



# The Small Business Guide to Running for Office

A HOW TO MANUAL

**“If you run a business, you need to get involved in politics or politics will run your business.”**

Dear Small Business Owner:

Every day you walk into your business, you face a litany of rules, regulations, and laws determined by local, state, and federal officials. Politics—and government—have more than an interest in your business. Their decisions, no matter how big or small, affect your bottom line.

Your decision to consider running for office carries significance. There are 513,000 elected officials in the United States—an astounding number of individuals who govern our lives and your business.

That’s why we’ve created **“The Small Business Guide to Running for Office”** to help you better prepare for your candidacy. NFIB is proud to be the voice of small business in Washington, D.C. and in state capitals across the nation. Now, we want to be a resource for small business owners who consider running for office.

In many ways, running a campaign is like running a business: You create a strategy and plan, establish a budget, raise the money, and target your audience. And now, voters are your customers.

The following chapters explain the best practices as well as provide examples to help you be a successful candidate for elective office. There is so much at stake and the only way to have good small business policies is to elect good small business candidates!

Thank you again for considering this next step in serving your community and country. I hope you find this guide helpful and wish you the best of luck in your campaign!

Sincerely,



Brad Close  
NFIB President & CEO

**Chapter One:** (pg. 5 - 76)

**The Campaign Foundation:  
Running a Campaign is a Business**

- Campaign Overview and Planning
- Campaign Structure
- Candidate Scheduling
- The Campaign Headquarters
- Recruiting Volunteers
- Targeting
- Opposition and Issue Research
- Appendix: Excel Formulas for Targeting

**Chapter Two:** (pg. 77 - 121)

**Voter Contact**

- Lists, Databases and Software
- Organizing the Precincts
- Voter Canvassing
  - Telephone Canvassing
  - Door-to-Door Canvassing
- Voter Registration
- Early Voting & Absentee Ballot Program
- Get-Out-The-Vote (GOTV)

**Chapter Three:** (pg. 123 - 175)

**Fundraising**

- Guidelines for Successful Fundraising
- Finance Chair and Finance Committee
- Personal Solicitation
- Developing a Finance Plan
- Political Action Committees
- Events
- Direct Mail Fundraising
- Telemarketing
- Digital Fundraising
- Appendix A: 2017-2018
  - FEC Contribution Limits
- Appendix B: Sample Campaign Income Worksheet

**Chapter Four:** (pg. 177 - 243)

**Communications**

- Paid Media
  - Radio Advertising
  - Newspaper Advertising
  - Television Advertising
  - Cable Television
- Graphics
- Direct Mail
  - Targeting
  - Copywriting
  - Design and Artwork
- Digital Media
  - Website
  - Social Media
  - Blogs
  - Podcasting
- Earned Media
  - Communications Basics
  - Five Elements of Political Communication
  - Dealing with Reporters
  - Developing Media Lists
  - Writing News Releases
  - Sample Press Release
  - News Conferences
- Public Speaking and Presentations

**Chapter Five:** (pg. 245 - 249)

**You as the Candidate**

- Building the Foundation
- Preparing Yourself for a Run for Office
- Tips for the Spouse of the Candidate

