

The background of the entire page is a scenic landscape of mountains and a river. The mountains are rendered in various shades of teal and blue, with some peaks appearing more distant and hazy. The river in the foreground is a vibrant orange-red color, winding through the landscape. The sky is a light teal color with several dark, stylized clouds. On the left side, several thin, white lines radiate from the bottom towards the top of the page, creating a sense of movement or focus.

A Guidebook for Democratic

Candidates in Cabell County, WV

RUNNING FOR OFFICE

**Provided by the Cabell County
Democratic Executive Committee**



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface.....	4
Chapter 1: Understanding the Political Landscape in Cabell County.....	5
1.1. Demographics.....	5
1.2. Key Issues.....	5
1.3. Past Election Results.....	5
1.4. Party Affiliation.....	6
Chapter 2: Declaring Candidacy.....	6
2.1. Choose the Office.....	6
2.2. Eligibility.....	7
2.3. Filing for Candidacy.....	7
2.4. Filing Financial Disclosures.....	7
Chapter 3: Developing Your Campaign Strategy.....	8
3.1. Define Your Message.....	8
3.2. Identify Your Target Audience.....	9
3.3. Outreach and Engagement.....	10
3.4. Inspiring Examples: Richard Ojeda.....	10
Chapter 4: Building a Campaign Team.....	11
4.1. Treasurer.....	11
4.2. Campaign Manager.....	12
4.3. Communications Director.....	12
4.4. Field Director.....	13
4.5. Selecting Team Members.....	13
4.6. Engaging with the Cabell County Democratic Executive Committee.....	13
Chapter 5: Fundraising and Budgeting.....	14
5.1. Developing a Fundraising Strategy.....	14
5.2. Creating a Campaign Budget.....	14
5.3. Utilizing ActBlue.....	15
5.4. Leveraging Financial Technology.....	15
Chapter 6: Reporting Requirements.....	16
6.1. Financial Disclosure.....	16
6.2. Candidate Affidavit.....	16
6.3. Campaign Finance Reports.....	16
6.4. In-Kind Contributions.....	17
6.5. Compliance with Electioneering and Communication Laws.....	17
Chapter 7: Campaigning.....	18
7.1. Key Campaign Tactics.....	18
7.2. Key Events, Organizations, and Media.....	18
7.3. Digital Campaigning: Social Media, Email, and Online Ads.....	19



7.4. Print and Broadcast Advertising.....	20
7.5. Yard signs, door hangers, and other printed materials.....	21
7.6. Utilizing Video for Voter Engagement.....	22
7.7. Leveraging NGP VAN in Your Campaign Strategy.....	24
7.8. Putting It All Together.....	25
Chapter 8: Election Day and Beyond.....	25
8.1. Get Out the Vote (GOTV).....	25
8.2. Election Day Operations.....	26
8.3. Post-Election Wind Down.....	26
Chapter 9: Key Contacts for Candidates.....	26
9.1. Federal Election Commission (FEC).....	27
9.2. West Virginia Secretary of State.....	27
9.3. West Virginia Democratic Party.....	27
9.4. Cabell County Clerk.....	27
9.5. Cabell County Democratic Executive Committee.....	27
9.6. Cabell County Democratic Women’s Club.....	27
9.7. NGP VAN.....	28
Chapter 10: Candidate's Campaign Checklist.....	28
Closing Statement.....	30



PREFACE

In the great mosaic of our democracy, every tile matters. Each individual, each candidate, each office - all contribute to the grand design of our shared governance. We at the Cabell County Democratic Executive Committee firmly believe in the power of collective action and the importance of full representation, from the smallest local office to the highest state position. That's why we've assembled this comprehensive guide to help potential Democratic candidates like you understand the process and requirements of running for office in Cabell County, West Virginia.

Our current political landscape presents us with both challenge and opportunity. In recent election cycles, too many local and state offices have gone uncontested, with Republican candidates running unopposed. This trend not only reduces the diversity of political perspectives in our local offices but also minimizes the crucial democratic principle of choice. It's vital that we as Democrats present a robust roster of candidates to counterbalance this trend and offer voters a genuine alternative. We believe that every voice matters, and every position of governance deserves to be challenged, debated, and elected by the people it serves.

However, our aim is not merely to populate the primaries with numerous candidates for a single office. While a healthy competition can energize a primary race, the reality of our current situation is such that we must be strategic, focused, and mindful of where our resources and energies are directed. Running multiple Democratic candidates against each other for the same office can potentially dilute resources and voter support. We must work together to ensure that we offer a robust and united front against our political counterparts.

That's where this guide and our committee come in. We're here to assist you in navigating the maze of candidacy - from choosing the right office to understanding the legal requirements, from managing effective campaigns to leveraging digital platforms, from fundraising strategies to understanding voter demographics. But more than just a guidebook, we're also your partners in this journey. We strongly recommend working with us, leveraging our knowledge and resources, to strategize your candidacy and optimize our collective impact.

Running for office is a significant commitment and an honorable endeavor. You are stepping up to serve your community and contribute to our democracy in a meaningful way. We hope this guide helps illuminate your path and provides a solid foundation for your potential candidacy. And remember, you are not alone in this journey. We are here with you, ready to assist and support, as we work together for a more inclusive, progressive, and vibrant Cabell County.

In working together, we can effectively challenge the status quo, provide voters with real choices, and work towards our shared vision of a more equitable and progressive Cabell County. We are here to assist you every step of the way. Your contribution to this cause can make a real difference in our community and our state.

Here's to our shared journey towards a brighter democratic future. Welcome to the team.



CHAPTER 1: UNDERSTANDING THE POLITICAL LANDSCAPE IN CABELL COUNTY

1.1. DEMOGRAPHICS

As of 2021, the estimated population of Cabell County was around 91,945. The county has a predominantly white population, with a small percentage of Black and Hispanic residents. The county's median age is 40 years, and the median household income is around \$38,637. The poverty rate is high, at around 20.4%. The main sectors of employment include health care and social assistance, retail trade, and educational services.

It's important to note that demographics may have shifted slightly since 2021, and the latest data should be sourced for an up-to-date view. For more specific, up-to-date information on demographics in Cabell County, you may wish to consult resources such as the U.S. Census Bureau, the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, or local government and community organizations. A valuable resource is the U.S. Census Bureau's Quick Facts page. This Quick Facts page can be filtered down to the state, county, town, or zip code, and additional columns can be added to compare demographics across different regions.

<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/cabellcountywestvirginia>

Understanding the county's demographic makeup can provide valuable insight into the type of messaging and policies that will resonate with voters. It's also recommended to spend time in these communities, meet with the people, and listen to their concerns to shape an effective, responsive campaign.

1.2. KEY ISSUES

Historically, economic development, job creation, healthcare, education, and infrastructure have been critical issues for Cabell County residents. Due to a high poverty rate and median income below the national average, economic initiatives and jobs may be particularly important. It's recommended to engage directly with constituents, attend public forums, and study local news to get a current understanding of the key issues.

