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### Working to Elect Under-Represented Groups in Public Office

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Working to Elect Underrepresented Groups into Public Office

**Working to Elect Underrepresented Groups into Public Office**

Jenny Pacillo

Research Methods and Strategies MPA 3999–2

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## **Acknowledgment**

It is extremely important to first acknowledge that I am writing this capstone from the perspective of a privileged white woman. I have been able to become very involved in Worcester because I have a strong support network, reliable child care and transportation, and I benefit from white privilege. I fully understand that finding the time to educate oneself on community issues, show up to meetings and engage with elected officials can be challenging for many people. Underrepresented folks such as women, people of color and underprivileged members of the community face systemic issues such as racism, disparities in education and other barriers that place additional burdens on running for public office. This capstone will focus on the City of Worcester's municipal government, but the information can be applied to any local campaign.

## Working to Elect Underrepresented Groups into Public Office

### **Abstract**

Running for public office is a massive undertaking that is often inaccessible to marginalized groups of people including women, people of color, low income folks and members of the LGBTQIA+ community. These people, especially when they are first time candidates, face barriers that range from lack of finances to gatekeeping. Communities benefit when residents are represented by a diverse range of elected officials, as they bring unique perspectives, lived experiences and opinions to the table. This capstone will provide an overview of strategy, guidelines to follow and basic tools that are needed to run for office to assist first time candidates in their run for public office.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

The demographics of our elected officials are slowly changing to represent citizens on the national level, but running for office is still an uphill battle for many groups of people. Women, people of color and folks who identify as LGBTQIA+ face added systemic challenges, especially as first time candidates. These challenges can range from lack of experience and financial support to gatekeeping, and they make it extremely difficult to run an effective campaign. Other issues can involve reliable child care, transportation, language barriers and balancing work with campaigning. It should come as no surprise that these complications apply to women and underrepresented groups far more than they affect white men. Census data shows that the United States is becoming more diverse, but our elected officials are still mostly white and mostly men.

### Demographics and Statistics

According to Mass.gov and the 2020 United States Census, 68.63% of Massachusetts residents are white, but white lawmakers made up 87% of the state legislature in 2020. Hispanic/Latinx representatives increased from 3% in 2015 to 7% in 2020, while Black/African Americans in state office fell from 3% in 2015 to 2% in 2020. As for gender, there are roughly 3.27 million men and 3.47 women statewide, however as of 2020 only 29% of the Massachusetts state legislature was female. On the national level, there are just nine LGBTQIA+ elected officials between the House and Senate (Moreau, 2022). It's important to note that Massachusetts just elected our first female and openly queer governor, Maura Healey in 2022. While this was a huge step for women and the LGBTQIA+ community, there is still room for improvement both nationally and in Massachusetts.

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My capstone is strictly focused on the municipal level, but the demographics of Worcester do reflect those of Massachusetts overall. Worcester's population has grown to 206,518 people and has increased in diversity with 64.7% of residents identifying as white, 23.9% Latinx and 12.7% Black/African American (Hanson, 2021). Worcester's City Council is comprised of eleven councilors and is surprisingly diverse. Six of the eleven councilors are white, making up 54.4%, and residents also elected the first non-binary councilor in 2022. These numbers are promising, but a truly representative democracy should be the goal for all municipalities.

### The Importance of Diversity

It has been said time and time again that “representation matters”, but it is so much more than diversity, equity and inclusion training or diversifying media content. Our elected officials should represent the people they serve for a number of reasons. Diversity leads to innovation. Collaborating with various groups of people will lead to more ideas, solutions and help to build understanding between these groups. It is always a good idea to have fresh policy ideas that are outside the box from the norm (Rock, 2019).

In Worcester, Councilor Nguyen has opened the door on issues for non-binary folks, young people and Asian Americans. They are skilled at using social media to grab the attention of “Generation Z” residents, and share information about policy in an accessible way (Shenoy & Guzman, 2021). Councilor Haxhaij is a mother and Albanian refugee who relocated to the United States when she was a teenager. She has a unique perspective on housing, public schools and new citizens (Bonner, 2021).

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We need to uplift new faces into public office in a meaningful way. Showing up on Election Day is only a small part of the puzzle, these candidates need our support throughout their campaigns. This capstone will provide a blueprint that can be used to run for public office, and I will begin by explaining key definitions.

### Definitions

Kitchen Cabinet - campaign team that includes, campaign manager, treasurer, field director, and advisors.

Campaign Manager - person who will oversee all campaign operations, allocate tasks to volunteers and work closely with the candidate.

Treasurer- person in charge of finances, which includes handling donations, ensuring campaign laws are followed and budgeting for the campaign.

Field Director- person in charge of where the candidate will canvass, organize volunteers and help add events to the campaign calendar.

Office of Campaign and Political Finance- independent state agency oversees state campaign finance laws. <https://www.ocpf.us/>

VoteBuilder- web based database run by the Democratic Party with voter information that allows candidates to track constituents, organize canvases, and identify voters.

Turfs- Designated area for the candidate and volunteers to knock on doors and identify voters.

Canvas- Following a turf to engage with voters in a specific neighborhood, typically door to door.



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Get Out the Vote- Working to reach residents and increase voter turnout for the election. This includes “GOTV” Weekend, which begins the Friday before the election. Candidates and volunteers use this as one final push for voter support.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### Research Topic: Running for Public Office

#### Define Your Research Topic

My research topic is to provide a basic “how to” of running for public office from the perspective of someone who has worked in this field on numerous political campaigns, both for candidates and ballot measures. I first started getting more involved in my community by attending my monthly neighborhood meetings and steadily became more involved because I was privileged enough to be able to dedicate my time to issues in Worcester that I felt needed attention.

Although I was always keenly aware of barriers the average person faces, such as inconvenient meeting times, lack of childcare or transportation, language barriers, etc, I truly saw how difficult it is to break into political circles and have the right amount of money or time to run, but also the basic knowledge of *how* to run.

