

Activity Booklet

Getting to the Gate: Discover Your Pathway to Find Success in Politics

e✓equal voice

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Activity 1: Why I Want to Get Involved in Politics

This activity will help you articulate your passion and the reasons why running for political office is important to you. Your answers will also help you identify which is the best level of government for you and help you craft your authentic message. What are the factors that sparked your interest in politics? Are there specific issues or reason that drove you to getting civically engaged?

Authenticity of your message should be about issues that you are passion about and how you will solve these issues. You will be able to identify the issues or reasons that motivate you

to participate in politics. Voters will be more receptive to authentic messaging by passionate candidates.

I want to get involved in politics because...

Think about your motives for entering the political arena?

What do you want to achieve? Engaging voters

and residents? Advocate for your community? Challenging the political climate? Making change on a particular issue?

I started to think about politics as a possibility for me when...

Was there a specific issue or event that made you feel like this was important for you to do? Did someone say something meaningful to you? Is it when you identified an important strength or skillset you have to offer? Have you always thought about it? What happened? How did

you feel? Who was involved? What was the setting?

Do you feel like you have the qualities of a good politician? How do you convince others that your strength and skill set suitable for public office?

I want to run because I care about...

What is most important to you that you could improve or further support through better legislation or policies?

What is/are the issue(s) that you are passionate

about? Which are the aspects of the policies you wish to challenge and change? Do you have strong opinion on or against a specific legislation or policy?

I want to run for...

Are there people that make you want to run? Who are those people? You could identify people, like 'small business owners', families, or even specific individuals who inspire you or who you think need a voice.

Who inspired you to run? Are there leadership figures who encouraged you? Do you have a

mentor who works or had worked in politics? Are there specific issues or problem you wish to address in your campaign?

How important are the following to you when you think about getting involved in politics? Identify how a run for public office will help you achieve these goals.

	IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT
My career			
Representing people like			
Representing people without a voice			
Specific issues			

NOTES: _____

Identifying Strengths and Opportunities: Life, Personality, Strengths, and Politics

The activities in this section will help you think through your personality traits and your strengths and weaknesses as they relate to politics.

Doing these activity will also help you identify where you are strong and where you might want to focus your efforts to build your skillset as you move forward. Taking an inventory of your personal skills and personality traits can also be used to build yourself a strong team – where do you need support and expertise from those around you?

Many women tend to downplay their skills and experience – you may be among them. It's important you get a real, honest look at your strengths and weaknesses. Don't under-estimate yourself. Review these activities and your answers with a trusted friend or mentor.

Activity 2: Personality

Rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being “Need a lot of work and practice” and 5 being “I have this skill down”.

Keep in mind that many of the skills you may be lacking can be learned or acquired. For example, you can find a mentor who can tutor you on your weaker skills. Practice Practice Practice!

Leadership Skills

Do you like working with people? Are you able to delegate responsibility effectively and to openly demonstrate your appreciation for the hard work and loyalty of your supporters? Do others like working with you? Can you identify people's strengths and delegate tasks?

1 2 3 4 5

Public Speaking

Can you speak easily in front of diverse groups and to the media? Are you articulate? Does it take you a long time to practice a speech before you feel comfortable, or do you need only to read it once or twice to ensure you remember the salient points? Are you able to handle unanticipated questions effectively?

1 2 3 4 5

Social Engagement

Are you comfortable talking to and engaging with strangers? Are you a good listener? Campaigning and elected office requires spending a lot of time with others, including acquaintances, strangers, colleagues, and individuals who disagree with and oppose you. Introverts often get exhausted when they socialize for a long time, while extroverts love socializing. Keep in mind, this does not mean introverts aren't good at social engagement, just that it can be very tiring.

1 2 3 4 5

Stress Management Skills, Balance, Perseverance

Can you deal with the highs and lows of your campaign? Are you able to do many different tasks at once, or are you easily overwhelmed by disorganization and confusion? Are you able to work long hours under stressful conditions? Can you pace yourself? Are you able to stop and say no as necessary?

