

How And Why To Showcase Your Abilities In A Public Office

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Approximately a quarter of all Americans have some sort of disability, [according to the CDC](#). This means that virtually every man, woman, and child living in the U.S. today is connected closely to somebody with a mobility, hearing, vision, mental health, or other disability. Sadly, our public offices fail to showcase this diversity. But it doesn't have to be that way, and you, as a person with a disability, have the power today to change the face of our nation.

What is Public Office Anyway?

[A public office](#) is essentially any role you take on that affects your community where you have been appointed by the people in it. On a state level, this might be a senator or judge. Locally, you can have an impact on your hometown as an alderman, town trustee, or city council member. You might also work on the board of education or local parks committee.

Depending on the role you choose to have, it might be necessary to run a campaign to create awareness of your name and your intentions. As a person with a disability, you are in a position to offer unique insight into these and other areas.

On The Campaign Trail

Think back to high school. You likely had a student council that was made up of the kids who were voted into their respective roles. A political campaign is similar, but on a broader scale. Your goal is to raise awareness of yourself and your ideologies, but you can't do it alone.

Before you get started, it makes sense to hire a [campaign manager](#), which Masterclass explains is someone who can devise a strategy, work within your budget, and handle things like marketing and fundraising. And given our digital age, you'll also want to find an experienced web developer to create, update, and promote your campaign site and hire a graphics programming expert for your [graphics needs](#). For either of these, you may be able to find the right talent using freelance job boards. And if you live in a college town, contact the school to find out about students interested in a political internship.

Something else to consider as you get your message across is how that message is generally conveyed. Running as a person with a disability, you'll have to pay careful attention to how you interact with both the general public and other people with impairments. Use all the tools available to you, such as [captioning](#) and sign language translation, to ensure you are seen and heard by everyone with a vote.

Does Experience Matter?

As you prepare to make your bid, you might be wondering if you have to have a ton of experience as a public official. The answer is *no*. What you do need is a vested interest in your community and the ability to ask lots of questions. You might, for example, run as a [school board](#) representative after realizing that your local campuses were failing its disabled students. What's more critical is recognizing what problems you intend to help solve, how you will solve them, and making sure your platform reflects your ideals.

Getting started

Once you know the reasons you want to campaign and have your team assembled, it's time to get started. NPR asserts that [grassroots tactics](#), like knocking on peoples' doors and engaging in meaningful one-on-one conversations, can go a long way toward fundraising and awareness. Be cautious, however, that you follow local [laws](#) about both fundraising and soliciting before you hit the streets.

Remember, when you want to run for office, you'll need to assemble the right team. Make sure that you have people in place that can help you showcase your talents and abilities. Convey your message and your genuine interest in your community, and don't be afraid to knock on doors and say hello. You never know how much of a difference you can make right in your own hometown.



Image via [Pexels](#)