I chose to read, “Representative Bureaucracy: Assessing the Evidence on Active Representation” by Mark Bradbury and J. Edward Kellough because they address the need for a public workforce that represents everyone, not just wealthy, educated white folks. Although their article focuses on bureaucracies as a whole, I found their statistics and theories relevant to my capstone as a solid foundation of why more people should be able to run for public office. Also, there are very few free resources that break down the realities of running for office, which further shows how difficult it can be to get a new campaign off the ground.

The other five articles I read focused on how to run for office in a very surface level way, the benefits of newcomers being elected, and the importance of having strong financial support. I found the “how to” articles to have a lighter tone, and while they were informative, they did not provide solid details or step by step information. “How Money Affects Elections” by Maggie Koerth illustrated the difficulties that middle to lower income candidates face when deciding to run.

#### Questions

1. Why do we need a representative democracy?

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2. What does a representative democracy look like?
3. What are the barriers underrepresented folks face when running for public office?
4. How can a first time candidate run for local office?

### Sub-Questions

1. How can we uplift others to hold positions of power in their local governments?
2. How does the community/society benefit from a diverse group of elected officials?

### Introduction to Literature Review

I reviewed two articles from online publications and one article from the American Review of Public Administration Journal, Forbes and a podcast produced by NPR. I found the Forbes article, “Want Social Change? Run for Office (It’s Not As Hard As You Think)” by Anna Schneider to be on the less serious end of the spectrum, with “Representative Bureaucracy: Assessing the Evidence on Active Representation” by Mark Bradbury and J. Edward Kellough on the opposite side. Bradbury and Kellough, along with “The Changing Face of Congress in 8 Charts” by Katherine Schaeffer. Both articles used data to show the need for better representation.

Literature reviews are an important tool when researching a subject. They help to organize and narrow the focus of study as well as provide proof that the topic you’re researching is viable. I found the literature review to be helpful in a number of ways. It’s easy to fall into rabbit holes when learning about new things, but being held accountable to document my progress helped keep me on track. Completing a literature review also helps scaffold the information you’ve found into a usable plan for your own research.

### Literature Review Components

When I was gathering articles for my Literature Review, I assumed that it would be difficult to find step by step information on how to run a political campaign, and I was right. Many of the websites I found for were consulting services or political action groups that worked with candidates, but they did charge for their services. Any of the information I was able to access

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was surface level and mostly focused on assembling a campaign team, the benefits of canvassing and the need to fundraise.

### **Types of Published Documentation**

I found the academic data from the Pew Research Center and the American Review of Public Administration Journal to be the most helpful in assembling hard facts, such as the demographics of elected officials nationwide. However these articles did not cover why women, people of color and members of the LGBTQIA+ community were less likely to be involved in politics, they just focused on the data. None of the articles I read really looked at the barriers these groups face, such as family commitments, gatekeeping and other challenging issues. I did find the articles about running for office useful and encouraging overall. I think it is important to note that I used more liberal publications to find information, with Forbes being the farthest right leaning article.

### **Conclusions**

I came to three solid conclusions after reviewing six articles that focused on how to run for public office, the need for a representative democracy and statistics on Congressional demographics. First, there is a strong need for all levels of government to represent the people they serve but there are a number of inequities for candidates who are women, people of color or members of the LGBTQIA+ community. According to the Pew Research Center, there are only two Senators and eleven Representatives who identify as queer, eighteen Legislators are immigrants, 29% are women, and there are 133 lawmakers of color. Although these statistics are an improvement from past Congresses, these demographics do not represent the population of the United States.

Secondly, running for office is expensive and candidates are raising more money than ever before (Koerth, 2018). This acts as a barrier to the average person, but encourages people who identify as independently wealthy. A candidate needs to set time aside every single day to fundraise, which is difficult for people who have a family, a full time job or any other daily obligations.

Finally, despite the breezy nature of the articles about running for office, it is an overwhelming task. In Anna Schneider's article for Forbes, "Want Social Change? Run for Office (It's Not As

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Hard As You Think),” she references the beloved sitcom “Parks and Rec” and suggests organizations that help uplift women into elected positions. What she does not mention is that most groups do charge for their classes and expertise, and although they often have sliding scales for payment options, it still costs money and takes time.

### **Methods for Investigating My Research Topic**

Scholarly articles are a wonderful source of information, and I found the Pew Research Center’s article to also have concrete, usable data. I work best with a range of information, from academic to more casual. “How to Run for Office” by Miles Parks and Chloe Weiner was from NPR’s “Life Kit” podcast, a program that was created to “make life better” and highlight various life hacks and tips for listeners. If I had had more time for my capstone, I would have reached out to local officials, activists and campaign workers for advice, but I was able to find some great information online.

### **Lessons Learned**

When I went into this topic, I didn't quite realize how great the need for better representation in all levels of government is. When I read the Pew Research Center’s article, I was very surprised to learn that there are only thirteen queer members of Congress, eleven in the House of Representatives and two in the Senate. This accounts for 2% of lawmakers, while nearly 7% of Americans identify as LGBTQIA+. I also learned that there is a serious need for free resources to help folks run for office. It should not be a mysterious undertaking that takes years of groundwork before it can even be considered, we should all have access and opportunities to represent our communities on a higher level.

## **Chapter 3: Methods**

### **Getting Started**

#### Reflecting On Your Campaign

Making the choice to run for office is a huge decision that will have a massive impact on your life, and the sooner you start planning the better. It takes time to discuss this choice with the people closest to you, assemble a team and begin fundraising. A campaign is a marathon, and the strongest ones will start a year before the actual election.

Before committing to run for office, the candidate needs to take time to reflect on their decision. It helps to make a list of why they want to run, expected challenges, and the benefits of holding public office. Challenges might include finding the time to canvas, child care or even mental health concerns. Social media can be a scary place for anyone in the public eye, and candidates will need a thick skin, especially as a progressive or nontraditional candidate. Benefits such as influencing policy, giving back to the community and making a positive impact should outweigh any challenges or concerns. Running for office is a large and stressful undertaking, but everyone involved should stay positive and have fun.

Once the candidate is set in their decision, they will need to sit down with their family and close friends to share their interest in running for office. They will need to lean on these people for support throughout the campaign. The candidate should listen and be open to any feedback given and ensure that their family and friends understand how important they are in this process.

