

Running for Office

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US Government

In order to be elected for public office, candidates must convince people to vote for them. This is called "running for office." In some cases, like when running for president, running for office can be a full time job. There are a lot of things to do when running for office. We've outlined the process a candidate may go through below.

Requirements for Office

Once a person has decided to run for office, the first thing they must do is make sure they meet the requirements. Some typical requirements include being a minimum age, a registered voter, a local resident, and a U.S. citizen.

Choosing a Party

Today, most people run for office as part of a political party. The first election they must win is often the primary election where they run to represent that party. The two main political parties in the United States are the Democratic Party and the Republican Party.

Budget

Running for office is hard to do without money. Candidates often print signs, run TV commercials, and travel to make speeches. This all costs money. Candidates get money from people who want to help them get elected. They then figure out the [budget](#) of what they can spend. This is important as sometimes the person with the most money to spend can

influence the most voters and will win the election.

Campaign Team

The candidate will also want to put together a campaign team. These are people who will work for the candidate to help them get elected. They organize volunteers, keep track of the money, schedule events, and basically help the candidate get elected. The main person on the campaign team is the campaign manager.

A Good Slogan

One of the things many candidates do is come up with a catchy slogan. This is a short saying that people will remember and will help keep the candidate on their mind when they go to vote. Some famous campaign slogans of U.S. Presidents include "I Like Ike" for [Dwight Eisenhower](#) and "Keep Cool with Coolidge" for Calvin Coolidge.

Campaigning

President Nixon Campaigns
from the White House Press Office

As the election gets closer, the candidate will begin to campaign. Campaigning includes a lot of "shaking hands and kissing babies." They travel around and make speeches telling people what they will do when they get into office. They explain to the voters how they will do better than the other candidates.

Issues

When running for office, the candidate typically declares a stand on certain important issues that have to do with the office they are running for. These issues could include a number of things such as education, clean water, taxes, war, healthcare, and the economy.

Debates

Another part of running for office is the debate. A debate is where each of the candidates running for an office get together. During the debate the candidates answer questions and respond to the answers of other candidates. How a candidate performs in a debate can make all the difference.

The Election

Finally, it will be the day of the election. The candidates will vote and then be back at work. They may attend a rally or even shake hands on the streets trying to get a few more votes. Once the polls are closed all the candidates can do is wait. They usually wait for the results with their family, friends, and campaign team. If they win, they will likely give a victory speech and then attend a celebration party.

Interesting Facts about Running for Office

- To be President of the U.S. you must be at least 35 years old and be a natural born citizen.
- The campaign slogan for President Woodrow Wilson was "He Kept Us Out of War." It helped him win the election, but only a month after being inaugurated he declared war on Germany and entered World War I.
- Presidential campaigns are very expensive. In 2012, [President Barack Obama](#) and the Democratic Party spent over \$1B on the presidential election campaign.
- It is estimated that in 2012 over \$6B was spent on presidential and congressional election races.

Activities

- Take a ten question [quiz](#) about this page.
- Listen to a recorded reading of this page:

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