1.3. PAST ELECTION RESULTS

Examining past election results can provide a wealth of information about the voting habits of Cabell County residents.

- **2020 General Election:** In the 2020 Presidential Election, Donald Trump (R) won Cabell County with around 66.5% of the votes, while Joe Biden (D) received about 32.4% of the votes.
- **2018 Midterm Election:** The Republican candidates won the majority of votes for the House and Senate races.
- **2016 General Election:** Donald Trump (R) won Cabell County with approximately 65.3% of the votes, while Hillary Clinton (D) received about 30.1% of the votes.



In terms of voter turnout:

- **2020 General Election:** The voter turnout rate was around 70%.
- **2018 Midterm Election:** The voter turnout rate was approximately 40%.
- **2016 General Election:** The voter turnout rate was around 67%.

Based on this data, it's clear that Cabell County leans Republican, and voter turnout is generally higher during general elections than midterm elections. As a Democratic candidate, it's crucial to develop a strategic plan to engage with and mobilize the Democratic and independent voters in the county.

1.4. PARTY AFFILIATION

As of the latest data available in 2021, the majority of registered voters in Cabell County are affiliated with the Republican Party. Democrats make up a smaller portion, followed by independent or no party affiliation voters. As a Democratic candidate, it will be critical to appeal to independent and swing voters, as well as motivate registered Democrats to vote.

While these trends provide a valuable foundation, they are just a starting point. It's important to continually gauge the political climate and stay informed about the concerns of your potential constituents as they evolve.

CHAPTER 2: DECLARING CANDIDACY

2.1. CHOOSE THE OFFICE

Before filing for candidacy, it's important to decide which position you're interested in. Here's a list of public offices that a resident of Cabell County, West Virginia, might run for:

1. **County Offices:** County Commissioner, County Clerk, Sheriff, Assessor, Prosecuting Attorney, Circuit Clerk, Board of Education.
2. **City Offices:** Mayor, City Council, Clerk/Recorder.
3. **State Offices:** Governor, State Senator, State Delegate.
4. **Federal Offices:** U.S. Senator, U.S. Representative.
5. **Special District Offices:** Greater Huntington Park and Recreation Board of Commissioners.

Consider factors like the responsibilities associated with the role, the influence it has on policy and change, and the specific community needs you're passionate about addressing when choosing the office you want to run for. The Cabell County Democratic Executive Committee can assist you with choosing an office to run for. You can refer to our website for a list of the available offices, the current incumbents,



their party affiliation, and the year their term ends.

<https://cabellcountydems.com/executive-committee/cabell-county-office-holders/>

2.2. ELIGIBILITY

Each office comes with its own set of eligibility requirements such as age, residency, voter registration, and more. Typically, requirements for candidacy can be found on the West Virginia Secretary of State's website or through the local county clerk's office.

For example, to run for the House of Delegates, the West Virginia Constitution requires that candidates must be at least 18 years old, a resident of their district for at least one year before their election, and must reside in their district during their term of service.

2.3. FILING FOR CANDIDACY

To officially become a candidate, you'll need to file for candidacy with the appropriate election authority.

1. **State and Federal Offices:** You would file your pre-candidacy papers with the West Virginia Secretary of State's Office. You can visit their website at <https://sos.wv.gov/> or call their Elections Division at (304) 558-6000 for more information.
2. **County Offices:** For local positions, you would file with the Cabell County Clerk's office. You can visit their website at <https://www.cabellcounty.org/countyclerk/> or call them at (304) 526-8625.
3. **City Offices:**
 1. City of Huntington: You would file with the City of Huntington Clerk's office. You can visit their website at <https://www.cityofhuntington.com/city-government/city-council-clerk/city-clerk/> or call them at (304) 696-5530.
 2. Village of Barboursville: You would file with the Village of Barboursville Village Recorder's office. You can visit their website at <https://www.barboursville.org/government/recorder.php> or call them at (304) 736-9820 Ext 134.
 3. City of Milton: You would file with the City of Milton Recorder's office. You can visit their website at <https://www.cityofmiltonwv.com/> or call them at (304) 743-3032.

Filing generally involves submitting a form and paying a filing fee. The form will request information such as your name, address, the office you're running for, and your party affiliation.

Please note that filing deadlines vary based on the election and the office you're seeking. It's essential to check with the appropriate office to ensure you file your candidacy in a timely manner.

2.4. FILING FINANCIAL DISCLOSURES



Candidates are often required to file financial disclosures with the appropriate state or local agencies. These forms vary depending on the level of office you're seeking. The West Virginia Secretary of State's Office and the Cabell County Clerk's Office can provide further guidance.

This chapter provides a basic overview of declaring candidacy in Cabell County, West Virginia. Always verify current requirements and regulations with the relevant government agencies.

CHAPTER 3: DEVELOPING YOUR CAMPAIGN STRATEGY

Your campaign strategy should define your goals, messages, target audience, and the tactics you'll use to reach them.

3.1. DEFINE YOUR MESSAGE

A compelling, coherent, and concise campaign message is crucial for connecting with voters. This is the core of your campaign, the heart of why you're running, and the basis on which voters will decide to support you. Your campaign message should encapsulate your vision for Cabell County, your understanding of its challenges, and your commitment to solutions. Given Cabell County's political leanings, you might focus on areas that resonate with both independents and Democrats:

- **Economic Initiatives:** Highlight your plans to improve the economy, create jobs, and raise wages. Policies that support small businesses, reduce unemployment, and address poverty can be particularly compelling.
- **Healthcare:** Emphasize the importance of accessible and affordable healthcare.
- **Education:** Detail your commitment to improving public education, which can encompass increasing funding, supporting teachers, and expanding vocational and technical training.
- **Bipartisanship:** Express your willingness to work across party lines. This can appeal to independent voters and moderate Republicans.

When crafting your message, try to focus on three key ideas or campaign points. Too many issues can dilute your message, confuse your audience, and make it harder for voters to grasp what you stand for. Instead, pinpoint the three most important issues you aim to address or the changes you plan to bring about. Make these three points the pillars of your campaign message. They should be relevant to your constituents, align with your personal values and strengths, and distinguish you from other candidates.

The rule of three is powerful: it's easy to remember, easy to understand, and provides a clear structure. Think of it as your campaign mantra, something that every voter will associate with your name and campaign.



Crafting a 30-second/250-word "elevator pitch" is an essential next step. An elevator pitch is a brief, persuasive speech that you can use to spark interest in your campaign. It should be engaging, informative, and memorable. Here's a possible structure for your pitch:

1. Introduction (5-10 seconds): Start by introducing yourself and the office you're running for.
2. The Issues (15-20 seconds): Briefly outline the three key issues or ideas your campaign is focused on. Use clear, direct language and avoid jargon.
3. Your Solution (10-15 seconds): State how you plan to address these issues. Again, be concise and clear.
4. Call to Action (5-10 seconds): End with a call to action. This could be a plea for their vote, a request to visit your campaign website, or an invitation to attend a campaign event.