1 2 3 4 5

Comfort With Conflict Or Disagreement

Whether in debates with other candidates/colleagues/representatives or when discussing your position with constituents, you will come across conflict and active disagreement with others during campaigns and once elected. Are you comfortable with and can you process conflict and disagreement? Can you debate politely and respectfully? Are you comfortable with the notion that not everyone will agree with you on all issues, all of the time.

1 2 3 4 5

Life In The Public Eye

During election campaigns you, your skills and positions, and even your past may be the subject of media attention, online forums, and public and private conversations. Are you comfortable with being in the public eye? Would you be comfortable with losing some of your privacy in your community? Have you discussed privacy and boundaries with your family? Do they understand what their roles will be during the campaign? Are they comfortable with the decision?

1 2 3 4 5

Activity 3: Knowledge

Rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being “lots to learn” and 5 being “I know lots about this and understand it very well”.

Keep in mind that many of the skills you may be lacking can be learned or acquired. Do you have someone who have been in politics who can share their political knowledge? Find someone that is politically savvy to help you out!

Political Know-How

How well do you know process of decision-making in government? Are you familiar with the different roles and responsibilities of elected officials? Do you know which levels of government have responsibility and power in which areas?

1 2 3 4 5

Election Know-How

Do you understand the nomination process and the electoral system? Do you know campaign and finance rules?

1 2 3 4 5

Knowledge of Local Issues

Do you have adequate knowledge and understanding of the issues in your area? Do you have a sense of the main concerns of residents, business owners, and families in your community? Do you know what issues have been important in previous elections?

1 2 3 4 5

The Political Game

Do you know how to play the “game” of politics? Do you have a sense of the strategy of a political strategy?

1 2 3 4 5

The Players

Do you know the main players in your area? Do you know who the elected officials are in your city? Do you know leadership figures in your community? Are you engaged in local communities and organizations?

1 2 3 4 5

Activity 4: Personal Life

Answer these questions on a scale of 1 disagree to 5 agree

Family Care Responsibilities

Do you have responsibility for the care of young children or elderly parents/relatives?

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Do you have support in the form of childcare, friends, or family to support you with these responsibilities?

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Does your family support the idea of you getting involved in politics?

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Are you able to be away for some evenings during campaigns or while the legislature/council is meeting?

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Are you able to be away for multiple days at a time while the legislature/council is meeting?

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Work and Financial Flexibility

Are you able to modify or take leave from your work/volunteer commitments during a campaign period?

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Financially, would you be able to take an unpaid leave from work?

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Can you access financial support from friends or family when taking a leave from work?

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Activity 5: Experience and Network

Have you served on or been involved with...

	NO	YES, IN THE PAST	YES, SOMEWHAT	YES, A LOT
Corporate boards?				
Not-for-profit, community, or charity boards?				
Community centres?				
A community project?				
Service clubs?				
Neighbourhood groups or associations?				
Parent Advisory Councils?				
Business organizations?				
A union or labour organization?				
Activism?				
Local organizing?				

Do you volunteer or work with...

	NO	YES, IN THE PAST	YES, SOMEWHAT	YES, A LOT
A not-for-profit or charity in your community?				
A church or faith-based group?				
Special events or activities in your city/ community?				
Sports or recreation teams?				
Festivals?				
Cultural events?				

Are you, or have you been...

	NO	YES, IN THE PAST	YES, SOMEWHAT	YES, A LOT
A member of a political party?				
Involved in a riding association or electoral district association?				
A volunteer on a candidate's campaign?				
Involved in student elections?				
A shop steward or union rep?				

Do you, or have you...

	NO	YES, IN THE PAST	YES, SOMEWHAT	YES, A LOT
Know another language?				
Helped organize a street or block party?				
Written a letter to the editor or an op-ed?				
Received recognition from your community, workplace, or other organization?				

Identifying Your Experience,

Qualifications, and Network

The activities in this section will help you take a good look at your experiences, qualifications, and network. The content you write here can be used to build your bio, in materials like press releases, websites, and leaflets, and in speaking notes or speeches.

These lists will serve as a go-to when you need to ask for supporters, volunteers, and donors. These activities are also self-affirming – it will show you and remind you that you are qualified to run for office and that you have important things to offer in the role of public service.

You will not have something to add in every case – and that's okay! No one has experience in everything nor do they know everyone.

