



5 Essential Campaign Steps for Aspiring Political Candidates with Disabilities

Adults who are living with disabilities, including those that result in socialization struggles, often need the right resources, support, and advocacy to thrive. That last one is particularly noteworthy when it comes to policies and services that make life more accessible for those with disabilities. If you want to play a role in forming those policies and services, you could volunteer with an advocacy group. Or, you could really get involved by running for office. And by running for office, you could help empower voters with different disabilities who may feel that nobody in politics reflects their needs or their unique points of view.

With these campaign steps, affecting change is a lot easier than you think.

Research Election Rules

When you are running for office, you will need to follow certain pre-established rules to keep your campaign legal and legit. To determine what these rules are in your chosen race, check in with [your local election office](#). You will want to pay special attention to deadlines for getting your name on the ballot and rules for campaigning. In terms of the latter, you would be surprised how

many new candidates make mistakes that can jeopardize their chances, including placing campaign signs [too close](#) to polling locations. So, make sure you understand your state's rules.

Choose a Political Party

You don't necessarily need to run as a Democrat or a Republican to win an election, but it can help to choose a [political party](#) that most closely aligns with your values. In addition to these two mainstream political parties, candidates can opt to run as a member of the Independent, Green, Libertarian, or Constitution parties. All of these are registered political parties in the United States, but keep in mind that it can be difficult for [third-party candidates](#) to win elections. So, if you want more support in your campaign, consider running as a Republican or Democrat.

Hire a Campaign Team

While being elected to office is very much attainable for average citizens, doing so can take a considerable effort. You likely won't be able to manage a campaign all on your own, but you can hire an experienced team to help. One professional you will definitely want on your side is an expert in social media advertising. You can [hire these pros](#) via job board sites like Upwork, and then you can put them to work creating ad campaigns for various social media platforms. In addition to this pro, you will also want to fill your team with a campaign manager and volunteers.

Create a Fundraising Plan

During the 2018 midterm elections, senate candidates [spent over \\$5 billion](#) on campaign expenses. That's a staggering sum for anyone but you should know that the smaller the office you are running for, the less you are likely to spend on your campaign. Still, most political campaigns do require you to spend a little bit of cash, even if it's on hiring the team mentioned above or campaign signage. So, coming up with an [effective fundraising strategy](#) is key to your success. You can raise money from friends and family, or you can increase your coffers via fundraising events, phone banks, and canvassing. Volunteers can help with these efforts.

Create Positive Change

So here's the thing, even with the steps above you may not win your race. Which may make you wonder what the point of running is in the first place? Well, according to the National Council on Independent Living, Americans living with disabilities are still very much underrepresented in the political spectrum. This is why the NCIL [strongly encourages](#) those with disabilities to run for office, or at least participate more in elections. You can even check out the NCIL's list of current candidates for some added motivation. Then add your name to the list by running for office!

Putting your name in the hat for a public position can be nerve-wracking, but it can also be quite thrilling — especially when you connect with voters who think you're representing them in politics. You could end up winning and putting yourself into a position to make some real changes, but

even if you end up losing, your efforts will serve as inspiration for others with disabilities. So, don't let a fear of failure keep you from at least trying.

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