Here's an example:

"Hi, I'm [Your Name], running for [Office] in Cabell County. I'm dedicated to improving our local education, ensuring better healthcare access, and promoting sustainable development. With your support, I will fight for improved school facilities, champion healthcare policies that serve us all, and work to attract green jobs to our community. Please join me in shaping a better future for Cabell County."

Remember, the aim is to engage and inspire. You want your message to resonate with voters and stay with them long after you've finished speaking. Be passionate, be authentic, and, most importantly, be clear. Your message is the promise you make to your constituents - make it count.

3.2. IDENTIFY YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

A successful campaign requires a deep understanding of your target audience – the voters you aim to connect with, persuade, and ultimately, mobilize. Knowing your target audience will help you craft a persuasive message, develop effective campaign strategies, and optimize your resource allocation.

To identify your target audience, start by analyzing the demographic and political landscape of Cabell County. Here are some factors to consider:

1. **Political Affiliations:** Understanding the political leanings of Cabell County voters is crucial. Examine past election data to understand voter preferences and trends.
2. **Age Groups:** Age can significantly influence a person's political priorities and communication preferences. A younger audience, such as the students at Marshall University, may prioritize issues like education, reproductive healthcare, climate change, and job prospects. On the other hand, older constituents might focus more on healthcare, social security, and local community issues.
3. **Occupation:** The dominant industries and employers in the area can provide insights into your audience's economic concerns. For instance, workers in healthcare, manufacturing, and retail trade constitute a significant portion of the Cabell County workforce.



4. **Education Levels:** Education can influence a voter's political leanings and their receptivity to various campaign messages.
5. **Income Levels:** Income and socioeconomic status can impact a person's political priorities and their perspective on issues like tax policies, social services, and economic development.
6. **Geographical Locations:** The location within the county could also influence the voter's perspectives. For example, urban voters in Huntington may have different concerns and priorities than rural voters in the unincorporated areas.
7. **Union Membership:** Union members are often active voters with specific concerns related to labor laws, wages, and working conditions.

Once you've understood these demographics, it can be helpful to create voter personas – semi-fictional characters that represent the different voter segments within your constituency. For instance:

1. **Marshall Student:** A young voter, studying full time, possibly working a part-time job. This persona is likely to be concerned with student debt, job prospects after graduation, and social issues.
2. **Manufacturing Worker:** This could be a middle-aged voter working in one of the county's many factories. They might be part of a labor union, and concerns could include wages, job security, workers' rights, and perhaps trade policies.
3. **Healthcare Professional:** This persona might be particularly concerned about health policy, working conditions in health care facilities, and public health issues.

Craft specific messages tailored to each persona, addressing their unique concerns and offering solutions that resonate with their circumstances. Remember, however, that while it's crucial to tailor your message to different audiences, your overall campaign message should remain cohesive and consistent.

3.3. OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

Choose the most effective outreach tactics for your target audience:

- **Door-to-Door Canvassing:** This is a powerful way to connect with voters directly. Prepare a succinct message, and be ready to listen to voters' concerns.
- **Community Events:** Attend local events, fairs, town halls, and public meetings to interact with potential voters.
- **Social Media:** Use platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to engage with younger and tech-savvy voters. Social media is also a powerful tool for fundraising.
- **Direct Mail:** Although more traditional, direct mail can still be an effective way to reach older voters.



- **Phone Banking:** This allows you to reach a large number of voters, especially those who may not be active online or difficult to reach in person.

More details about outreach will be shared in the chapter on Campaigning.

3.4. INSPIRING EXAMPLES: RICHARD OJEDA

Richard Ojeda, a Democrat, won his 2016 bid for the West Virginia State Senate in a district that voted heavily for Trump in the presidential race. Ojeda stood out by his direct engagement with voters, focusing on issues like healthcare, education, and jobs. He emphasized his military service and his roots in the community, which resonated with voters.

Although Ojeda is more moderate than some Democrats, his campaign strategy offers valuable lessons for Democratic candidates in Cabell County, particularly in connecting with voters on a personal level and prioritizing local issues.

In conclusion, your campaign strategy should be tailored to the specific needs and interests of Cabell County voters. By defining a clear message, identifying your target audience, and choosing effective outreach methods, you can build a strong foundation for a successful campaign.

CHAPTER 4: BUILDING A CAMPAIGN TEAM

Your campaign team is vital to your success. They'll manage the day-to-day operations, make strategic decisions, and help execute your campaign strategy. Let's delve into key roles and their responsibilities.

4.1. TREASURER

By law, the most essential campaign team member a candidate must appoint is the campaign treasurer. Before any money can be raised or spent (beyond a certain threshold, which varies by jurisdiction), a treasurer must be designated. This rule applies to all levels of campaigns—local, state, and federal. As such, more detail is provided in this section regarding the responsibilities of the campaign treasurer than for any other position.

- **Opening a Campaign Bank Account:** Before your campaign can accept any donations or make any expenditures, you must first open a separate bank account exclusively for the campaign. This account should be separate from any personal or business accounts to ensure transparency and compliance with campaign finance laws. You should open this account after you've officially declared your candidacy and appointed your campaign treasurer, but before you start fundraising or spending money. It's essential to remember that every transaction made for the campaign must go through this account.



- **Recording all contributions and expenditures:** Every single financial transaction must be recorded and reported, including who made a contribution and the purpose of every expenditure.
- **Staying within contribution limits:** They must ensure that the campaign does not accept contributions that exceed legal limits, and that it only accepts contributions from allowable sources.
- **Recording and Reporting Transactions:** The treasurer must record all contributions and expenditures and file regular financial reports with the appropriate oversight body. For federal offices, this is the Federal Election Commission (FEC), while for state and local offices in West Virginia, this is the Secretary of State's Office. These reports provide transparency to the public about your campaign's funding and spending.
- **Maintaining Records:** Detailed records of all receipts and disbursements must be kept for at least three years after the date of the report to which they relate, in case of audits or investigations.

The campaign treasurer has significant legal responsibilities, and failure to comply with campaign finance laws can result in substantial fines and even criminal charges in extreme cases. Therefore, it's crucial to select a treasurer who is diligent, detail-oriented, and knowledgeable about campaign finance laws. You may want to consider asking a friend or relative with a financial background, such as an accountant or someone with business management experience, to take on this role. It's essential to have absolute trust in your treasurer since they're handling money and ensuring legal compliance.

You must legally appoint a treasurer. For any other position in the campaign, such as campaign manager, communications director, field director, etc., there's no legal requirement to appoint someone to these roles. However, these positions often prove to be crucial for a well-run campaign.

4.2. CAMPAIGN MANAGER

The campaign manager oversees the entire operation. This person should have strong leadership skills, political acumen, and a knack for organization. Ideally, they should have experience with campaigns and a deep understanding of Cabell County's political landscape.

Responsibilities:

- Overall campaign strategy
- Staff management
- Coordination with volunteers
- Managing day-to-day operations
- Crisis management



4.3. COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

The communications director manages all communications, media, and public relations. They need excellent written and oral communication skills, creativity, and experience in dealing with the media.