The activities are guided. This is not because you need to be involved in a business organization, have an aunt that will take a sign,

be a parent involved in PACs, AND be part of organized labour. Instead, we want to make sure you consider all the possible places you have relevant experience that will help you along the way and will speak to the people you are trying to represent.

Don't forget, you can continue to build your profile, network, and experience! So take stock of where you are at, and all the skills, knowledge and connections you already have and, in a later section, we'll consider ways to prepare yourself even further.

Activity 6: Identifying Your Experience and Qualifications

Taking stock of your experiences and qualifications is critical. It's a list you can return to if you experience self-doubt, but it also will help you draft your elevator pitch, and articulate to party members, voters, and donors why they should support you.

Tying your experience to the issues facing your community and the issues you care about will help voters understand why you can help address their concerns and why you have the knowledge and skills to get the job done.

Let's start with the predictable questions:

	WHAT	WHAT I'VE LEARNED/ WHY IT'S PREPARED ME FOR POLITICS / RELATION TO THE ISSUES I CARE ABOUT
<p>Education</p> <p>*Don't forget, education may be formal or informal, for example, maybe you have a degree, or certificate, or maybe you've learned french from a friend or in a conversation club.</p>		
<p>Employment</p>		

Make sure you aren't limiting yourself here. Maybe you didn't pursue formal education because you started a business, or because

you had to work to support a family. Put that in there! What did you learn from those experiences.

What you have to offer to public service and politics is about more than your education and professional background.

Make sure you didn't miss anything!

	What	What I've learned/why it's prepared me for politics / relation to the issues I care about
Have you volunteered anywhere else?		
Served as a union representative?		
Been involved in public consultation?		
Participated in student clubs or student elections?		
As a parent or family member, have you been involved with a child's care or school?		
Can you think of anything else?		

What about the other parts of your life?

	What	What I've learned/why it's prepared me for politics / relation to the issues I care about
Are you a parent, grandparent, child, friend or neighbour?		
Have you experienced financial hardship, illness, or other challenges in your life?		
Have you supported someone else through hardship?		

Activity 7: Identifying your Network and Sources of Support

Success in your political career and the odds of winning a nomination race and a general election depend on your ability to build a base of support. Identifying your current sources of support and relationships is important. It will serve as a list of possible voters, volunteers, campaign workers, and, of course, donors. It can also help you identify what gaps you should start to fill.

List all the people you know through the organizations and events you've been involved in. You don't need to know right now whether they would give you money, or support your campaign. List them all.

List your family and friends. Friends and family may take a lawn sign, donate \$20 (or \$200!), and knock doors with you.

What about work? Many colleagues may want to support you when they learn you are running.

Did you add anything in Activity 6 that you missed the first time you listed your experiences in Activity 5? If so, make sure you add it here and including everyone you know from there too.

Activity 8: Revisiting Activities 3, 5, 6 and 7

This activity asks you to share some of your responses to activities with someone you trust, someone who knows you. Many women tend to downplay their skills and experience, and as a result you may rate yourself more poorly than someone else might. Getting some feedback, outside opinions, and a second look can help you more fully understand your strengths, the skill set and knowledge you already have, and where you can spend some time and energy working to improve.

Not sure how to ask for help? How about this?

“Hi [friend’s name]!

I have been working on a course that is preparing me to run for political office – I worked through some activities that help identify my strengths and weaknesses and it was suggested that I share this with someone I trust and respect. That’s where you come in. Could you please help me in this process by reading my responses to how I rank my knowledge, skills, and network? Have I missed something? Am I underselling myself? Do you have tips on people who might help me work on the skills I need or who could teach more about the parts of the process I don’t yet have a good grasp on?

Thank you!

[your name]”

Picking Your Podium

Activity 9: Picking Your Podium: Policy and Level of Government

Federal Issues

Provincial / Territorial Issues

Municipal Issues

Return to Activity 1 and highlight all the issues and policy areas. Did you mention education? Did you mention environmental protection? What about resource development? Gender-

based violence? Identify as many policy issues as you can, then identify which level of government is involved in addressing them using government resources.

Activity 10: Picking your Podium: Impact on Life

Return to Activity 4. How do your answers to the flexibility in your life compared to the demands of various levels of government?