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### Creating a Team

The next step is assembling a kitchen cabinet, which is crucial to your success. At the very least, the kitchen cabinet will need a campaign manager, treasurer and one or two trusted advisors (Daley, 2023). A grassroots campaign should have an all hands on deck mentality, with each member of the team open to helping others. All aspects of each role must be clearly communicated when interviewing the potential kitchen cabinet members, such as the expected time commitment, salary and any other expectations. The kitchen cabinet should meet weekly for roughly one hour. These meetings will cover the goals for the upcoming week and give the team a chance to check in on each other. Oftentimes these roles will be unpaid, especially on a municipal level campaign, however if the candidate is a strong fundraiser the budget may allow extra money to go towards paying their staff.

The **campaign manager** will be in charge of the entire campaign, oversee all operations and be the closest person to the candidate. They will work closely with the candidate on speeches, be in charge of the events calendar and oversee meetings. The campaign manager will often staff the candidate at events or when they are out canvassing (Finucane, 2019). They can act as a buffer for the candidate, for example, a campaign manager can politely wrap up conversations between the candidate and constituents or help with photo opportunities.

The **campaign treasurer** will be in charge of depositing donations, recording all donations, expenditures and in kind contributions with OCPF. They will need to reach out to the Massachusetts Office of Campaign and Political Finance before the candidate can accept any money. OCPF will assign the treasurer with an auditor, this person will be able to answer any

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questions and help to ensure state finance laws are followed. The campaign treasurer and candidate will need to take a one hour class to learn the basic campaign finance laws, such as the following:

1. No individual can donate more than \$1000 per year to a candidate for local office.
2. No individual can donate more than \$50 cash per year to a candidate.
3. According to Massachusetts General Law Chapter 55, state employees cannot fundraise for a political campaign, use their official title in connection with any campaign activity or solicit any kind of campaign contribution. State employees cannot act as treasurer on a campaign, host a fundraiser or speak at a fundraising event. This is a very important rule to fully understand and any questions should be directed to OCPF to ensure that the rules are being followed correctly. State employees are allowed to donate to political campaigns, volunteer on a campaign outside of working hours and they can attend fundraisers.
4. An “in kind” contribution is when a supporter donates goods or services rather than donating money. For example, if a supporter has a house party they might pay for light refreshments as an in kind contribution, or a photographer friend may offer to take the candidate's headshot for free. In kind contributions need to be recorded and filed with OCPF.
5. Expenditures or receipts must be clarified every month after the campaign's bank automatically sends their statement to OCPF. Expenditures can be accessed through the campaign's OCPF account. The treasurer simply has to clarify what each check or debit card amount spent for, such as postage, campaign literature or snacks for volunteers.



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Every campaign should have **trusted advisors** who are familiar with the political landscape and the district the candidate is running in. These advisors will attend the kitchen cabinet meetings and offer suggestions on messaging, help with debate preparations and share their insights on policy.

A **field director** is not always an option for every campaign, due to budgeting or the size of the campaign itself. This capstone is designed for municipal level campaigns, which are on a relatively small scale and do not necessarily require a field director. The field director is in charge of motivating voters by working with volunteers. They will need to identify anyone who wants to help with the campaign. This is best accomplished with a spreadsheet to keep track of volunteers' contact information, availability and what they are willing to do. The field director should be keenly aware of what issues are important to voters and keep the campaign up to date on what is happening in the community.

Finally, the candidate should reach out to elected officials within their district before announcing their run, including those at the municipal and state level. The candidate should make a personal phone call to everyone in order to introduce themselves and establish a relationship to what could potentially become a future colleague. This might be considered “old school” or passe, but it is a sign of respect that is common when running for office. I would like to acknowledge that first time candidates might feel intimidated to call a state senator or other public officials, but most elected officials they speak to will appreciate their willingness to connect.

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### **Strategy**

Developing a strong strategy does not happen overnight, kitchen cabinet members and the candidate need to create the game plan at the start of the campaign. It might seem tedious to review basic information about the candidate, but voters will want to know the candidate's biography. Strategy will also cover effective messaging, preemptive responses to potential issues and what their social media should look like.

### Biography

Once the kitchen cabinet has been assembled, the team needs to meet to discuss what the campaign platform is going to look like. It helps to start by assembling basic background information on the candidate such as:

1. Where they grew up
2. Family history, such as nationality and economic status
3. Where did they go to school and what degrees have they earned
4. Who is in their immediate family, such as partner, spouse or children
5. What is their history in the district they are running in
  - a. How many years have they lived there?
  - b. Do they have any family or children in the district?
6. What groups and organizations are they involved with
7. Create a "brag list" of any accomplishments, awards or volunteering

The candidate's basic information needs to be recorded in a comprehensive way, because this will become the bio that will be on their campaign literature, website and social media. Keep in

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mind that everyone remembers a good origin story. For example, Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez’s father died of cancer and her mother cleaned houses to support the family. She was living at home in the Bronx and bartending when she was elected to Congress at just twenty-seven years old, beating a seasoned incumbent (Relman, 2019). Ocasio-Cortez has an amazing story of overcoming the odds with grit, grassroots support and dedication to the people she represents.

Take the candidate’s background and look for an honest narrative that voters will relate to. Is the candidate a first generation American who loves their community or a single mother trying to improve their district for the better? Most people love to root for the underdog, because we can all relate to their struggle in some way (Hegde, 2022). Being the scrappy, grassroots candidate is exciting for voters and will hopefully increase voter turnout.

Before the candidate and their team starts working on the campaign message, they should use the “message box” exercise below:

What We Say About Us	What We Say About Them
What They Say About Us	What They Say About Them

The candidate and their team can fill in what they want voters to know about them. For example, if the candidate is a parent, they might write, “invested in the school system” for What We Say

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About Us, but write, “too busy with family obligations to run” under What They Say About Us. It’s important to look at this exercise objectively and think about it from the opponents point of view. This will give you a headstart on any pushback by allowing the candidate to have prepared answers ready.