Responsibilities:

- Developing and executing communication strategies
- Writing press releases and speeches
- Managing social media accounts
- Coordinating interviews and media appearances
- Crisis communication

4.4. FIELD DIRECTOR

The field director manages ground operations. They need to be energetic, sociable, and capable of managing large teams of volunteers.

Responsibilities:

- Volunteer recruitment and management
- Organizing canvassing, phone banking, and other field operations
- Voter registration drives
- Event organization and management

4.5. SELECTING TEAM MEMBERS

When choosing your campaign staff, look for people who are:

- Committed to your campaign's goals
- Skilled in their areas of responsibility
- Capable of working under pressure
- Flexible and adaptable to changing situations
- Familiar with Cabell County and its residents

Remember, while experience is valuable, passion and dedication are equally important. Many successful campaigns are powered by motivated volunteers who believe in the candidate's vision.

4.6. ENGAGING WITH THE CABELL COUNTY DEMOCRATIC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



The Cabell County Democratic Executive Committee is a valuable resource. They can provide guidance, help you understand local political dynamics, assist in identifying potential volunteers, and sometimes provide financial support.

Building a relationship with them can offer significant advantages. They can be reached through their website, <https://cabellcountydems.com/>, or through social media, <https://www.facebook.com/CabellCountyDems>.

In conclusion, your campaign team will play a significant role in determining your campaign's success. Take the time to carefully choose your staff, and don't hesitate to reach out to local resources for help and guidance.

CHAPTER 5: FUNDRAISING AND BUDGETING

Campaign finance is a crucial aspect of running for office. It enables the campaign to operate, pays for advertising, staff, events, and other essential expenses. Your campaign treasurer will play a vital role in managing this process, and it's essential to understand their specific responsibilities before delving into the details of fundraising and budgeting.

Again, before your campaign can accept any donations or make any expenditures, you must first appoint a campaign treasurer and open a campaign bank account. This is a separate bank account exclusively for the campaign. This account should be separate from any personal or business accounts to ensure transparency and compliance with campaign finance laws. It's essential to remember that every transaction made for the campaign must go through this account.

5.1. DEVELOPING A FUNDRAISING STRATEGY

A well-planned fundraising strategy will help you meet your campaign's financial goals. Here are a few steps to consider:

- **Establish Your Fundraising Goals:** Determine how much money you will need to run your campaign effectively. This will depend on factors like the competitiveness of the race, the size of your district, and your campaign strategy.
- **Identify Potential Donors:** This could include individual supporters, political action committees (PACs), and party organizations. Remember to comply with campaign finance laws regarding who can donate and how much they can give.
- **Plan Fundraising Activities:** This can include direct mail, phone calls, online fundraising, and in-person events. Personalized appeals often work best, so tailor your request to each potential donor.



- **Thank Your Donors:** Always thank your donors promptly and sincerely. This not only shows your appreciation but also helps build relationships for future support.

5.2. CREATING A CAMPAIGN BUDGET

A campaign budget helps ensure that you spend your funds effectively and responsibly. Here are a few steps to creating a campaign budget:

- **Estimate Your Income:** Based on your fundraising strategy, estimate how much money you expect to raise during the campaign. It's highly recommended that candidates search the WV Secretary of State's Campaign Finance Reporting System (CFRS) to see what previous candidates have raised for their campaigns: <https://cfrs.wvsos.gov/>
- **List Your Expenses:** Identify all potential costs, including staff salaries, office rent, utilities, travel, advertising, events, and any other expenses. Again, utilize the CFRS to see how similar campaigns have spent their resources.
- **Prioritize Your Spending:** Allocate your funds to the areas that will have the most impact on your campaign. This will depend on your specific campaign strategy.
- **Monitor Your Budget Regularly:** Regularly compare your actual income and expenditures with your budget estimates. This will allow you to adjust your strategy if necessary.

Remember, your campaign treasurer plays a crucial role in managing your fundraising and budgeting process. Their responsibilities are significant, so it's important to select someone who is detail-oriented, organized, and knowledgeable about campaign finance laws. By following a clear fundraising strategy and maintaining a strict budget, you can ensure your campaign has the funds it needs to be successful.

5.3. UTILIZING ACTBLUE

ActBlue is a nonprofit technology organization that offers an online fundraising platform for Democratic candidates and progressive organizations. Since its inception in 2004, ActBlue has revolutionized grassroots fundraising, allowing candidates at all levels to leverage the power of small-dollar donations. This fundraising gives Democrats a strategic advantage as no other political party has as robust a fundraising tool as ActBlue. More information can be found at <https://secure.actblue.com/>

Benefits of using ActBlue:

- **Ease of Use:** ActBlue's platform is user-friendly for both donors and campaigns. Donors can give with a single click, and campaigns can easily track and manage their fundraising.
- **Accessibility to Small-Dollar Donors:** ActBlue has made it possible for individuals to contribute small amounts to their preferred candidates, democratizing the process of political donations.
- **Streamlined Compliance:** ActBlue handles the compliance aspect for you, ensuring that contributions comply with campaign finance laws. They'll collect donor information and handle contribution limits.



- **Integration:** ActBlue integrates well with many other campaign tools and technologies, making it easier to manage your campaign's digital efforts.

5.4. LEVERAGING FINANCIAL TECHNOLOGY

Several technologies can streamline financial management and reporting for your campaign. Here are a few:

- **NGP VAN:** This is a technology provider that offers a suite of digital tools designed specifically for Democratic campaigns. Their fundraising and compliance software is top-notch and integrates with other aspects of the campaign like voter contact and volunteer management.
- **QuickBooks:** An accounting software package developed and marketed by Intuit. QuickBooks products are geared toward small and medium-sized businesses and offer on-premises accounting applications and cloud-based versions that accept business payments, manage and pay bills, and payroll functions.
- **Google Sheets or Microsoft Excel:** These spreadsheet programs are robust enough to handle most smaller campaigns' budgeting needs. Both programs can create visually appealing graphs and charts for presentations, track income and expenditures, and generate budget projections.
- **DonorBox or Fundly:** These are online fundraising platforms that allow campaigns to accept donations via a website or social media.
- **Square or Stripe:** These are payment processing platforms that allow campaigns to accept credit card payments at in-person events or over the internet.

When choosing technologies, consider your campaign's size, budget, and specific needs. Remember, the goal is to streamline your operations, not to overcomplicate them. Therefore, choose technologies that are easy for your team to learn and use, and that integrate well with each other to avoid duplication of effort.

CHAPTER 6: REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

While your campaign treasurer is mainly responsible for financial reporting, there are additional reporting and disclosure requirements that a candidate must adhere to during the campaign. The extent of these requirements depends largely on the office you're running for, but generally, they fall into the following categories:

6.1. FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE

Most states, including West Virginia, and the federal government require candidates to disclose their personal financial information. This is designed to prevent conflicts of interest and promote transparency.