Can you name additional sources of support and resources that could allow you to combine family responsibilities and the level of government that you are interested in?

Activity 11: Picking your Podium: Party Affiliation

Return to Activity 1 and highlight all the issues and policy areas. Make a few notes on what you think are the best ways to address the issues you've identified. Then check out the platform or policy resolutions of the parties you might join. Do they talk about these issues? How does the approach of parties match up to what you think is the best strategy?

If you know you want to run federally or provincially/territorially, then look at the parties at the level of government you are interested in. If not, then it will be worth your time to poke around both the provincial/territorial and federal parties – and even the municipal parties if you are in a city where that is common.

My thoughts on this issue:

Thoughts of Party A, B, C:

The Long Game

Activity 12: Increasing Your Profile

Set some goals for increasing your profile. You don't need to do all of these things, but select some that work for you and push yourself.

	WHO/WHAT	STRATEGY OR GOAL
<p>Getting involved in your community. Choose a group or organization that aligns with your beliefs. Go after the leadership positions such as chair or spokesperson. Never shy away from the nuance jobs — they are roles of power and influence.</p>		
<p>Run for something at home. Politics happens everywhere there are elections e.g. school councils, health boards, strata council, parent advisory councils, ratepayers associations. Even if the process lacks an of official election, get yourself nominated for a position.</p>		
<p>Get involved with local media. Write letters to the editor. If you have a particular area of expertise that the local TV station might welcome in community programming, offer it.</p>		
<p>Join a political party. Volunteer to be on the finance committee or other influential role.</p>		
	WHO/WHAT	STRATEGY OR GOAL

Work on an election campaign.

Volunteer to be the campaign manager. This role not only hones your leadership skills, it exposes you to the legislative processes and to how government policies are made.

Join your riding association. The longer you are involved in the riding association, the more you learn about the nominations process, the more you get to test your leadership skills and the more visibility you have with members.

Participate in municipal advisory committees or city/neighbourhood consultation processes. These activities will deepen your understanding of issues, of local decision-making processes and of the various community positions on issues.

Work with a mentor. Women in politics are known for their capacity to support one another in a non-partisan way. Look around you. Very likely there will be an experienced elected woman nearby willing to mentor you through these critical beginning stages.

Get involved in organized labour and activism. The world of organized labour mirrors in many ways the world of politics and provides good schooling for women who want to test the waters and develop some of that 'thick skin' needed to succeed in politics.

Activity 13: Building Skills and Knowledge

Whether you are thinking about running next month or in five years, you can start building a strategy for the skills and knowledge that remain a work in progress for you.

Identify what success would look like for you. Don't forget, these do not have to be measurable skills or knowledge. What would you want to see, know, or do, for example to turn a '2' you gave yourself in Section 1 into a '4' or a '5'? How are you going to get there? Maybe there's a book you'd like to read or a mentor

you'd like to learn from. Maybe you want to put yourself into situations where you have to practice these skills twice a month. Maybe it's taking a class, joining a club, or maybe it's just taking more risks and bold steps. There's lots of ways to improve and practice – make a strategy that works for you!

	WHAT WOULD SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?	STRATEGIES
Insert answers from Activities 2 and 3 here.		

Next Steps

Doing this activity will help you collect the information you need to get off the ground. Spend time thinking through and researching these questions, it will help you develop your strategy and you can return to it over time to check for information and resources. Keep these lists handy and return to them often. These activities will help you identify what you need to do, how much you need to raise, and who can help you!

Activity 14: Draft Your Elevator Pitch

You've already identified the reasons why you want to run and the experiences and knowledge that will make you a good candidate. Pull on these to develop your elevator pitch.

Ask your friends and family how they would describe you – what is their 30 second pitch about you?

Use their pitch and your answers to the previous activities to answer the following question. Write two compelling sentences under each heading.

Who I am.

What I do/how I am I engaged.

What I am running for/am planning to run for.

Why I am running/what difference I want to make

Is there something that makes you unique? Something that makes you stand out as a potential candidate/representative?

Pull it together in a way that feels natural for you.

Try a few a few different lengths of a pitch, some events allow 30 seconds intro, some are 1 min. Practice the timing & hitting the key points before running out of time.

