the governing party forms a majority government, it will govern for the full four to five years it is entitled to before calling an election. Given this information, the election will most probably take place a few months after the fourth year is completed.**

On the other hand, if the governing party forms a minority government it will most likely call an election in less than four years. This could happen for two reasons. The minority government could hope to gain a majority through returning to the polls early, or the opposition could force the minority government to call an election.

The best way to evaluate the possible date of a general election is to follow the news very closely and to keep in close contact with members of your party. The same applies to any by-election that may be called when a seat becomes vacant in the legislature between general elections. A typical provincial/ territorial campaign period lasts approximately four weeks.

## FEDERAL ELECTIONS

Federal elections must be held every five years, though they usually take place at approximately four-year intervals. The process is set in motion when the Prime Minister requests the Governor General to dissolve Parliament and to request the issuing of writs by the Chief Electoral Officer for an election.

The Canada Elections Act stipulates that the writ must not be issued later than the 36th day before polling day, making the minimum length of a federal election 36 days.

As at the provincial level, you must keep abreast of the news and establish contacts with the party of your choice in order to best evaluate when the writ will be dropped.







# STEP 5: RUNNING YOUR CAMPAIGN

From building a strong campaign team to distributing your messaging, this section will provide you with the concrete tools you need to run your campaign. Discover who you should have by your side and how to effectively work together to establish a strong campaign strategy. Learn the intricacies of financing your campaign, including the rules and regulations, how to develop a budget, and fundraising tactics. Explore campaign communications through learning how to build your own communications plan and establish relations with the media. Review the products you can deliver to the public and which activities you can participate in, and then consider your options for distribution. You are about to enter the political arena — good luck!







# TEAM BUILDING

Building a strong team will be essential to your success at the polls. Your team will vary depending on several factors, such as contesting a nomination versus running as a candidate and the area which you will represent (rural versus urban, small versus large). However, the team members you will need will be much the same. Always remember, one team member may accomplish more than one task.

Think about building your campaign team in two steps. First, you will need to set up an initial team as soon as you decide to run for a nomination. Then, if you become a candidate, you will need to assemble a (much larger) campaign team.

## BUILDING A NOMINATION TEAM

Your nomination team — your initial team — is often called your kitchen cabinet. You can begin assembling your kitchen cabinet as much as one year before the actual voting day. This team will require a campaign manager, a treasurer or chartered accountant, and possibly a legal advisor and a communications advisor. They will all act as your strategy committee. Generally, these individuals carry on their responsibilities beyond the nomination process through the election campaign.

Tasks of this kitchen cabinet include but are not limited to:

- Making sure that all the registration requirements are met;
- Making sure you respect all the financing rules and regulations;
- Developing your nomination campaign strategy;
- Developing a budget to support the strategy.

## BUILDING A CAMPAIGN TEAM

Your campaign team will be much larger than your nomination team and should be put in place approximately four months before voting day. Experts recommend that you establish a balanced team in terms of the number of men and women. Choose people who seem to have the most organizational experience, either in corporate management, politics or through community groups and volunteer organizations. These people tend to grasp more clearly how a campaign has to work, even if it is the first time they are involved politically.

*“Make sure all the different voices are heard on your team.”*

**Libby Burnham**  
Senior Political Advisor

You will also need to establish a strategy or steering committee, identify chairs of campaign subcommittees and recruit a large number of volunteers. The core members of your strategy or steering committee are generally the members of your nomination team. Your strategy or steering committee will work with you on developing your campaign strategy and budget and will act as the central clearing house for financial and administrative approvals and tactical decisions.





This committee will establish a number of sub-committees, according to the needs of your ward or riding, and name a chair to head each sub-committee. These chairpersons may be invited to sit on the steering committee. Regular meetings of these committees must be scheduled to ensure consistency in your campaign, timely sharing of important information, and immediate adjustments if required. These meetings will also help build a strong team spirit that will have a very positive effect on your campaign.

*"Pick a team that you can trust with your life because that's what they'll have in their hands."*

Anonymous

## POSITIONS TO FILL ON YOUR TEAM

Depending on the scope of your campaign, you may have more or less people on your team and some may take on more than one role. In general, these people are volunteers.

- Campaign Manager
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Financial Chairperson
- Volunteer Chairperson
- Research Chairperson
- Meeting Chairperson
- Advertising Chairperson
- Sign Chairperson
- Office Manager
- Director of Organization
- Director of Literature Distribution and Door-to-Door Organizer
- Transportation Chairperson
- Nomination or Election Day Coordinator
- Poll Captains

## YOUR ROLE AS CANDIDATE

As a candidate, you will be in the spotlight before, during and after your campaign. Knowing what your role is at each level will help you prepare — and perform — appropriately.

It is especially important to understand the difference in your role as a candidate during a nomination campaign versus during a candidate campaign. The nomination process is often where you as an individual make the difference: your personality, your qualifications and your platform. Moreover, your team is not there because of policy or political ideology, they are there because of you!

The audience will be looking at you as an individual, and you will need to ensure that you always put your best foot forward. Without the support of a party, you must convince the people to buy a Party membership, come out to a meeting, and vote for you. This is not an easy task for anyone with even a modicum of modesty! The nomination is also more personally rewarding for the candidate than the election itself; if you win, it is not because of the Party or the Leader, it is because of you.



## POSITION DESCRIPTIONS

What follows are descriptions of some positions you will want to fill in your campaign team.