The details required for these disclosures vary by jurisdiction but usually include information about your income, assets, liabilities, and financial interests. In West Virginia, the Statement of Financial Interests must be filed annually with the West Virginia Ethics Commission. For federal candidates, the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate each have their own Financial Disclosure forms that must be filed with the Clerk of the House or the Secretary of the Senate, respectively.

6.2. CANDIDATE AFFIDAVIT

When declaring your candidacy, you'll typically need to file a Candidate Affidavit or similar document. This form affirms that you meet the qualifications for the office you're seeking and that you will abide by the laws governing the conduct of campaigns. The affidavit often includes information about your campaign treasurer and your campaign bank account. In West Virginia, this is handled through the Candidate's Certificate of Announcement, which is filed with the Secretary of State's Office.

6.3. CAMPAIGN FINANCE REPORTS

As discussed in Chapter 5, the campaign treasurer must regularly file campaign finance reports detailing your campaign's income and expenditures. The specific forms and deadlines vary depending on the office you're running for and the jurisdiction overseeing your election. Generally, these reports are due quarterly during an election year, with additional pre- and post-election reports required.

Filing Reports:

The campaign treasurer files campaign finance reports with the appropriate oversight body, depending on the office being sought:

- **Federal Offices:** If you're running for a federal office (such as U.S. Senator or U.S. Representative), you'll need to file your reports with the Federal Election Commission (FEC).
- **State and Local Offices:** If you're running for a state or local office in West Virginia, you'll file your reports with the West Virginia Secretary of State's Office.

These reports detail your campaign's income and expenditures and provide transparency to the public about who is funding your campaign and how you're spending the funds.

Frequency of Reporting:

The frequency of reporting varies based on the office being sought and the specific election schedule. Here's the general outline:

- **Federal Offices:** The FEC requires quarterly reports in an election year, along with pre-election and post-election reports. In non-election years, reports are due semi-annually. Check the FEC's reporting schedule for the most accurate dates.
- **State and Local Offices:** In West Virginia, the Secretary of State's Office requires pre-primary, post-primary, pre-general, and post-general election reports, along with a year-end annual report. Check the Secretary of State's website for specific dates and requirements.



6.4. IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS

In-kind contributions are goods, services, or property donated to your campaign. These could include donated office space, campaign materials, or professional services. In-kind contributions must be reported like any other contribution, with information about the donor and the fair market value of the contribution.

6.5. COMPLIANCE WITH ELECTIONEERING AND COMMUNICATION LAWS

As a candidate, you must comply with laws governing political communications. This includes proper disclaimers on campaign advertisements and following rules related to direct communication with voters. For example, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) requires certain disclosures and notices for political advertising on broadcast media, and the FEC has rules for disclaimers on printed, digital, and other types of campaign communications.

Failure to comply with these reporting requirements can result in fines, penalties, and other sanctions. Therefore, it's crucial for you, as the candidate, to understand these obligations and ensure that your campaign staff, particularly your campaign treasurer, are equipped to handle these responsibilities. It's always recommended to seek legal counsel or consult with the appropriate oversight agency if you have any questions about these requirements.

CHAPTER 7: CAMPAIGNING

Campaigning is the heart and soul of your political journey. It's where you connect with voters, share your vision, and persuade people to support your candidacy. Here's a comprehensive guide on successful campaigning, with a particular focus on Cabell County, West Virginia.

7.1. KEY CAMPAIGN TACTICS

Here are some tactics you might employ as part of your campaign strategy:

- **Canvassing:** This is a tried-and-true method of campaigning where you or your volunteers go door-to-door to speak directly with voters. Personal interaction can leave a lasting impression.
- **Phone Banking:** This is another classic campaign tactic, particularly useful for reaching voters spread out over a larger geographic area.
- **Town Hall Meetings:** These forums provide an opportunity for candidates to discuss issues with voters, respond to their concerns, and showcase their policy understanding.
- **Direct Mail Campaigns:** Sending campaign literature directly to voters' homes can help raise awareness about your candidacy.



- **Political Rallies and Events:** Hosting or participating in rallies allows candidates to galvanize their base, get media coverage, and present their platforms to larger audiences.

7.2. KEY EVENTS, ORGANIZATIONS, AND MEDIA

To increase your visibility and credibility, consider engaging with the following:

- **Cabell County Democratic Executive Committee Meetings:** Participating in these meetings allows you to network with local party leaders, gain endorsements, and mobilize volunteers.
- **Community Events:** Attending fairs, parades, festivals, and other community events can give you face time with potential voters.
- **Local Media:** Reach out to the Herald-Dispatch (Huntington's primary newspaper) or local radio stations like WRVC for interviews or to share your press releases.
- **Endorsements:** Seek endorsements from local and state politicians, unions, or other influential individuals or groups.
- **Political Party Events:** Participate in West Virginia Democratic Party events to network, build relationships, and gain visibility.

7.3. DIGITAL CAMPAIGNING: SOCIAL MEDIA, EMAIL, AND ONLINE ADS

In today's increasingly connected world, digital campaigning is a vital part of any election strategy. This section will guide you through the various aspects of digital campaigning, from social media engagement to email newsletters and online advertising.

Social Media Campaigning:

1. **Choosing Platforms:** Not all social media platforms are the same. Facebook is generally popular across various age groups, while Instagram and Twitter are more popular among younger demographics. Analyze your voter base and choose platforms accordingly.
2. **Engagement:** Use your platforms to engage with your audience. This means not just posting, but also responding to comments, participating in discussions, and reacting to followers' posts. Regular engagement can help build a strong online community around your campaign.
3. **Content:** Post a mix of content, from policy discussions and campaign updates to more personal, behind-the-scenes posts. Visual content, like images and videos, tends to perform well.
4. **Promotion:** Use your social media platforms to promote campaign events, request donations, and encourage voter registration and turnout.

Email Campaigning:

1. **Building Your List:** A strong email list is a valuable asset. Build your list through your website, social media, and campaign events.



2. **Content:** Like with social media, your emails should contain a mix of content. Include campaign updates, policy discussions, and opportunities for supporters to get involved.
3. **Fundraising:** Email is an effective fundraising tool. Be clear about what donations will be used for and make it easy to donate directly from your email.
4. **Personalization:** Whenever possible, personalize your emails. Most email marketing tools allow for some level of customization. A personalized greeting can increase open rates and engagement.

Online Advertising:

1. **Platforms:** There are many platforms you can use for online advertising. Google and Facebook are two of the most popular, but also consider other platforms where your target demographics spend time.
2. **Targeting:** One of the biggest advantages of online advertising is the ability to target specific demographics. You can target based on location, age, gender, interests, and even voting history.
3. **Budgeting:** Keep a close eye on your spending. Digital advertising can become expensive quickly, so set a budget and stick to it. Also, analyze the performance of your ads and adjust your strategy as needed to get the best return on your investment.
4. **Compliance:** All digital ads must comply with election laws, including disclaimers about who paid for the ad. Platforms may have their own additional requirements.

By effectively utilizing digital tools, you can increase your campaign's reach, engage with voters, and drive action in a cost-effective way. Remember to keep track of what works and what doesn't, and be ready to adjust your strategy as needed.