Now practice, practice, practice! Read it out loud over and over. And then record yourself and watch it. If you're talking a mile a minute, try again and slow down. Really listen to what you're saying, are you repeating yourself or using the same words a few times? Play with the text if you think some changes would make the pitch feel more natural.

Be ready to adjust and cater this pitch to the different events, people, and topics. This flexibility can be especially important at "themed" events, for example at a seniors home, climate debates, events held by stakeholders (local charities or business organizations, etc). Build on your pitch for these types of events, make your pitch special, make it resonate with your audience – it's worth it!

Activity 15: The Lay of the Land – What You Need to Know

Are you planning to run in provincial/territorial/federal election?

When is the next election?

Look into the party & riding you want to run for.

Who was the candidate in the last election?

Who won the election?

Is the incumbent running again? You may not know this now, but keep your eye on this. If your party won the election last time, you're unlikely to win a nomination contest if the incumbent is running again. If another party won in the last election, whether or not the incumbent is running again can have a big impact on your chance of success (it's hard - but not impossible - to beat an incumbent).

Find the results from the previous election, you can usually access this just by googling the year and election. Find your riding in the final results.

What was turn out?

How many votes were necessary to win?

How close was the election?

What are the dates for filing nomination papers?

How many people do you need to nominate you?

Are you planning to run in municipal elections?

Note: if you are running for school or park board, you can still use a lot of these questions to collect the information you need.

When is the next election?

Some municipalities elected councillors through a ward system, this means that every councillor represents one specific geographic area of the city (for example, Ottawa and Calgary). Others elected councillors 'at large' – all councillors represent the whole city. Find out the practice in your city.

Check to see if parties or slates run in municipal elections. If there are parties or electoral groups that put together slates, you might want to consider joining. If you plan to run as an independent, knowing whether or not there are parties will help you understand the electoral landscape.

What do you learn:

Find the results from the previous election, you can usually access this just by googling the year and city election.

What was turn out?

How many votes were necessary to win?

What did candidates in the last election spend:

Activity 16: Running for a Party – Assessing the Local Riding Association Landscape

If you've decided on a party that fits you, this activity can help you pull together some of the key information you need to get engaged and, when it's time, run for the nomination. This activity may require some digging and you may

need to answer these questions over time. Check out riding association's social media and website, have coffee with the riding association president, develop relationships with members of the local riding executive.

Riding Association President:

Other members of the executive:

Nomination date:

Last election:

Candidate:

Was it contested?

Number of members:

Finances of riding association:

Activity 17: Building Your Team

Pull up list of individuals from “Identifying your network and sources of support” in activity 7 and identify which position the people listed might be able to do.



Activity 18: Fundraising

You need money to run a campaign! This part is very hard for many women, especially those who are new to politics. But you can do it and people will help you.

Find the website for the elections authority in your province/territory (Elections BC or Elections Ontario) or, if you are running federally, Elections Canada. Keep these resources and the links to them close at hand.

Key sources:

First, it's important you know the rules. Who can donate and how much? How much can you spend?

What are the fundraising and spending rules?

Spending limit:

Donation limit:

Can unions/businesses donate:

Second, you need to know what you should expect to spend. Find the financial reports from the last election.

What did candidates in the last election spend?

Now, you need to find that money. Return to the list of people you know! They can help you raise the money you need and many will donate themselves. Push yourself here, look at your list and think about how much you expect individuals to contribute to your campaign. This step is often extremely hard for women, but your run for political office is a public service and you need help and support. The people with whom you work and who you will eventually represent will want to support you.

If you can, identify a reliable financial agent: they don't have to be professional at accounting/bookkeeping, but they have to be detail-oriented, gets along with campaign manager and candidate, and is keen to know every financial rule before spending campaign money. They must be reliable and trustworthy. This is a role you can do yourself, but it can take a lot of pressure off your main role – a candidate – if you have someone to look after this job.

Pull up list from Activities 5 and 7. Who else can you think to approach for donations?



Now that you've identified possible donors, you need to practice the ask!

"I really want to get elected because (your vision or goal), and I need to raise money to do so. Can you support me with a financial contribution?"