### CAMPAIGN MANAGER

The campaign manager is the person who makes sure the candidate's vision and goals are achieved while they are out on the hustings. This is a full-time job that starts weeks prior to the campaign and continues throughout its duration. He or she must:

- assist the candidate in developing her platform including communications materials;
- recruit and manage the campaign team;
- determine the specific tasks and their dates of completion;
- plan a temporary budget and arrange for deposit payments;
- facilitate the initial requests for funding;
- lead the development of a master mailing list;
- arrange the kick-off rally;
- perform administrative tasks;
- provide constructive criticisms, firmly if necessary, but always discreetly;
- support the candidate in public, witness what is said and note the citizens' impressions and concerns.

### FINANCIAL CHAIRPERSON

The Financial Chairperson's main goal will be to raise as much money as possible through individual or corporate donations and any other form of fundraising. He or she must:

- identify, contact and meet with potential donors;
- follow up with people who have indicated that they are willing to give support;
- remind donors of tax credits when applicable;
- track gains and setbacks with the treasurer.

### SECRETARY

The Secretary provides secretarial support before, during and after your campaign. He or she must:

- keep files of candidate's photos and other material;
- type letters, and mailing addresses and other campaign material;
- buy envelopes and stamps;
- manage the distribution of mail, e-mail, etc.

### TREASURER

The Treasurer is responsible for the budget and must ensure compliance with it and with all the financial reporting requirements. He or she must:

- manage the budget, pay bills;
- establish a strict policy on payments, receipts and use of petty cash. Cheques are encouraged over cash;
- open a bank account with a co-signer. He or she is responsible for deposits and withdrawals;
- keep a ledger of all expenditures, contributors and amounts given;
- provide regular financial updates;
- balance and close the account after the nomination or the election;
- compile the financial statements required for the candidate to submit her financial report.

### RESEARCH CHAIRPERSON

The Research Chairperson will conduct all research related to your campaign. He or she must:

- form a committee to help with research;
- request schedules of other party candidates;
- seek intelligence on opponents' campaigns;
- read general literature, reports and platforms about issues to acquire facts and figures to support the candidate's stand;
- help write position papers and press releases.





## **VOLUNTEER CHAIRPERSON**

The Volunteer Chairperson is responsible for managing campaign volunteers. He or she must:

- delegate tasks based on the information individuals provided on participation cards;
- recruit additional workers if necessary;
- create a database of workers' names and what they are able to do.

## **MEETING CHAIRPERSON**

The Meeting Chairperson coordinates the candidate's activities to maximize the use of her time. He or she must:

- keep track of the events calendar and set up dates for 'Meet Your Candidate' sessions;
- arrange for sponsors and locations;
- develop sign-up sheets or participation cards to enlist support;
- prepare instructions for sponsors and deliver them in advance of speaking engagements;
- provide suggestions about room arrangements (candidate should be visible to all), nametags, introductions, refreshments (before and after presentation);
- work with the sponsors to draw up guest list;
- invite supporters in the area to meetings;
- keep lists of event attendees.

## **TRANSPORTATION CHAIRPERSON**

The Transportation Chairperson is responsible for organizing the transportation needs of your campaign team. He or she must:

- receive the names of drivers from the Volunteer Chairperson and the names of people who need rides from the Poll Captains;
- organize, assign and provide rides to poll or nomination meeting.

## **ADVERTISING CHAIRPERSON**

The Advertising Chairperson is responsible for all campaign advertising. He or she must:

- set advertising priorities and budget;
- develop a communications strategy including the slogan, the design and execution of paid and free media activities, the design and content of flyers, bumper stickers, buttons;
- find writers and, if necessary, translators;
- keep files of original releases, speeches and copies of radio and TV interviews and ads;
- make arrangements for endorsement tapes or letters to be used in various media;
- manage the material posted on the candidate's website.

## **SIGN CHAIRPERSON**

The Sign Chairperson will be responsible for all campaign signage. He or she must:

- check the legal limits for signs and the local laws regulating the use of utility poles and trees for posters and signs use;
- order commercial and lawn signs or strike a volunteer committee to build them;
- contact owners of commercial properties and residents for permission to post signs;
- develop a strategy of setting up signs to demonstrate campaign momentum;
- remove signs and posters after the election.

## **NOMINATION OR ELECTION DAY COORDINATOR**

The Nomination of Election Day Coordinator is responsible for coordinating operations on Nomination or Election Day. It is recommended that this person have experience as a scrutineer. He or she must:

- line up people who will phone voters;
- prepare a list of drivers;
- book victory hall and refreshments;
- arrange and train scrutineers;
- get necessary approvals.





## **DIRECTOR OF LITERATURE DISTRIBUTION & DOOR-TO-DOOR ORGANIZER**

The Director of Literature Distribution & Door-to-Door Organizer is responsible for distributing your materials to the public. He or she must:

- determine the amount of literature needed;
- define the areas or districts to distribute to;
- solicit and train volunteers to distribute.

## **DIRECTOR OF ORGANIZATION**

The Director of Organization is responsible for organizing campaign outreach and developing a campaign outreach strategy. He or she must:

- establish the number of dwellings to visit and number of areas within the constituency;
- schedule the start and finish dates of canvassing;
- check previous election returns to identify swing-vote areas;
- select Area Chairpersons and assist them in choosing poll captains;
- set up training sessions for poll captains and canvassers on canvassing and election or nomination day procedures, advance polls, proxy voting;
- get voters' lists from returning officer generally four weeks before voting day;
- organize a committee to establish and number walking routes (approx. 4 hours = 50 houses);
- hold weekly meetings with area chairpersons to maintain enthusiasm;
- provide supervision of election day polling activities and analyze results to determine how the candidate did in each poll.