7.4. PRINT AND BROADCAST ADVERTISING

While digital campaigning continues to grow in importance, traditional media still hold a significant place in political campaigns. Here's a detailed guide on how to use print and broadcast advertising effectively.

Print Advertising:

Print advertising consists of advertisements placed in printed media like newspapers, magazines, flyers, brochures, and direct mailers. They're an excellent way to reach older demographics who are more likely to read print media, or those who have limited internet access. Here's how to effectively use print ads:

1. **Local Newspapers:** In Cabell County, consider placing ads in local newspapers like the Herald-Dispatch or the West Virginia Daily News. Local newspapers often have a dedicated readership who are engaged in the community.
2. **Brochures and Flyers:** These can be handed out at community events, canvassing, or through direct mail campaigns. Make sure to include compelling images, essential campaign messages, and information on how to get involved or donate.



3. **Direct Mail:** Direct mail campaigns, where you send advertising materials directly to registered voters' homes, can be highly effective if targeted properly. This allows you to send tailored messages to specific demographics or neighborhoods.

Broadcast Advertising:

Broadcast advertising refers to ads run on television and radio. While these can be more costly, they have the potential to reach a large audience, including demographics less likely to be online. Here's how to make the most of broadcast ads:

1. **Television Ads:** For local elections, consider buying ad spots on local network affiliates such as WSAZ (NBC) or WOWK (CBS), particularly during news hours when viewership is higher. Make sure your ad conveys your main campaign message clearly and quickly, as you'll usually only have 30 seconds to a minute.
2. **Radio Ads:** Similarly, consider radio stations popular in Cabell County like WMUL or WRVC. Time your ads for when people are most likely to be listening, such as during morning and evening commutes.
3. **Production Quality:** Whether for television or radio, the quality of your ads matters. Poor production quality can leave a bad impression. Consider hiring a professional to help write, film, and edit your broadcast ads.
4. **Targeting Your Audience:** Consider your audience when deciding where to place your ads. Different radio and TV stations will have different demographics among their listeners and viewers, so choose those that align best with the voters you're trying to reach.
5. **Comply with Legal Requirements:** Remember that all ads must comply with the legal requirements, including the "paid for by" disclaimer. For television ads, you also need to comply with the FCC's "Stand By Your Ad" provision, which requires the candidate to appear in the ad and verbally approve the message.

Through a mix of both print and broadcast advertising, you can ensure your campaign message reaches a wide array of voters. It's essential to tailor your message to the medium and the audience, and always track your results to see what's working and what isn't.

7.5. YARD SIGNS, DOOR HANGERS, AND OTHER PRINTED MATERIALS

Yard signs, door hangers, and other printed materials are traditional yet effective methods of campaign advertisement that can be invaluable in raising awareness about your candidacy and garnering voter support. Here are some best practices and regulations you need to keep in mind:

1. **Design and Messaging:** The design of your materials should be visually appealing and easy to read, even from a distance. Stick to your campaign's color scheme and always ensure that your



name and the office you're running for are prominently displayed. Keep the message simple, memorable, and aligned with your campaign's core message.

2. **Quality:** It's worth investing in durable materials, particularly for yard signs, as they need to withstand various weather conditions. You want your signs to last throughout your campaign, and not become an eyesore.
3. **Placement:** For yard signs, you must obtain permission from homeowners before placing signs in their yards. Consider high-visibility locations where your sign is likely to be seen by a significant number of people, such as busy streets or near local businesses (with their permission). For door hangers, ensure that you respect the privacy of the residents and don't trespass on private property.
4. **Distribution Strategy:** Coordinate your distribution strategy with your door-knocking or other canvassing efforts. When volunteers interact with supportive residents, it's an opportune time to offer yard signs or leave behind door hangers.
5. **Local Regulations:** Familiarize yourself with local regulations regarding political signage and solicitation. Some cities or homeowner associations may have specific rules about the size, placement, or duration of display for yard signs. Failure to adhere to these rules can result in fines or removal of signs. Check with the Cabell County Clerk's office for more information.
6. **Eco-friendly practices:** Consider environmentally friendly practices in your campaign materials. Choose recyclable materials when possible and encourage supporters to recycle signs and other materials after the election.
7. **Post-Election Clean-Up:** Ensure you have a plan for post-election clean-up. It's your responsibility to remove your signs from public areas and to encourage your supporters to do the same from their properties.

Remember, while yard signs, door hangers, and printed materials may not reach as many people as digital campaigns, they are essential in local elections where community recognition and visibility are critical. Utilizing these tools effectively can help solidify your presence in your community and demonstrate your commitment to your constituents.

7.6. UTILIZING VIDEO FOR VOTER ENGAGEMENT

Video content is an increasingly powerful tool in political campaigns. It offers an opportunity to connect with voters in a more personal and engaging way, often reaching a wider audience than traditional campaign methods alone.



The benefits of utilizing video content in your campaign are numerous:

- **Personal Connection:** Videos allow candidates to speak directly to voters, making a personal connection that's harder to achieve through written content.
- **Wider Reach:** Social media platforms favor video content, often giving it a wider reach than text posts. This means your message can reach more people, including those outside of your immediate network.
- **Versatility:** Videos can be used in a variety of ways, from policy explainers and campaign updates to testimonials from supporters and behind-the-scenes looks at your campaign.
- **Accessibility:** Videos with subtitles or transcripts are more accessible to people with hearing impairments and those who prefer to read rather than listen.

There are numerous examples of candidates who've used video content successfully in their campaigns. In the 2018 U.S. midterm elections, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez leveraged video content as a cornerstone of her campaign. Her campaign videos, which showcased her personal story and policy positions, went viral on social media, contributing to her victory.

Former President Barack Obama also utilized video effectively throughout both his presidential campaigns. He used video content to mobilize his base, explain his policy positions, and respond to current events. His team produced a variety of video content, including documentary-style videos, short clips for social media, and long-form speeches.

Here are a few tips for creating effective campaign videos:

1. **Be Authentic:** Authenticity resonates with viewers. Speak from the heart, be genuine, and let your personality shine through.
2. **Quality Matters:** While you don't need a Hollywood-level production, make sure your video is clear, with good lighting and sound quality.
3. **Engage With Viewers:** Encourage viewers to like, comment, share, or donate. Engagement not only boosts your video's reach but also helps build a community around your campaign.
4. **Diversify Your Content:** Vary your video content to keep viewers engaged. Mix policy discussions with personal stories, behind-the-scenes peeks at your campaign, and testimonials from supporters.
5. **Remember Accessibility:** Include subtitles or a transcript to make your video accessible to all viewers.

Here are some of the best platforms to use:

1. **YouTube:** As one of the largest video sharing platforms, YouTube is an excellent tool for housing your campaign videos. It's free to use, allows for longer-form videos, and is great for sharing



speeches, interviews, and issue-based content. YouTube videos are also easily shareable on other social media platforms and can be embedded on your campaign website.