### Messaging

Every campaign's platform will be different, but there are general steps to create effective messaging. The first step is to look at the district to see what the issues are, but public safety, strong schools and quality of life are often very important to voters. The campaign team should brainstorm the top six platform issues, and create talking points for each one. This is an example of how to organize these ideas:

<b><u>Quality Of Life and Constituent Services</u></b>	<b><u>Talking Points</u></b>
I will fight for better quality city services like snow removal, litter removal, and crosswalk and road repair. Constituent services are a top priority for me. You’ll always have my number and I’ll always pick up the phone and be your advocate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Investing in the department of public works</li><li>• Improving leaf collection/street sweeping/parking ban notifications</li><li>• Beautify community and remove litter</li><li>• Number one focus will be constituent services and being accessible to the community</li></ul>

The message itself needs to be brief, clear and important to voters. It should be between thirty to fifty words, so very direct and to the point. The talking points will show actionable, concrete items that will affect policy. The candidate will need to repeat their messaging throughout the campaign and should feel comfortable discussing their platform in depth. Being involved in the community and reaching out to stakeholders such as residents, local groups and businesses will give you insight on what the needs of the community are.

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### **Budget**

One of the greatest barriers a first time candidate faces is building a strong financial foundation, especially when they are up against an incumbent. The candidate will need to fundraise throughout the campaign in order to raise money for literature, lawn signs, salaries and any other costs that arise. The budget should be created and agreed upon before the campaign begins in order to predict how much money should be raised.

### Fundraising

One of my biggest challenges as a candidate has been fundraising. Asking people for money can be very challenging, and you will need a strong script, confidence and practice. The important thing to remember is that people want to support a candidate that they believe in. For some support means volunteers to help with the campaign, but others prefer to donate money. They may have busy schedules, feel uncomfortable phone banking or canvassing or they may be supporting the candidate from afar. It's also important to understand that this money is not going into the candidate's vacation fund, it's a way for people to invest in their community.

The candidate should schedule at least one hour a day to make fundraising phone calls, affectionately known as "dialing for dollars". The schedule can be made at the weekly kitchen cabinet meetings where the candidate can brief the team on how the fundraising is progressing, ask for advice or communicate any other information that is pertinent to fundraising. The team can also schedule fundraisers to help raise higher amounts of money in a short time. A fundraiser can range from a large event at a restaurant with large suggested donations, to informal house

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parties arranged by supporters. The candidate's job at a fundraiser is to speak to supporters, while their treasurer should be in attendance to collect donations and ensure campaign financing rules are being followed.

### **Voter Outreach**

Campaigns are spending increasingly large amounts of money, but ultimately a candidate needs to engage with voters to win. Going door to door during an election is time consuming, but most voters appreciate meeting the candidate and having the opportunity to discuss the issues. This is also the best way to identify where voters stand in regards to your campaign.

### The Voters

The campaign manager and advisors will need to research the last municipal election to see which areas of the district had the highest voter turnout. Every municipality will have the election results available on their website or it can be requested at the government offices. This is an example from 2021 municipal election in Worcester:

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11/12/21 03:54 PM		OFFICIAL ELECTION RESULTS MUNICIPAL ELECTION 11/02/2021																1 of 6		
STATISTICS			MAYOR						COUNCILOR AT LARGE											
REGIS- TERED	VOTERS - TOTAL	CAS- T	CAS- T	JOSEPH M. PETERSON	PETER A. STEFAN- SON	M. COLONNA	BILL COLLEMAN	BLANK VOTES	A. MORRIS- SON	PETER A. STEFAN- SON	KATE TOOMEY	THU- NGUYEN	JOSEPH M. GUILLERMO	CRAIG MATTHER- SON	KIRBY STILLMAN	BILL COLLEMAN	M. DONNINO	BLANK VOTES		
WARD 1 - PRECINCT 1	2870	942	0	580	31	244	60	27	356	151	427	385	529	261	358	412	268	488	2042	
WARD 1 - PRECINCT 2	2963	983	1	554	27	302	67	33	463	162	487	339	503	208	371	382	258	488	2237	
WARD 1 - PRECINCT 3	1591	554	0	350	27	121	31	25	265	100	274	247	285	163	225	237	136	222	1170	
WARD 1 - PRECINCT 4	2792	1107	0	704	49	229	77	48	518	179	447	583	612	395	455	557	294	410	2192	
WARD 1 - PRECINCT 5	2683	529	0	288	28	138	50	25	227	129	262	205	240	148	180	202	157	254	1170	
WARD 2 - PRECINCT 1	2741	646	1	347	34	192	51	22	288	144	352	235	305	151	265	264	186	328	1358	
WARD 2 - PRECINCT 2	2608	668	0	382	33	180	53	20	292	153	364	276	311	185	289	279	216	288	1355	
WARD 2 - PRECINCT 3	2478	615	0	333	20	172	61	29	233	122	312	257	295	194	302	265	204	278	1228	
WARD 2 - PRECINCT 4	2371	357	0	226	21	54	40	16	129	76	189	97	167	80	99	150	108	126	921	
WARD 2 - PRECINCT 5	1648	115	0	79	10	12	9	5	38	23	40	51	60	35	24	50	42	40	287	
WARD 3 - PRECINCT 1	2181	380	2	230	21	81	34	14	167	80	185	167	198	129	168	178	127	151	730	
WARD 3 - PRECINCT 2	784	203	0	67	6	14	14	2	41	26	46	61	58	42	37	62	36	33	176	
WARD 3 - PRECINCT 3	2114	233	0	149	11	45	21	7	79	69	93	110	129	85	75	127	78	90	463	
WARD 3 - PRECINCT 4	1971	136	0	81	15	19	16	5	49	36	53	69	68	54	29	63	54	45	296	
WARD 3 - PRECINCT 5	2112	247	0	150	14	55	19	9	96	61	122	107	129	88	68	113	84	111	503	
WARD 4 - PRECINCT 1	1799	170	1	81	9	46	28	6	51	40	63	53	78	35	35	65	60	75	465	
WARD 4 - PRECINCT 2	1941	211	0	115	9	65	19	3	94	48	98	80	107	64	51	96	68	108	452	
WARD 4 - PRECINCT 3	2185	164	0	108	11	15	20	10	49	40	52	97	86	83	48	102	50	39	338	
WARD 4 - PRECINCT 4	2108	271	0	149	7	90	20	5	137	70	150	88	142	77	69	109	83	141	560	
WARD 4 - PRECINCT 5	2271	340	2	186	19	86	29	20	155	77	164	119	164	94	112	120	119	160	756	
WARD 5 - PRECINCT 1	1983	158	0	91	12	31	19	5	61	41	69	65	79	48	38	78	56	57	356	
WARD 5 - PRECINCT 2	2403	318	0	163	22	92	27	14	147	68	152	102	139	79	81	106	97	148	795	
WARD 5 - PRECINCT 3	2738	345	0	161	20	122	26	16	167	79	202	96	145	71	106	129	121	183	771	
WARD 5 - PRECINCT 4	2423	338	0	195	16	86	32	9	149	78	195	134	167	87	102	151	121	156	688	
WARD 5 - PRECINCT 5	2425	339	0	175	18	114	22	10	192	78	179	95	166	74	130	122	108	181	709	
WARD 6 - PRECINCT 1	1676	87	0	55	4	13	8	7	26	27	29	46	43	33	26	38	27	27	200	
WARD 6 - PRECINCT 2	2026	148	0	88	13	21	21	5	47	44	60	72	85	57	42	81	68	50	282	
WARD 6 - PRECINCT 3	2064	173	0	108	12	27	19	7	68	42	79	59	89	49	39	78	68	56	411	
WARD 6 - PRECINCT 4	841	113	0	69	6	30	6	2	47	30	53	54	60	41	42	51	39	50	211	
WARD 6 - PRECINCT 5	2260	203	0	115	14	42	27	5	78	52	85	87	92	66	47	106	75	72	458	
WARD 7 - PRECINCT 1	2360	502	0	274	28	130	56	14	194	120	210	242	238	167	219	261	177	211	973	
WARD 7 - PRECINCT 2	1916	270	0	149	28	43	43	7	91	64	104	125	104	83	105	116	94	91	643	
WARD 7 - PRECINCT 3	2406	349	0	180	23	88	47	11	152	85	172	126	155	85	141	141	126	155	756	
WARD 7 - PRECINCT 4	2233	309	0	155	32	84	28	10	114	100	132	110	143	92	125	93	106	134	705	
WARD 7 - PRECINCT 5	2351	392	0	189	33	125	32	13	159	105	187	141	180	100	144	118	134	199	885	
WARD 8 - PRECINCT 1	1697	91	0	59	5	14	11	2	36	20	38	36	43	30	27	46	30	36	204	
WARD 8 - PRECINCT 2	1577	75	0	46	9	14	4	2	24	22	25	50	35	36	20	43	27	29	139	
WARD 8 - PRECINCT 3	1012	84	0	54	8	7	6	9	21	23	25	64	38	50	14	48	28	19	174	