## **OFFICE MANAGER**

The Office Manager is responsible for managing operations from the campaign office. He or she must:

- secure a suitable location, install phones, arrange for light, water, keys, furniture, stationery, coffee supplies, insurance to cover fire, theft, and public utilities;

- determine number of volunteers needed for office duties;
- obtain constituency lists, maps, the number of registered voters and polls;
- establish a filing system;
- set up petty cash fund;
- develop charts for everything (campaign organization, workers, sign locations, canvass lists, telephone numbers, contact lists, etc.);
- monitor distribution of literature, signs and canvassing activities;
- prepare scrutineers;
- provide copies of marked voters lists and maps;
- prepare poll-by-poll charts to record election returns by candidate.

## **POLL CAPTAINS**

Poll Captains are responsible for thorough canvassing of the polls during the campaign and for getting out the vote on election or nomination day. With regard to canvassing preparations, he or she must:

- select reliable poll residents who are willing to canvass
- send a list of canvassers to Chairpersons;
- facilitate training for canvassers;
- check in with canvassers to monitor their progress;
- inform the Area Chairperson when a route is done;
- ensure that all supporters vote;
- coordinate a telephone blitz of the poll to offer transportation and sitter services;
- mark Candidate's supporters on the voters' list;
- keep up the pressure until the last minute;
- be inside the poll when it closes and stay for the count. Check the tally and then phone headquarters;
- gather helpers and attend the victory party;
- supply headquarters with the names and addresses of all the helpers for thank you letters.





# RECRUITING AND MANAGING VOLUNTEERS

You will need dozens of volunteers throughout the campaign and hundreds on nomination and voting day.

Find these volunteers through drawing on family and personal friends, then on friends of friends. Tap in to the networks you created while raising your profile through community and/or business activities, and talk to people you don't know but who believe in you. Also, once you have been chosen as the candidate at the provincial or federal level, and if you are running for one of the major parties, you will be able to draw on party faithfuls who will come out to support whoever is chosen as their candidate in a riding. Set up a database to keep track of your volunteers, not only because you will need them during your campaign, but you may also want to recruit them again for a future campaign.

*“When someone says they want to help, close the deal!”*  
Anonymous

# VOLUNTEER SIGN-UP SHEETS

Sign-up sheets will allow you to gain a sense of how involved the individual would like to be, and what tasks they would be interested in doing. A sign-up sheet should collect the following information:

- Name
- Address
- Telephone

Task the volunteer is interested in doing:

- Financial
- Work at polls or gives rides to polls
- Creates signs or postcards
- Door-to Door or Telephone canvassing
- Clerical support (typing, photocopying, web)

Make sure your volunteers always feel they are part of your team. Say hello and thank you to all of them when you meet them at the campaign headquarters or elsewhere. Get to know them well. For example, create a wall of photos of volunteers at work. This usually has a strong impact on team building. Feed them when they work long hours into the night. Always thank them sincerely for their work.

# VOLUNTEER WORK CARDS

Use the following card to track your volunteers' involvement with your campaign. Distribute these to volunteers when they come on board.

Helper:		Phone and email:					Comments	
Street:								
Town/City:				Postal Code:				
Election	Donations	Lawn Sign	Will Phone	Canvasser	Scrutineer	Help w/signs	Other	Comments
Year								
Work actually done								





# CAMPAIGN STRATEGY

A strong campaign strategy will ensure that your campaign runs smoothly and successfully. Know how to develop a campaign strategy and create a campaign calendar to organize every step of the journey.

These two tools will make you better prepared to get the vote out, when the time comes.

## DEVELOPING YOUR CAMPAIGN STRATEGY

Use the following tips to guide your campaign team in developing a campaign strategy:

### CLEARLY DEFINE YOUR RIDING OR WARD PROFILE

- demographics;
- boundaries;
- main employer(s);
- poll by poll breakdown;
- local authorities;
- elected members at all levels of government;
- special interest groups;
- media (print & electronic).

### DEFINE YOUR PROFILE AS A CANDIDATE

- identify your strengths and weaknesses, especially any possible skeletons in the closet that your 'kitchen cabinet' should know about.

### DO SOME RESEARCH OR POLLING TO FIND OUT:

- if you are 'electable';
- if there is an existing political hierarchy in your riding or ward, and who are these people;
- what issues do people have on their minds;
- where various parties, special interest groups or community organizations and their leaders stand on these issues;
- where your opponents stand on these issues;
- what issues are your opponents running with;
- where can you raise money.

### CRAFT A MESSAGE OR SLOGAN

- create one that it will be effective throughout your campaign.

### DETERMINE ALL THE ASPECTS OF RULES AND REGULATIONS

- identify those that can be of positive use to your campaign, including what some may call dirty tricks. (If they are according to rules, they are not dirty, they are smart!)

### BUILD A CALENDAR INDICATING KEY DATES AND EVENTS

- define tasks to be accomplished.

### DETERMINE SHORT, MEDIUM AND LONG TERM GOALS

- acquire funds;
- hire people;
- produce material;
- create events;
- communicate.