2. **Facebook:** With a large user base, Facebook is a vital platform for political campaigns. Videos on Facebook have high engagement rates. You can go live, post recorded videos, or use Facebook ads to target specific voter demographics with your video content. Make sure to enable captions for accessibility and for those who may watch without sound.
3. **Instagram:** This platform is popular among younger demographics. It's ideal for shorter, engaging videos or live broadcasts. Instagram Stories and IGTV are useful tools for behind-the-scenes content, quick updates, and connecting on a more personal level.
4. **Twitter:** Videos on Twitter are great for short messages or clips from speeches and debates. It's also a powerful platform for real-time updates and rapid response to current events.
5. **TikTok:** This platform has exploded in popularity among younger demographics. Its unique format of short, creative videos can be a fun and engaging way to reach out to younger voters. Political TikToks have become increasingly popular, but they require a different, more casual approach than traditional campaign videos.
6. **LinkedIn:** While not traditionally a campaign tool, LinkedIn can be an effective platform for reaching professionals and discussing issues related to business, job creation, or education.
7. **Zoom:** For virtual town halls, Q&As, or digital canvassing, Zoom has become a reliable platform for connecting with voters in real-time. These sessions can be recorded and later shared on other platforms.

When creating video content, remember to tailor your message and style to the platform and its audience. Additionally, always ensure your video content is in line with your campaign messaging and values. Also, do remember to promote your videos across your other campaigning channels to reach as wide an audience as possible. By effectively utilizing video content, you can connect with voters on a personal level, explain complex issues, and broadly disseminate your campaign message.

7.7. LEVERAGING NGP VAN IN YOUR CAMPAIGN STRATEGY

NGP VAN is a technology provider that offers a suite of digital tools designed specifically for Democratic campaigns and progressive organizations. Its platform integrates fundraising, compliance, field organizing, digital, and social networking features. Here's how to leverage this powerful tool in your campaign:

Fundraising and Compliance:

1. **Online Donations:** NGP VAN integrates with ActBlue, allowing you to accept online donations and automatically track them for compliance purposes.



2. **Fundraising Tools:** The software also provides tools for managing donor relationships, tracking pledges and contributions, and planning fundraising events.
3. **Compliance Reporting:** NGP VAN simplifies the process of compliance reporting, providing the necessary tools to generate reports required by the FEC and state agencies.

Field Organizing:

1. **Voter Database:** NGP VAN offers access to a vast voter database, allowing your campaign to identify potential supporters, volunteers, and donors.
2. **Canvassing and Phone Banking:** The platform includes tools for managing door-to-door canvassing and phone banking efforts, including route optimization, script creation, and response tracking.
3. **Volunteer Management:** You can also use NGP VAN to recruit, manage, and communicate with volunteers, and to organize and track volunteer-led events.

Digital and Social Networking:

1. **Email Campaigning:** NGP VAN provides tools for managing email campaigns, including list segmentation, A/B testing, analytics, and built-in compliance features.
2. **Social Media Integration:** The platform integrates with social media networks, allowing you to track your campaign's social media reach and engagement.
3. **Website Integration:** NGP VAN can integrate with your campaign website, allowing you to track visitor data, manage online forms, and optimize your site based on user behavior.

Leveraging NGP VAN in your campaign can save time, streamline operations, and provide valuable insights to inform your strategy. While it may seem overwhelming at first, NGP VAN offers comprehensive training and support to help you make the most of their platform. With this tool at your disposal, you're well-equipped to run a modern, effective campaign.

7.8. PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Successful campaigning involves a mix of all these tactics. Your strategy should reflect the makeup of Cabell County's voters, your campaign's resources, and your personal strengths as a candidate. Keep track of what works and what doesn't, and be ready to adjust your strategy as needed.

Finally, remember that while campaigning is about getting your message out, it's equally about listening to the voters. Be genuine, be respectful, and always be listening.



Election Day is the culmination of all your hard work, but the campaign's end doesn't mean your job is done. The final stages of the campaign include getting out the vote, managing Election Day operations, and winding down the campaign post-election. Here's a detailed guide on how to navigate these critical stages.

8.1. GET OUT THE VOTE (GOTV)

In the days leading up to the election, your campaign's focus should shift towards mobilizing your supporters to vote. Here's how to execute a successful GOTV strategy:

1. **Remind Supporters:** Use every channel available—email, social media, phone banking, direct mail—to remind your supporters about the upcoming election and the importance of their vote.
2. **Provide Information:** Make sure your supporters know when, where, and how to vote. Provide information on polling locations and hours, early voting options, absentee ballots, and any identification requirements.
3. **Mobilize Volunteers:** Your volunteers should be out in full force in the days leading up to the election, knocking on doors, making phone calls, and helping with logistics like rides to polling stations.

8.2. ELECTION DAY OPERATIONS

Election Day is all hands on deck. Here's how to manage your operations:

1. **Poll Watchers:** Have volunteers at polling places to ensure that voting goes smoothly, to provide assistance to voters if needed, and to monitor for any irregularities.
2. **Continued GOTV Efforts:** Keep your GOTV efforts going until the polls close. Continue making calls, posting on social media, and sending emails to remind people to vote.
3. **Election Night Party:** Plan an event for your campaign team and supporters to watch the results come in. This is a time to thank everyone for their hard work, regardless of the outcome.

8.3. POST-ELECTION WIND DOWN

After the election, whether you've won or lost, there's still work to be done:

1. **Thank Your Supporters:** Publicly and personally thank your supporters, volunteers, and staff for their efforts.
2. **Compliance Reporting:** Work with your treasurer to complete any final compliance reports. Make sure all campaign expenses are paid, and all donations are properly accounted for.
3. **Evaluate the Campaign:** Conduct a post-mortem to evaluate your campaign—what worked, what didn't, and what you could do differently next time. This is a valuable exercise whether you plan to run again or not, as these insights can be shared with future candidates.



4. **Stay Engaged:** Regardless of the election's outcome, continue to stay engaged in local politics and community issues. If you won, this means fulfilling your campaign promises. If you lost, consider other ways you can make a difference, such as volunteering, supporting other candidates, or planning for a future run.

The campaign's end is just as important as its start. By ensuring a strong finish, you'll be able to look back on your campaign with pride, knowing you did everything possible to succeed.

CHAPTER 9: KEY CONTACTS FOR CANDIDATES

Successful campaigning requires an understanding of and communication with various government and political entities. This chapter provides information on several such bodies relevant to your campaign, why they matter, and how you can get in touch with them.

9.1. FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION (FEC)

The FEC is responsible for enforcing federal campaign finance laws. It provides guidelines about contributions, expenditures, and reporting for federal offices. While it might not directly apply to a local or state election, understanding its rules can be beneficial.

- Website: <https://www.fec.gov/>
- Phone: 1-800-424-9530

9.2. WEST VIRGINIA SECRETARY OF STATE

The West Virginia Secretary of State's office oversees elections in the state, including voter registration, election administration, and campaign finance reporting for state and local offices.