The campaign team can analyze these results to see where the candidate should focus their canvassing efforts. The goal is to canvas the entire universe, but precincts with higher voter turnouts will need special attention.

This is an area that I often think about because oftentimes the focus is on reaching consistent voters more than it is making connections to increase voter turnout. Time and money is so limited on a municipal campaign, and I understand that the end goal is to win the election and help enact inclusive policies that will help the entire community. However voter turnout is dismal, the last municipal election in Worcester in 2021 saw just 17% of registered voters hit the polls. One small way I am hoping to do my part is by including anyone under the age of twenty-five in my universe, regardless of their voting history. Young people do not show up as

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super voters because they haven't had the chance to vote in enough elections, and I want to make sure they're included in my canvassing.

### Votebuilder

VoteBuilder is a database used by the Democratic Party that catalogs all election results into a comprehensive format for campaigns to engage with. The cost of VoteBuilder varies on the size of the district that is being sought, but it is well worth the price. The field director and campaign manager will need to arrange for training but the basics are as follows:

#### 1. Building a Universe

The universe will be the pool of voters the campaign team believes are most likely to turn out for the election. This will include "super voters", who are people with exceptional voting records. A universe can be created using demographic information and voter history, which allows the campaign to use the candidate's time wisely.

#### 2. Cutting Turfs

Once a universe has been created, the field director or campaign manager will "cut turfs". These will be small portions of each precinct to canvas. A turf will list every registered voter, their demographics and allow canvassers to identify the voters on a scale of one to five. A one means the voter is highly likely to vote for the candidate, while a five means they are highly against voting for the candidate.

#### 3. MiniVan

The candidate and volunteers can download the MiniVan app on their phones and input data as they canvas. This information will be directly uploaded to VoteBuilder and immediately



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accessible by the campaign team. The field director can also print out turfs and enter the voter information manually when the canvassing is complete.

### Canvassing

I find canvassing to be the best way to identify and connect with voters. Volunteers are always welcome to help canvas, as each voter should have at least three forms of contact with the campaign. The campaign universe will be broken up into manageable turfs for the candidate and volunteers to follow and include a script that should be followed on the doors. A canvassing script should be friendly, informative and brief. It should share basic information on the candidate such as who they are and what they stand for.

According to Mass Alliance, a progressive advocacy coalition, a canvassing script should always have four steps.

1. Introduction - Introduce yourself and ask to speak to the voter by name.
2. Question - Ask a question you think the voter will answer yes to
3. Ask for Action - Be clear and direct in your purpose for canvassing and ask the voter if you can count on their support
4. Record Data - All information should be recorded in the MiniVan app or noted on the turf.

If your conversation on the door is going well, feel free to ask if they would like a lawn sign or to sign up for volunteer opportunities. Every home is different, and it's important to read the voter's body language and attitude. If they seem distracted or irritated, end the conversation politely and quickly. Some voters might be eager to talk, but make sure to limit your time on each door as

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canvassing is time consuming. It's also helpful to share the voter's polling location and date of the election.