### ASSESS YOUR POTENTIAL SUPPORTERS

- determine any financing or media opportunities within your networks or groups.

Always remember:  
never underestimate  
your opponents.



## CREATING A CAMPAIGN CALENDAR

Your campaign team has to establish a very detailed calendar, traveling backwards from nomination or election day to the beginning of your campaign. It will include the key dates and events throughout this period and everything you need to do or produce from the moment you decide to run through to nomination and election day.

You may want to use an existing electronic calendar template to build this action path. Ask one of your friends competent in informatics to advise you on this. Or, your team may decide to build its own calendar.

Follow these five steps to build a complete campaign calendar:

### STEP 1

Enter the key dates and events that are relevant to your strategic plan.

### STEP 2

Consider when work will need to start on a given element for quality and timely delivery, and by whom.

### STEP 3

Be meticulous about details.

### STEP 4

Don't stop checking until the task is actually accomplished.

### STEP 5

Make sure the calendar covers: the nomination period, election day, launch of door to door and telephone campaign activities, dates for literature distribution and setting up of signs, dates of advertisements.

## ITEMS TO INCLUDE ON YOUR CAMPAIGN CALENDAR

- Draft your team structure
- Book nomination or election day party space
- Draft terms and references for any positions
- Obtain nomination papers and arrange for signatures
- Select, enlist and brief committee members
- Form sub-committees
- Draft volunteer cards
- Draft budget and fundraising guidelines
- Purchase receipt books
- Set up campaign account and initiate fundraising
- Design posters, signs etc.
- Get press photos taken
- Prepare press statement
- Order signs, buttons, stickers, posters, post-cards, thank-you cards, etc.
- Order first literature
- Prepare instruction sheets for canvassers and area directors
- Select area directors for canvassing and literature distribution
- Obtain street maps, voters lists and polling station information
- Determine numbers required for printed materials
- Select promotional strategies (print, web)
- Do rough draft of newspaper and radio ads
- Create media contact list
- Schedule events and speeches



# SAMPLE OF AN 8-WEEK CAMPAIGN CALENDAR

## WEEK 8

- ☐ Establish official headquarters
- ☐ Call a press conference
- ☐ Distribute participation cards

## WEEK 7

- ☐ Kick-off rally
- ☐ Solicitation letters mailed
- ☐ Announce news release
- ☐ Arrange luncheons and breakfasts
- ☐ Strategy committee meets
- ☐ Meet media (editors or other)
- ☐ Prepare election day strategy

## WEEK 6

- ☐ News release
- ☐ Buttons and bumper stickers appear
- ☐ Strategy committee meets
- ☐ Continuing follow-up on solicitation letters

## WEEK 5

- ☐ Meet the candidate sessions
- ☐ Luncheons and breakfasts
- ☐ Plan dates for mailings and literature drops

## WEEK 4

- ☐ News release
- ☐ Strategy committee meets
- ☐ Continuing follow-up for fund raising
- ☐ Poll workers rally
- ☐ All candidates' meetings begin
- ☐ Lawn signs could begin to appear
- ☐ Billboards appear

## WEEK 3

- ☐ News releases on issues unfolding
- ☐ Strategy committee meets
- ☐ Re-contact people who promised a contribution but have not yet sent it.
- ☐ All candidates' meeting
- ☐ Candidate canvasses in swing-vote areas
- ☐ Newspaper ads could begin
- ☐ House to house canvass begins

## WEEK 2

- ☐ News releases on issues unfolding
- ☐ Strategy committee meets
- ☐ All candidates' meeting
- ☐ House to house canvassing continues
- ☐ Literature drop
- ☐ Candidate canvasses
- ☐ Radio/TV spots
- ☐ Newspaper ads
- ☐ Pick up all necessary credentials for returning officer

## WEEK 1

- ☐ News releases on issues unfolding
- ☐ Strategy committee meets
- ☐ Postcard campaign
- ☐ Scrutineer named for every poll
- ☐ House to house canvassing continues
- ☐ Candidate's energy directed to most productive initiatives
- ☐ Radio/TV spots
- ☐ Endorsement ads

## ELECTION DAY

- ☐ Make sure all your workers vote
- ☐ Coordinate telephone campaign to known supporters to offer transportation and sitting services
- ☐ Arrange transportation to the polls

## POST ELECTION

- ☐ Victory party
- ☐ Send thank-you letters
- ☐ Dismantle organization – keep all records for next election





Financing your nomination or election campaign is critical to running a successful campaign. Staying informed and up-to-date with the latest financing rules and regulations, fundraising strategies and budgeting techniques will ensure you get to the gate.

## RULES AND REGULATIONS

When setting your financing strategy, you must be fully aware of the rules and regulations that apply to nomination contests and election campaigns. They are equally complex for both men and women. Here are some key points that you must be aware of regarding election financing:

- The difference between the rules that apply to nomination contestants and election candidates;
- The limits that apply to contributions;
- The limits that apply to nomination campaign expenses;
- The limits that apply to expenses during an election.

*It is crucial that you follow these rules and regulations — any deviation can carry serious consequences.*

The rules and regulations are constantly evolving, so ensure that you review those applicable to your campaign immediately prior to entering the race.

## CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS

Contributions — or donations — are a key factor in financing a campaign. However, there are many rules and regulations surrounding contributions to campaigns which you should be aware of prior to accepting any kind of donation. There is also a defined time period for contributions, so ensure you accept donations only within that period.

