

## **Building relationships and skills** *Steps to take now*

Even if you feel you are not yet ready (yet), there are steps that you can take to ensure you will be prepared to serve your community when the time is right.

### **The Basics: 5 Steps You Can Take**

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- 1. Build a network of community leaders.** It is important to get to know those who are influential in your district. Religious leaders, community activists and business notables can all sway the opinions of voters, so start creating relationships and learning from those who lead now.
  
- 2. Build a network of party leaders.** Getting involved with your political party will help you learn the political dynamic and will help you meet people who can support you when it is time for you to campaign. Also, building goodwill early makes them more likely to help you when your time comes.
  
- 3. Build your policy credentials.** Voters will look to see if you have the right experience to get the job done. They will factor in both your professional experience as well as extracurricular work. For instance, it's great to see a candidate running for school board who has served in a leadership role with a group like PTA and/or regularly attended school board meetings.
  
- 4. Build your community credentials.** If you aren't actively involved in your community – start now. People like to know that you understand where they are coming from. Demonstrating involvement with the issues you care most about can do that and it will go a long way to increase your name recognition, which is one of the key components of a strong campaign.
  
- 5. Build your campaign skills.** Volunteering for a campaign will do good for the community, and it will give you a window into what it's like to run for office. By working behind the scenes, you will make great contacts, learn about the process, and build your credentials in the community. In addition, you just might pick up on some tips to incorporate into your future campaign!

#### **Get to Work: 3 Things You Can Do Right Now**

- Make a list of influential leaders with whom you want to network and build relationships, including religious leaders, community activists and business notables.
- Contact your local party to learn about volunteer opportunities with campaigns in your area.
- Identify community groups focused on issues of importance to you and find out how you can get involved.