- Website: <https://sos.wv.gov/elections/Pages/default.aspx>
- Phone: (304) 558-6000

9.3. WEST VIRGINIA DEMOCRATIC PARTY

The state party can provide resources, support, and coordination for Democratic candidates in West Virginia. They can assist with training, voter databases, and other campaign-related needs.

- Website: <https://wvdemocrats.com/>
- Phone: (304) 342-8121

9.4. CABELL COUNTY CLERK

The county clerk's office handles local election administration, including voter registration, ballot access, and election results. They are a key contact for running a local campaign.



- Website: <http://www.cabellcounty.org/countyclerk/>
- Phone: (304) 526-8625

9.5. CABELL COUNTY DEMOCRATIC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Your local county party committee can provide direct support and resources for your campaign, including local voter data, connections with local activists and donors, and opportunities for coordination with other local campaigns.

- Website: <https://cabellcountydems.com/>

9.6. CABELL COUNTY DEMOCRATIC WOMEN'S CLUB

Members of the Cabell County Democratic Women's Club are involved in various community service activities and events, promoting Democratic values, and actively supporting Democratic candidates during the election cycle. The club regularly hosts meetings and events where candidates can network, seek advice, and learn more about the issues that matter to voters in Cabell County. And the Women's Club is not just for Women! Men can join too.

For more information about the Cabell County Democratic Women's Club, their activities, and how to get involved, you can visit their Facebook page or contact them directly through their listed contact information.

Website: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100064866843072>

9.7. NGP VAN

As a Democratic candidate, you'll likely use NGP VAN for your voter database and other campaign functions. They provide training and support for their software.

- Website: <https://www.ngpvan.com/>
- Phone: (202) 686-9330

Remember, these organizations exist to facilitate a fair and efficient election process, and they're available to help. Don't hesitate to reach out with any questions or issues you encounter during your campaign.

CHAPTER 10: CANDIDATE'S CAMPAIGN CHECKLIST

This checklist serves as a general guide. There may be additional tasks specific to your campaign, office, or the current political climate that you should also account for.

Pre-Campaign



1. **Identify your reasons for running and align your objectives.** Reflect on why you want to run for office and what changes you hope to implement if elected.
2. **Research and choose the office you plan to run for.** Consider your interests, skills, and the needs of your community. Refer to the list of offices available to candidates in Cabell County, WV in Chapter 2 of this guidebook.
3. **Consult with the Cabell County Democratic Executive Committee.** Discuss your intentions to run for office and seek advice on the best strategic approach.
4. **Assemble your campaign team.** Begin by recruiting a trustworthy and organized campaign treasurer. Then fill other vital roles such as campaign manager, communications director, and volunteers. Refer to Chapter 4 for more details on building your team.
5. **Prepare and file your candidate paperwork.** Ensure you meet all eligibility requirements and filing deadlines for the chosen office. Contact the Secretary of State's office or the Cabell County Clerk's office to obtain and submit the necessary forms.
6. **Set up a campaign bank account.** This is a critical step that needs to happen after filing your candidacy but before any fundraising efforts.
7. **Prepare for campaign finance reporting.** Understand the reporting schedule and requirements set by the West Virginia Secretary of State's office.

Campaign Launch

8. **Create your campaign strategy.** Identify key issues, understand the demographics and voter preferences in your area, and develop a campaign message that resonates with voters.
9. **Develop a campaign budget and start fundraising.** Use tools like ActBlue for online donations, plan fundraising events, and remember to record all contributions.
10. **Build your campaign website and social media presence.** Make sure they are regularly updated with your campaign activities and stances on key issues.
11. **Prepare campaign materials.** This includes yard signs, door hangers, brochures, and other promotional items. Make sure they align with your campaign branding and messaging.
12. **Leverage NGP VAN.** Use this tool to manage and analyze your campaign's voter contact, volunteer network, fundraising, and more.
13. **Launch your campaign.** Consider holding a kickoff event to generate publicity and energy for your campaign.

Campaigning

14. **Implement your campaign strategy.** Begin door-knocking, phone banking, and digital campaigning efforts.



15. **Attend relevant events and functions.** Connect with potential voters and network with influential community members.
16. **Record videos to engage with voters.** Share your campaign message, discuss key issues, or respond to voter queries.
17. **Ensure regular communication with your supporters.** Keep them engaged and informed through emails, social media updates, and newsletters.
18. **Monitor your campaign finance.** Regularly check your campaign expenditure and make sure you're staying within budget.
19. **Meet campaign finance reporting deadlines.** Make sure your treasurer files timely and accurate reports with the state or county as required.
20. **Adjust campaign strategies as necessary.** Use data and feedback to refine your campaign strategies.

Election and Beyond

21. **Prepare for Election Day.** Organize volunteers for a final Get-Out-The-Vote (GOTV) push and ensure your supporters know where and when to vote.
22. **Thank your team and supporters.** Regardless of the election outcome, remember to express gratitude to those who supported your campaign.
23. **Participate in post-election tasks.** If elected, fulfill the requirements to take office. If not, consider other ways to serve your community and prepare for future opportunities.
24. **Collect and recycle campaign materials.** Remove yard signs from public areas and ask your supporters to do the same.
25. **Analyze campaign results.** Reflect on your campaign's strengths and weaknesses to prepare for future elections or advise others.
26. **Complete post-campaign finance reports.** Ensure all campaign finances are settled and reported accurately.

CLOSING STATEMENT

As you've journeyed through this guide, absorbed the insights, and considered the multitude of factors that come with running for office, we hope you've felt a spark of possibility, of potential, of promise. In these pages, we've aimed to provide the tools, resources, and guidance necessary to help you take that crucial step from contemplation to action. And now, as we arrive at this guide's conclusion, we look forward to the exciting prospect of your journey's continuation.



Democracy thrives when engaged citizens step up to the challenge of representation and public service. The absence of contestation in recent elections in Cabell County, and West Virginia as a whole, underscores the vital importance of your contribution. The stakes are high, but the rewards - serving your community, enacting meaningful change, ensuring fair representation - are immeasurably higher.

Now, we turn to you with a call to action. Don't let this guidebook be the end of your journey but rather its springboard. Reach out to the Cabell County Democratic Executive Committee, engage in a dialogue about your aspirations, discuss which offices might best align with your skills, interests, and the needs of our community. Start the process. Start the conversation. Start the change.

And remember, running for office is not a solitary pursuit. We're here to assist, to guide, and to support. Together, we can break the cycle of uncontested seats, offer voters the choices they deserve, and bring the diverse, dynamic representation our community needs. You are part of a team dedicated to fostering a more equitable and inclusive Cabell County and West Virginia. Your voice, your effort, your campaign - they all matter.

So, as we close this guidebook, we open the door to a new chapter, one filled with possibility and promise. We look forward to embarking on this journey with you, toward a future where every seat is contested, every voice is heard, and every citizen is represented. Together, let's shape the community we envision - for ourselves, our neighbors, and future generations.

The time to act is now. Your community needs you. Democracy needs you. We are ready. Are you?