*“Disclosure! The other side runs to see where your money comes from... You may have received contributions from business A that runs business B or C that are illegal...”*

**Penny Priddy**  
Former MLA, British Columbia

Some candidates prefer to not be made aware of the identity of all the contributors to their campaign. However, unless your Official Agent or Fundraising Chair is personally aware of every person making a donation to your campaign, full disclosure is recommended to avoid any unpleasant surprises.

There may be restrictions surrounding contributions...

- by individuals, corporations or trade unions;
- by an unincorporated association;
- made directly to the nomination contestants or candidate or to a registered party and its registered electoral district associations;
- made to a candidate for an election who is not the candidate of a registered party;
- start and end dates applying to contributions.

*Tip: Never agree to take a cheque or money order personally. It must be sent to your Official Agent.*





## DEVELOPING A BUDGET

Your budget is your most valuable asset. One of your primary goals should be to not accumulate a huge debt over the course of the nomination contest or election campaign. Your official agent is in charge of all the financial requirements of your nomination and election campaign and must determine the dates on which the official disclosure of expenditures starts and ends. They will ensure you stick to your budget. When developing a budget, it is important to include the following items:

### FILING FEES FOR CANDIDATE

#### ADMINISTRATION

- Rental of office space
- Telephone/lights/heat/water
- Equipment rental (computers, fax, photocopier, etc.)
- Stationary/office supplies
- Staffing
- Petty cash

#### MAILINGS

- Solicitation letter (printing/stationary/postage)
- Flyers
- Pre-election 'You vote at' postcard

#### ADVERTISING AND PROMOTION

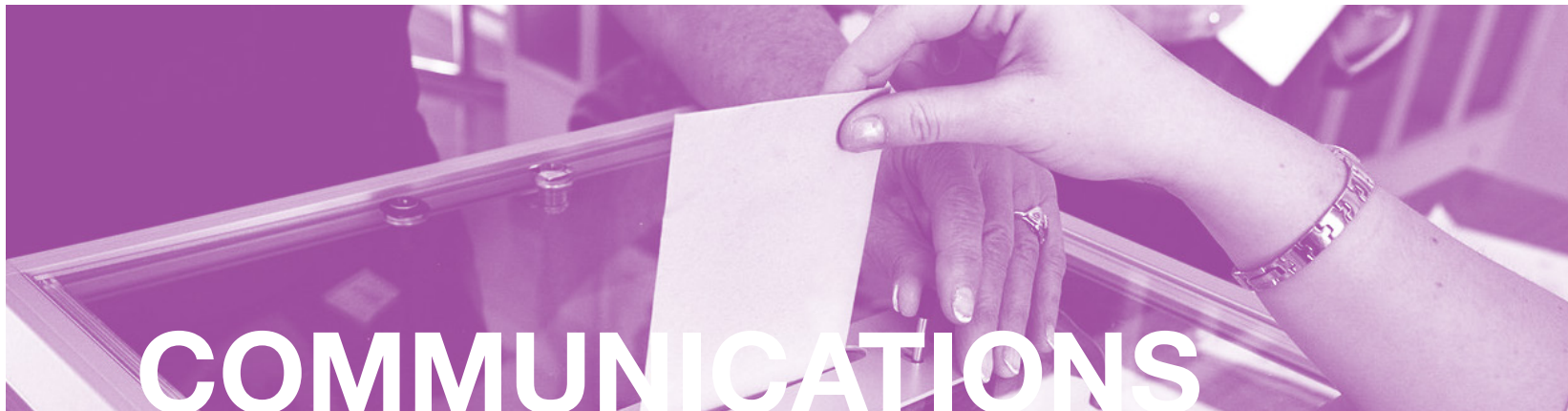
- Photographs
- Newspaper ads
- Radio/TV
- Buttons/stickers
- Canvas brochure
- Signs/posters

#### OTHER

- Meeting place (training sessions/rallies/events)
- Travel expenses (in particular for getting out the vote on nomination/election day)
- Election follow-up

## BUDGETING TIPS FROM CAMPAIGN ORGANIZERS

- Ensure that you separate your nomination and campaign budgets.
- Dedicate a considerable proportion of your budget to Nomination or Election Day.
- Ensure that your accountant keeps daily tabs on expenditures and donations.
- Remember that your campaign manager's goal is to win, while your accountant's goal is to balance the books and meet the legal requirements for reporting donations and expenditures. Tension may arise between these two goals.



# COMMUNICATIONS

Campaigns are communications. Throughout your campaign, you will need to generate, disseminate, collect and store communications. You will need to communicate internally to those working directly for you on the campaign as well as externally to the voters and opinion makers. Your communications, including your actions and inactions, will send messages to the public and will be interpreted differently. Managing this interpretation will be essential to the success of your campaign.

## BUILDING A COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

A well-developed communications plan will ensure that your message is delivered effectively and accurately to all audiences throughout the course of your campaign. Building a communications plan should be priority on your pre-campaign to-do list. Communications will make or break your campaign, so it is essential to have this plan in place well before you enter the race.

You will develop your communications plan with your campaign manager and communications director, if applicable. You must then submit the plan to your team so they can understand it, buy-in to it and implement it with you, according to the tasks each member will be accomplishing.