### Get Out the Vote

Throughout the campaign, the field director or campaign manager should have been collecting volunteer information (see spreadsheet in Chapter 8). The weekend leading up to Election Day is known as GOTV Weekend, and there needs to be a call to action for all of the candidate's supporters to canvas and reach voters. Volunteers will be given targeted turfs to help increase voter awareness and turnout. The field director can also set up phone banks for people who are unable or do not feel comfortable canvassing door to door. Volunteers will be given a script to follow for both canvassing and phone banking, that will help identify voters and share the campaign's message.

Other ways a campaign can get out of the vote are:

1. Lawn Signs - Everyone knows it's election season when they start seeing candidate and ballot measure lawn signs throughout their community. It's important to acknowledge that "signs don't vote", and some people feel that they are more to boost the candidate's confidence, but having your name seen repeatedly does not hurt.
2. Direct Mail - Mailing campaign literature to a targeted group of households is also an expensive undertaking, but it does help reach voters who you might not have had contact with. Direct mail will deliver your message to voters but according to the Brookings Institute, it costs roughly \$75 per vote (Green, 2019).

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3. Standouts - the campaign manager or field director is always welcome to organize standouts with the candidate and supporters, although it is not totally clear how helpful this technique truly is. Standouts should take place during the morning or afternoon commute in high traffic locations for maximum visibility.

## **Chapter 4: Results**

### Representation

The goal of this information is to increase the level of diversity in municipal government by recognizing the disparities in public office and offering advice on the basics of running for public office. We need to work together to ensure underrepresented groups are being supported, valued and have a say in policies that affect their lives. As our local municipalities and elected officials begin to mirror the actual demographics of the communities they represent, more residents will feel inspired to get involved and engage with their government (Taneja, 2022). Residents should believe in the people who represent them, and having shared experiences builds trust.

Working to elect underrepresented folks into public office at the municipal level also creates a pipeline to elevate them into higher levels of government. I understand that being on your town's selectboard or city council might not seem glamorous, but for some it is a learning experience that acts as a stepping stone to other positions of power. While the goal of this paper is to provide a roadmap for a political campaign, getting elected is only the beginning.

### Inclusive Agenda

Everyone benefits when our local governments are focused on equity, addressing systemic issues and transparency, especially underrepresented folks. There is a growing distrust in government throughout the country. I find that the community members in Worcester often do not feel as though their opinions matter to their elected officials, and this deepens the "us versus them" mentality that is harmful to our community (Meyers & Pandit, 2022). A representative

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democracy puts the needs of their community first, because the people creating policy have a unique, lived experience that provides insight on everyone, not just a small portion of folks.

Inclusivity means supporting residents who want to engage with their local government. This could mean offering rides and providing childcare at meetings, ensuring translation services, allowing for remote participation and simply meeting community members where they are at. I often hear the traditional people in power complain that community members refuse to get involved but don't hesitate to complain or criticize their choices, and I am always quick to question their outreach efforts. Are the meetings during standard working hours? Were they widely circulated and translated? Can residents participate remotely? There are so many barriers that prevent folks from engaging with their government, but the more we increase diversity, the more these common issues will be acknowledged and solved. It can be easy for some people to discount the voices who aren't able to show up consistently, but we need to make space for everyone.

## **Chapter 5: Conclusion**

### Recommendations for Practice

There are a number of basic recommendations for practice throughout the capstone for first time candidates. Ultimately the candidate and their team will need to be highly knowledgeable on community issues, accessible and ready to put in the time. There is no substitution for hard work and doing your homework. Understanding your municipality's budget, strategic plan and becoming acquainted with community groups is the best way to fully understand the district being sought.

Aside from hard work, the kitchen cabinet needs to always use direct and clear communication. Campaigns are stressful and it's only natural for the team to become frustrated with each other at times. Everyone needs to feel comfortable being open and honest with each other. A campaign is a marathon not a sprint, so disagreements within the team should be handled respectfully. At the end of the campaign, you and your team should feel proud of the work they've done, regardless of the outcome.

### Reflection

When I reflect on my capstone, I think about how difficult it is to be a first time candidate, especially in today's political climate. There has always been pushback and vitriol towards political candidates, but "trolling" has taken on a whole new meaning in the age of social media and Donald Trump (Perstein, 2021). It is intimidating to be picked apart by strangers on the internet, especially when most young people have grown up sharing their entire lives on social

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media. The potential to be humiliated is enough to keep most people from running for office, which is a disservice to everyone.

Aside from personal attacks, new candidates, specifically underrepresented folks face so many barriers, whether it's a lack of support and time, the daunting task of facing an incumbent or simply not having access to information. I often think about my personal journey that led me to becoming involved in local politics, and it started by attending my neighborhood meetings. These meetings are only promoted in English on Facebook and the City of Worcester's website, they start at 6:00pm on a weeknight and they're not on a bus line. There are so many obstacles that I never even considered until I started questioning why community meetings typically skew white and older, it's because older white folks have the time and resources to attend.

I mentioned gatekeeping in my introduction, which is another issue. It can be very intimidating to enter a space that is new and you do not have a personal connection with anybody else in the room. I often hear women groan about the "old boy's club", and how men in power will close ranks and stick together. These challenges need to be met head on, and the best way to change our local governments for the better is to help uplift new faces that represent the entire community.

## **Chapter 6: Documents, Spreadsheets**

### Documents

The candidate and their treasurer will need to fill out the Statement of Organization and Appointment of Depository Bank forms. These documents can be found and downloaded at [http://files.ocpf.us/pdf/forms/cpf\\_m101.pdf](http://files.ocpf.us/pdf/forms/cpf_m101.pdf). Once this has been submitted to OCPF, the candidate can open a bank account and begin fundraising.



# Working to Elect Underrepresented Groups into Public Office



Commonwealth  
of Massachusetts

CPF ID #: \_\_\_\_\_  
(For Office Use Only)

## Form CPF D103: Appointment of Depository Bank Office of Campaign and Political Finance

Committee Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Office Sought/District: \_\_\_\_\_

Candidate Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Candidate E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Treasurer Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Treasurer E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

### ACTIVITY PRIOR TO ESTABLISHING DEPOSITORY BANK ACCOUNT

Please check one

Has the candidate or committee raised or spent money, including the candidate's own funds, received in-kind contributions or incurred liabilities for political purposes prior to establishing this bank account?