So what's your vision and goal? You've identified this and written it into an elevator pitch. Can you adjust it so it works for a financial ask?

Responses and Feedback for Activities

Feedback for Activity 2

	SCORE 1-3	SCORE 4-5
Leadership Skills	One way to build this skill is to find yourself a mentor whose leadership style you admire. Do they have advice for you? Can you emulate their approach? Another way is to practice – put yourself out there, seek small leadership opportunities with businesses, community, faith, or charitable organizations you are involved with.	Great! Keep working on this skill, it will serve you in a career in politics.
Public Speaking	Public speaking is not natural to many people. This is a skill you can learn and practice! If you want to improve, check out a local chapter of Toast Masters. There are lots of other resources out there, here's one from Harvard.	Nice. Public speaking does not come naturally to many. Keep practicing, watch yourself in the mirror, recording yourself making statements, ask feedback from friends.
Social Engagement	If you aren't a natural extrovert, it doesn't mean that politics isn't for you! Talking to strangers may get easier over time. If you find social interaction draining, book yourself some solo-time after public or campaign events.	You don't need to be a natural extrovert to run for politics, but if talking to lots of people, including strangers will help! If you get energy from social interaction, use that.
Stress Management	Recognizing that this is something you need to work on is really important. If you find yourself overwhelmed when things get busy, make sure you stay very organized with tasks and details. Even better, surround yourself with someone who can do this for you. Book in the time you need to stay relaxed and focus – put it in the calendar! Practice 'no' statements. "Thank you for the offer, but I can't take that on right now." "Thank you for thinking of me/us, it won't work for us at this time."	Awesome! During campaigns this will help you a lot! Keep in mind not everyone on your team will find long hours and busy calendars easy.
	SCORE 1-3	SCORE 4-5

<p>Conflict Management</p>	<p>Facing disagreement, criticism, and conflict is difficult for many. Find ways to manage the negative impact that work for you. A mentor may offer some perspective or guidance. One possibility is to keep a list of your motivations for entering the political arena and your vision for the future close at hand. Remember that the contributions you can make to policy decisions are invaluable, and should not be side-lined due to criticism. Surround yourself with positive and encouraging family, friends and supporters [most of the content is from original GTTG]</p>	<p>Being able to weather criticism, conflict, and disagreement will help you get through some of the more difficult moments in politics, both during campaigns and once elected.</p> <p>Remember that the contributions you can make to policy decisions are invaluable, and should not be side-lined due to criticism. Surround yourself with positive and encouraging family, friends and supporters [this content is from original GTTG]</p>
<p>Life in the Public Eye</p>	<p>Entering in to the political arena will mean that your entire life — including your family — will be in the spotlight. This can be stressful for some family members, as well as on yourself. Discuss this issue with your family and close friends before beginning your campaign. Develop strategies that you can use to maintain some level of privacy during your campaign. You may want to unlist your home phone number, amp up the privacy on your personal social media, and you may or may not want to keep your family out of the public light as much as possible.</p>	

Feedback for Activity 3

	SCORE 1-3	SCORE 4-5
Political Knowledge	Who remembers everything from social studies from grade 12? Just because you don't know all the ins and outs now, doesn't mean you don't have lots of the information you need. Do you have a mentor who is familiar with politics? Do you know someone who has been elected or has worked on campaigns?	You are well on your way! You've got a great start – keep learning, keep watching, keep asking questions.
Election Know-how	There are lots of places to get information – check out Elections Canada or the Elections body for your province or territory.	
Knowledge of local issues	To get up to speed on local issues, you can scope out social media, get a subscription to your local newspaper, or get yourself a meeting with the leader of a community organization.	
The Political Game	Campaigns schools offer a lot training on the ins and outs of the process and strategy, see if you can find one in your area. Organizations like Democracy Kit offer lots of online training as well.	
The Players	Make a list of elected officials in your community – you can start on your city's/town's website, google your provincial/territorial legislature, and find out who your local MP/representative is.	

These are some places to start. No one knows everything before they start, your learning-curve will be steep and fast. Surround yourself with people who know one or two pieces of the puzzle. Ask lots of questions.

Learning as you go is not only okay, its GOOD! You don't need – and you can't – know everything before you start.

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