When developing your plan, be sure to identify:

### THE GOAL

Though it may be as simple as winning, write it down! Think about it: winning by how much, against whom, with whom, because of whom, why, and so on.

### KEY MESSAGE

Your key message will become your slogan. It must be clear, simple, catchy and inspiring for your team. This message must consistently underline everything you and your team members do and say, be it one-on-one, on the phone, in print, or online. Make sure any translation of your key message conveys the same energy and vision; literal translation may not suffice.

### STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS

Never forget that your campaign is unfolding in a specific context, both personal and social. Make sure to clearly analyze the basic elements of this context to ensure your message and activities are on track.

Here are some of the basic questions you and your kitchen cabinet must reflect upon in developing the communications plan and in evaluating its chances of success:

- Why are you running?
- Who are the potential voters?
- Where are they?
- What are voters looking for?
- Do you have what they are looking for?
- Who is your third party support?
- Who are your opponents (candidates and opinion leaders)?





## **TONE**

The tone of your campaign must be consistent from the wording in your messages to the style and content of your products, the attitude of your spokespeople, and your participation in activities. It is just as much your signature as the words you use and the photographs on your material.

The tone of your campaign will be based on the context in which it is unfolding. For example: are you bringing a positive message of hope, or a more adversarial message concerning the need to overthrow somebody who has caused problems for some reason or another? Or a mixture of both, with the obvious need for subtle balance in tone?

Or you may also be involved in a passionate and possibly more confrontational one-issue campaign relating to a specific issue in your constituency.

## **TIMELINES**

Divide your communications plan in three phases to establish what tasks must be done, and to make sure your goal, messages, products and activities are coherent throughout.

The short-term section of your plan covers the setting up of your nomination or election campaign, the initial announcement and positioning of your campaign.

The medium-term covers the period between your initial announcement and the beginning of your campaign. This could be anything from a few weeks to a year or more. It is important to always remain focused on your main goal and message and to keep revising and strengthening your research and polling data.

The long-term covers the nomination or campaign itself. If you win the nomination, your communications plan should be extended to include the election campaign.

## **SPOKESPERSONS**

You are the main spokesperson for your campaign, but others will also speak on your behalf: your campaign director, your communications director, and all the volunteers who support you on the ground - fundraising, door-to-door, phone calls, responding to mail, etc. You must set very clear guidelines on who will be the spokespersons on your campaign, and for what purpose. This is particularly important in media relations. You must make sure all your volunteers understand your message as well as the importance of sticking to it. Keep close track of the questions your volunteers have to answer on the campaign trail and develop the appropriate answers for them.

## **TRACKING INFORMATION**

This activity is sometimes called media tracking and analysis. Whatever the title, you must remain constantly aware of how your message is being received, or played, by voters, the media and opinion makers. You must also remain constantly aware of the same information concerning your opponents. Make sure you have copies of their campaign material, as soon as possible. They will be doing the same to you.

To do so, have people keep close track of what is said in the electronic and print media as well as in door-to-door contacts and in private meetings. This should allow you to pick up trends among voters, media and opinion makers, as well as valuable information on your opponents.







## MEDIA RELATIONS

Timing is key to successful media relations. You can never guarantee what will happen the day you call a press conference or send out a press release. Your story may be totally lost. But you must come to understand what media deadlines are all about. For example, the Saturday paper is usually prepared on Wednesday, so a Friday event will have less chance of being reported in the Saturday paper, unless you have sent notice sufficiently in advance. On the other hand, during the weekend, media will be looking for stories for the Sunday and Monday editions.

Print and electronic media have different deadlines of which you must become aware. As a general rule, it is not good practice to call reporters in the afternoon. They are busy writing their story for the evening news or the next day's paper. Take time to find out from the media outlets what they need: establish a rapport.

Substantial information is also key to media relations. Reporters and editors are not there to provide you with free publicity. They are looking for stories. Find the human interest stories, or others, that support your vision, document them and provide the information to media. Help them break news. Chances are they will run with your story.

Know any background information  
before an interview.  
Avoid floral material, especially on TV.  
Don't forget to smile.

Remember, the media is looking to  
inform the public. Get the correct  
information to them — be the source of  
information.

## PREPARING FOR THE MEDIA

- Practice with a neighbour or friend;
- Get media training or have somebody play the reporter for you;
- Use simple language that everyone can understand.

Usually radio or TV reporters don't take clips from a speech. Be prepared with a five to 10 second clip to summarize your message for the reporter after the speech if you want to make it on air.

## KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE(S)

You may have one goal and a key message, but you will definitely have many audiences for which you will have to tailor your message. Keep these individuals and groups in mind while developing your communications plan in order to cover all of your bases.

Here are the main audiences you will be dealing with:

- Supporters in your party, if applicable
- Supporters in your community
- Undecided voters
- Voters traditionally supporting your opponent
- Traditional non-voters
- Opponents
- Media: reporters, columnists, editorialists
- Opinion makers (who may become third party supporters)





## TIPS & TRICKS

### SPEECH WRITING

Writing a good speech requires skill, patience and a lot of editing. Consider these tips before writing your next speech:

- Write out your entire speech - this will help you develop a consistent message throughout and will make it easier to edit and organize your thoughts;
- Put down all your relevant thoughts during your first draft without worrying about the length, then go back and edit, refine, and re-edit until you have a script that you're reasonably comfortable with.
- If you're not certain about what you're saying, don't say it;
- Quotations can be a relevant source of information. Read the quote verbatim;
- Ask yourself, "Could somebody else give this exact speech? " If the answer is "yes", scrap what you've done and start over, putting more of your own experiences, opinions and recommendations into it;
- Time how long it takes you to say your speech - this will help you speak to the required length.