☐ Yes: Continue with this form and contact OCPF. A report will be e-filed to disclose this activity.

☐ No: Continue with this form.

I certify that the bank named below has been designated as the depository for campaign funds and I authorize said bank to submit to the Director of the Office of Campaign and Political Finance the reports required by M.G.L. Chapter 55. **I agree that all financial activity following the date the bank account is opened shall be conducted through the depository account.**

SIGNED UNDER THE PENALTIES OF PERJURY:

Signature of Candidate \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Treasurer \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*(Below to be completed by bank)*

### BANK ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The undersigned bank is authorized to transact business and has its main office, or a branch office, in Massachusetts. The bank hereby acknowledges that it has been designated as the depository for campaign funds of the above named candidate or committee and agrees to file campaign finance reports with OCPF as required by c. 55 until such time as OCPF notifies the bank that its reporting requirements are no longer required.

Bank Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Account Opened: \_\_\_\_\_

Authorized by: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_


Bank Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City / State / Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Authorized Employee's Signature

One Ashburton Place, Room 411, Boston, MA 02108 Phone: 617-979-8300 www.OCPF.us ocpf@mass.gov

# Working to Elect Underrepresented Groups into Public Office

 Commonwealth of Massachusetts		<b>Form CPF M101: STATEMENT OF ORGANIZATION CANDIDATE OR CANDIDATE'S COMMITTEE MUNICIPAL FORM</b> Office of Campaign and Political Finance	
File with: City / Town Clerk or Election Commission			
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN in accordance with the provisions of General Laws, Chapter 55, as amended, organization of a candidate or candidate's committee as follows:			
<b>CANDIDATE:</b>			
Full Name:			
Residential Address:			
City / State / Zip:			
E-Mail Address:		Phone #:	
Party Affiliation:		(If applicable)	
<b>OFFICE SOUGHT/PURPOSE:</b>			
Title:		District:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate without committee (check if applicable). If checked, do not complete committee or officer sections: sign as candidate, date and file with clerk or local election official.			
<b>COMMITTEE:</b>			
Name of Committee:		(The name of the committee must include the candidate's last name)	
Committee Mailing Address:			
City / State / Zip:		Phone #:	
<b>OFFICERS:</b>			
<b>Chairperson:</b>		<b>Treasurer*:</b>	
Residential Address:		Residential Address:	
City / State / Zip:		City / State / Zip:	
Phone #:		Phone #: Email:	
*A public employee may not serve as treasurer of any political committee (see reverse).			
Additional officers may be listed on page two.			
Check applicable box before signing:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate with committee: I hereby 1) consent to this filing; 2) understand that a candidate shall not consent to the organization of more than one account or committee on their behalf; 3) am subject to certain duties and liabilities under M.G.L. c. 55, including the timely filing of campaign finance reports and keeping detailed accounts and records of all campaign finance activity for a period of six years from the date of the relevant election; and 4) may not serve as treasurer of a political committee organized on my behalf.			
<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate without committee: I hereby 1) consent to this filing; 2) understand that a candidate shall not consent to the organization of more than one account or committee on their behalf; 3) acknowledge if I become a public employee I must organize a committee and may not serve as treasurer; and 4) am subject to certain duties and liabilities under M.G.L. c. 55 including the timely filing of campaign finance reports and keeping detailed accounts and records of all campaign finance activity for a period of six years from the date of the relevant election.			
SIGNED UNDER THE PENALTIES OF PERJURY:		Date:	
Candidate's signature			
I hereby accept the office of Treasurer of the above-named committee. I affirm that I am not a public employee as defined by M.G.L. c. 55, s. 13. I understand that: 1) I am subject to certain duties and liabilities under M.G.L. c. 55, including the timely filing of campaign finance reports and keeping detailed accounts and records of all campaign finance activity for a period of six years from the date of the relevant election; 2) if after my acceptance of this office I become an appointed public employee, I must resign this position and notify OCPF of my resignation; and 3) a candidate may not serve as treasurer of the political committee organized on their behalf.			
SIGNED UNDER THE PENALTIES OF PERJURY:		Date:	
Treasurer's signature			
I hereby accept the office of Chairperson of the above-named committee.			
SIGNED UNDER THE PENALTIES OF PERJURY:		Date:	
Chairperson's signature			

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### ADDITIONAL OFFICERS:

Other Officer/Title:		Other Officer/Title:	
Residential Address:		Residential Address:	
City / State / Zip:		City / State / Zip:	
Phone #:		Phone #:	

### DEFINITION OF A PUBLIC EMPLOYEE

M.G.L. Chapter 55, Section 13 states that a person who is employed for compensation by the Commonwealth or any county, city or town (other than an elected official) may not directly or indirectly solicit or receive political contributions. Such persons may not serve as treasurers of any political committee. If you are unsure of your status, please contact OCPF for further guidance.

### SELECTED EXTRACTS FROM M.G.L. C. 55

#### **Section 1 defines a candidate's committee:**

"Candidate's committee", the political committee organized on behalf of a candidate .... The term "candidate's committee" shall also apply to the campaign fund of a candidate who has not organized a political committee for the purpose of carrying out the election campaign of such candidate or who receives contributions or makes expenditures independently of said committee.

#### **Section 2 requires candidates to keep certain records:**

Every candidate shall keep detailed accounts of all contributions received by him, or by a person acting on his behalf and of all expenditures made by him, or by a person acting on his behalf. Said accounts may be kept by an agent duly authorized thereto, but the candidate shall be responsible for said accounts, which shall be kept separate and distinct from all other accounts and shall include contributions made by the candidate .... The candidate shall preserve all receipted bills and accounts relative to all contributions received, expenditures made and any other campaign finance activity. ...The candidate shall preserve said receipted bills and accounts for six years from the date of the relevant election....

#### **Section 3 requires the director to:**

"assess a civil penalty for any [late filed] report ... of twenty-five dollars (\$25) per day .... [up to \$5,000 per report]. In the case of failure to file by a candidate or a candidate's committee, the civil penalty shall be assessed against the candidate ....