### INTERVIEWS & MEETINGS

- Be prepared (know your key messages).
- What you say is what is noted (on-the-record and off-the-record).
- If you don't know the answer to a question, say so. You can forward the answer later, prior to deadline.
- If you are asked a question you cannot answer, simply state that you are not in a position to offer that information and explain why.
- When answering a question, say the most important thing first... then expand.
- Never deal with more than three messages at the time. You will confuse people and they will not remember your key message.

### DISTRIBUTION

- Deliver your message yourself. Door-to-door campaigning remains the best technique.
- Nothing replaces the personal contact. Regardless of which strategy you choose, experience has shown that voters want to see the real person, and not the standard election rhetoric.





## PRODUCTS

The number and quality of your campaign products will vary according to your budget, timelines and audiences. You could divide them in at least two components:

### MARKETING ELEMENTS

Developed to create visibility, attract voters and reward supporters (such as flyers, posters, t-shirts, buttons, lawn signs, etc.); and

### COMMUNICATION ELEMENTS

Developed to inform the public about your ideas, goals and campaign in general (such as media releases, letters to the editor, articles for weeklies and the letters and messages you will send to various people during your campaign).

You and your team will be required to write Press Releases and News Releases throughout your campaign. When doing so, consider the following tips:

- Keep it to one key message;
- Provide an interesting angle to the story;
- Include quotes if appropriate;
- Remember the 5 Ws in a story: who, what, where, when and why;
- Think about the timing of the release;
- Tell the story, not just the facts;
- Keep it catchy;
- Keep it positive.

## ACTIVITIES

Throughout the life of your campaign, from the initial announcement to voting day, you will be involved in numerous activities. Your team will have control over many of these activities, such as fundraisers, door-to-door campaigning, phone calls, participation in community events, speaking opportunities, and planned media activities (interviews, press conferences, participation in talk shows).

However, you will also participate in activities and events that are under someone else's control, such as media scrums — where you have to respond on-the-spot to media questions— at the local, regional or national level. These activities will have an impact on the context of your campaign and may cause you to revise some of your strategy.