#### **Section 5 outlines statements of organization of political committees:**

Each political committee shall organize by filing with the director or, if organized for the purpose of a city or town election only, with the city or town clerk, a statement of organization.

The statement of organization shall include: (1) the full name of the political committee, which, if organized on behalf of a candidate, shall include the name of the candidate in said name; .... (2) the address of the political committee; (3) a statement of the purpose for which the political committee is organized .... (4) the name and residential address of the chairman and the treasurer; (5) the name, residential address, and position of other principal officers, including officers and members of the finance committee, if any, and; (6) the name and address, if known, and party affiliation of each candidate the political committee is supporting; provided, however, that if a candidate is nominated without reference to a political party, the name of his political party shall not be required ....

Any change in information previously submitted in a statement of organization shall be reported to the director, or if organized for the purpose of a city or town election only, to the city or town clerk, within ten days following the change.

Each political committee shall have a treasurer who shall qualify for his office by filing a written acceptance thereof with the director, or if organized for the purpose of a city or town election only, with the city or town clerk. Said treasurer shall remain subject to all the duties and liabilities imposed by this chapter until his written resignation of the office is received or his successor's written acceptance is filed as aforesaid. No person acting under the authority of, or on behalf of, any political committee shall receive any money or anything of value, or expend or disburse the same, or incur expenses while it has no treasurer qualified as aforesaid ....

Each treasurer of a political committee shall keep and preserve detailed accounts, vouchers and receipts as prescribed for a candidate by the provisions of section two. Each treasurer of a political committee shall keep said records for a period of six years following the date of the relevant election ....

No expenditure shall be made for, or on behalf of, a political committee without the authorization of the chairman or treasurer, or their designated agents ....

All funds of a political committee shall be kept separate from any personal funds of officers, members or associates of such committee ....

**IMPORTANT:** M.G.L. c. 55, s. 5 requires that any changes in the information provided on this form shall be filed within ten (10) days of said change. Further information can be obtained from OCPF by phone at (617) 979-8300, via e-mail at [ocpf@cpf.state.ma.us](mailto:ocpf@cpf.state.ma.us) or on the web at [www.ocpf.us](http://www.ocpf.us)

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## Spreadsheets

The “Thank You Cards” spreadsheet easily tracks any voters the candidate and their team comes in contact with. It is vital to record any meaningful interactions and contact. This spreadsheet holds the basic information for each voter, and leaves room for any notes that need to be communicated with the campaign team. Thank you cards can be tracked which helps the candidate stay up to date on mail. It also allows for the team to share information about

volunteers and sign locations. This spreadsheet should be accessible to all members of the kitchen cabinet.

This spreadsheet is an example of a budget tracker, which will help keep finances on track. The team should decide on both an overall budget goal and monthly goals for the candidate to meet. The campaign can plan ahead for certain materials such as palm cards, printing costs, postage and salaries. Those numbers should be added first in order to plan budget goals, and the actual numbers can be filled in throughout the campaign in real time.

[illegible]

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## **Appendix: Project Charter**

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### **Project Overview**

#### 1.1. Introduction

Running for public office is a daunting task, and first time candidates often find it difficult to fully grasp how to organize and run a strong campaign. There are a number of barriers that prevent most people from running, specifically women, people of color, and members of the LGBTQIA+ community. This is highly unfortunate, as a representative democracy that reflects our actual communities benefits everyone (Bradbury and Kellough, 2011). The old “boy’s club” that has dominated policy making should no longer be accepted, we need a diverse range of candidates to hold office to better represent their constituents. This new wave of candidates will



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need a great deal of support, and the goal of my capstone is to provide a jumping off point for anyone interested in running for public office.

### 1.2. Major Stakeholders

There are a wide range of stakeholders that a candidate has to consider when running for office, beginning with the candidate themselves. This person is committing massive amounts of time and energy into their campaign, which will have an impact on their personal and professional life. The candidate's family and friends are stakeholders as this will have an impact on their lives as well.

## 1. Project Goal and Scope

### 2.1. Project Goal

The project goal is to create a manual to help others overcome the obstacles of running for office that is comprehensive, effective and accessible. It should help candidates and their teams set a schedule, assign responsibilities, stick to a budget, introduce tools for voter identification and ultimately win an election.

### 2.2. Project Scope

Running for office is a huge undertaking, both personally and professionally, and there needs to be a great deal of consideration. The scope of this project is as follows:

- Creating a kitchen cabinet
  - Treasurer
  - Campaign Manager
  - Field Director
  - Consultants
  - Other

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- Fundraising
  - Script
  - Goals
- Working with the Office of Campaign and Political Finance
  - State regulations for finances
- Canvassing
  - Votebuilder
  - The Field
  - Script
  - Goals
- Communications and Literature
  - Creating literature that is on message
  - Choosing campaign issues
  - Social media
  - Debate preparations
  - Phone banking
- Get Out the Vote
  - Poll watching
  - Election Day canvas
  - Poll closing

### **2. Assumptions**

The assumptions for my capstone are as follows:

- This information will be useful to others in a meaningful way.
- I have knowledge from my personal experiences working in the political sphere on a ballot question committee, a Massachusetts state Senate race, and two Worcester City Council District campaigns.
- My capstone will be accessible and thorough.

### **3. Constraints**

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- Choosing this topic three months before the capstone deadline is time consuming because I did not have two years to build upon research or work on deliverables such as Literature Reviews and the Capstone Charter.

### **4. Risks**

- Providing information that might not work for everyone. This project is meant to be a jumping off point for people to get acquainted with the details of running for political office. All information should be curated to each campaign.

### **5. Communication Plan**

I am working on my capstone alone, so my communication plan is to meet with Mary and keep her updated on my progress throughout the semester.

### **6. Project Team**

This is a solo project, I do not have a team.

### **7. High Level Roles & Responsibilities of Project Team**

I am responsible for a Literature Review, Project Charter Outline, slide show to be presented to all cohorts, advisors and staff, and a well written Capstone.

### **9. Measures of Success**

My main measure of success is to write an engaging capstone that will be useful to others.

### **10. Stakeholder Sign-Off**

This project charter has been signed off by Jenny Pacillo and Mary Pieciewicz