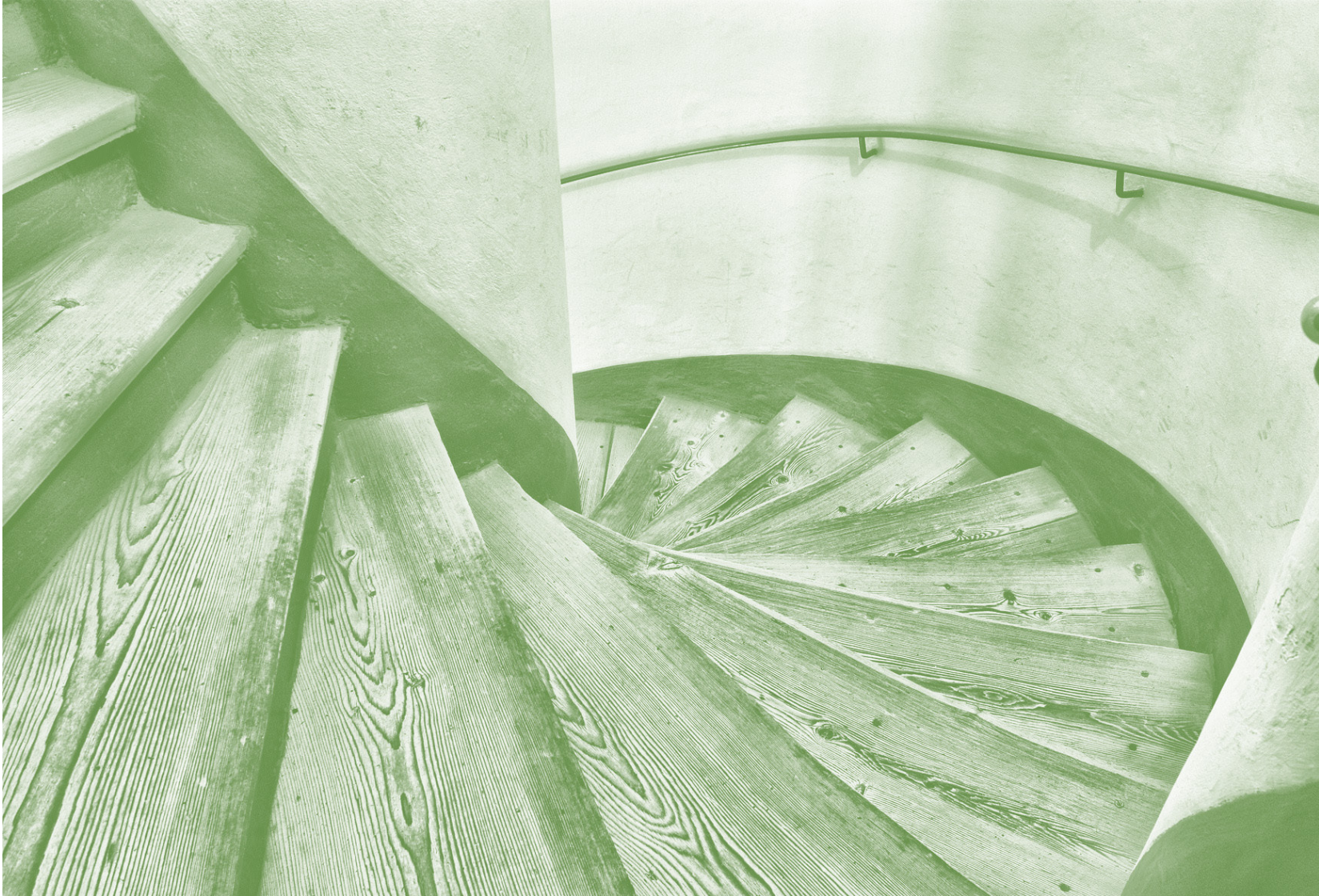
## DISTRIBUTION

Distribution refers to how you will deliver your message to the public. There are multiple distribution tools, including door-to-door campaigning, targeted mailing, radio and TV ads, email, fax, social media and your website. Choosing a tool depends on the type of message you are delivering (print, oral, visual) and the audience you plan to reach.

In the age of social media, your website and social media platforms will be some of your most important distribution tools. They can carry all the material you wish — your bio, photos of you and supporters, releases, speeches, opinion pieces, schedule of important events — and are easy to access. If you do choose to use these particular tools, it is important to regularly monitor them to ensure your message is being communicated consistently.











# NEXT STEPS

Intro text needed





## GENERAL INFORMATION

Equal Voice  
[www.equalvoice.ca](http://www.equalvoice.ca)

The United Nations Development Fund for Women  
[www.unifem.org](http://www.unifem.org)

Worldwide Guide to Women in Leadership  
[www.guide2womenleaders.com](http://www.guide2womenleaders.com)

Elections Canada  
[www.elections.ca](http://www.elections.ca)

Fair Vote Canada  
[www.fairvotecanada.org](http://www.fairvotecanada.org)

Federation of Canadian Municipalities  
[www.fcm.ca](http://www.fcm.ca)

Government of Canada  
[www.canada.gc.ca](http://www.canada.gc.ca)

Parliament of Canada  
[www.parl.gc.ca](http://www.parl.gc.ca)

## CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICERS

Alberta  
[www.electionsalberta.ab.ca](http://www.electionsalberta.ab.ca)

British Columbia  
[www.elections.bc.ca](http://www.elections.bc.ca)

Manitoba  
[www.electionsmanitoba.ca](http://www.electionsmanitoba.ca)

New Brunswick  
[www.gnb.ca/elections](http://www.gnb.ca/elections)

Newfoundland and Labrador  
[www.elections.gov.nl.ca/elections](http://www.elections.gov.nl.ca/elections)

Nova Scotia  
[www.gov.ns.ca/elo/elections](http://www.gov.ns.ca/elo/elections)

Ontario  
[www.mah.gov.on.ca](http://www.mah.gov.on.ca)

Prince Edward Island  
[www.electionspei.ca](http://www.electionspei.ca)

Quebec  
[www.dgeq.qc.ca](http://www.dgeq.qc.ca)

Saskatchewan  
[www.electionsnwt.com](http://www.electionsnwt.com)

Nunavut  
[www.elections.nu.ca](http://www.elections.nu.ca)

Yukon  
[www.electionsyukon.gov.yk.ca](http://www.electionsyukon.gov.yk.ca)





## OFFICAL POLITICAL PARTIES

Liberal Party of Canada  
[www.liberal.ca](http://www.liberal.ca)

Conservative Party of Canada  
[www.conservative.ca](http://www.conservative.ca)

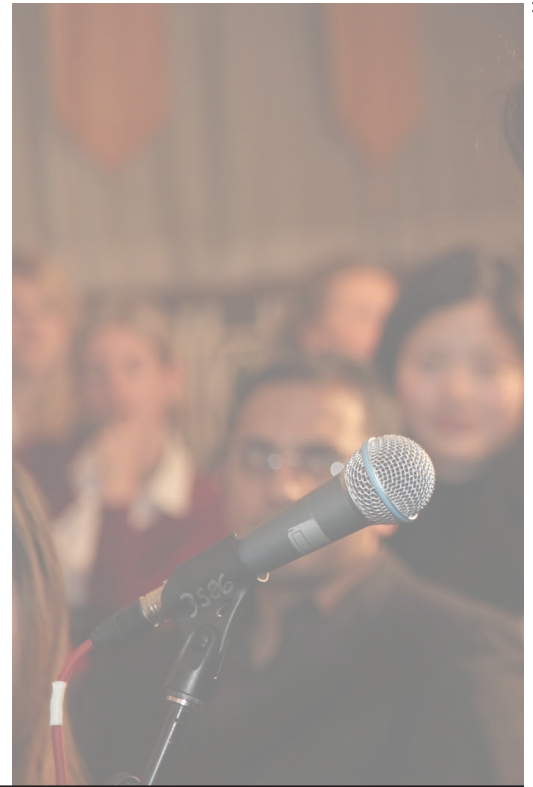
Block Quebecois  
[www.blocquebecois.org](http://www.blocquebecois.org)

New Democratic Party  
[www.ndp.ca](http://www.ndp.ca)

Green Party of Canada  
[www.greenparty.ca](http://www.greenparty.ca)







*e✓equal voice*

[www.equalvoice.ca](http://www.equalvoice.ca)

