



# SO, YOU'RE THINKING ABOUT RUNNING FOR PUBLIC OFFICE...

# YOU'VE COME TO THE RIGHT PLACE!

County Boards, City Councils and School Boards regularly make decisions that directly impact our members – from which contractors will work on projects to crafting budgets and priorities. It's important for the Carpenters Union to be part of these discussions, and your participation in local politics will ensure Union values and voices are heard.

The only requirement to run for a local office is a desire to serve your community. Will it be a lot of work? Yes, but as Union carpenters, we don't shy from challenges. We also understand the importance and privilege of having a seat at the table.

This handy guide covers the basics of running for office, from identifying an office or position to planning and executing a campaign. Read on and find out how you can make a positive impact in your community and trade!

# **GETTING READY TO RUN**

Identify a position. Involvement in local politics can take on a variety of forms. Do some research on your city or county's website to learn about offices for which you may be eligible. These sites will provide a wealth of information about the types of boards and positions available, meeting schedules and who is currently serving. While many positions are chosen through an election, there are also positions that are appointed or require an application.

Look for positions that focus on issues you're passionate about. Do you want to direct the vision of the city or town where you live? Think about getting involved with your city or town council. Do you want to ensure your children have access to the best education possible? Consider running for your school board.

### How can I serve?

Names may differ, but most counties and cities will have some form of the following:

- City Council or Board
- Town Council or Board
- County Board
- School Board
- Planning and Zoning Commission
- Economic or Workforce Development Board

Answer some preliminary questions. Before jumping on the ballot, it's important to understand the primary role of local officials is to represent and serve others. Take time to fully understand the scope of the position as well as the time commitment required.

Here are some preliminary questions to consider:

- 1. Is the office partisan (Democrat, Republican, other) or non-partisan?
- 2. Am I prepared to carry out the full term of the office?
- 3. How will the campaign and new role affect my family and friends?
- 4. Will the time needed to campaign conflict with my job or other responsibilities?
- 5. How could I benefit my family, Union and community through this position?

Think about your background. Consider how your background, experience, occupation and education make you a good candidate for the position. Voters will use this information to help decide whom to vote for. Be prepared with a basic resume or bio that highlights the most important aspects of your experience for voters. Because you will be representing your community, high civic and moral standards are required.



# PLANNING & RUNNING A CAMPAIGN

Once you've identified a position that will be a good fit with your interests and personal life, it's time to start building a campaign. You'll need to:



**Research the position.** Most local council or board meetings are open to the public, so attend one as a citizen to gain a clearer picture of how the group operates.



**Determine your budget and fundraising needs.** It's important to begin by knowing what you can afford to spend on a campaign and what level of fundraising you'll need to undertake. Consider costs such as campaign materials, technology and travel. Local offices may not require significant fundraising.



**Connect with community groups.** Reach out to officials in your political party, public interest groups and labor groups to see if they can provide any assistance.



Research the demographics of your constituency. Understanding who makes up your community will help you effectively communicate and determine the best ways to connect with voters. The Census Bureau has a wealth of easily accessible information on its website, www.census.gov.



**Research your opposition.** What is your opponent's position and how does it differ from your own? Are there inconsistencies with his or her actions and position you could turn into talking points?



**Research your community.** Dive into the issues impacting your community and understand the effect new or proposed policies will have. This will educate you on the issues and show voters you are actively seeking solutions.



Create a personal website or social media account. The majority of voters will likely use the Internet to research candidates, making an online presence critical. Make sure you're easy to find online and you've represented yourself professionally and effectively.



**Build a core group of supporters.** Enlist your friends, family, neighbors and coworkers to help out with your campaign. This core goup is vital for a successful campaign!



# **EXECUTING THE CAMPAIGN**

Now that the leg work is completed, it's time to get out there with your message! You've researched your community and constituency, so you should have an idea of where and how best to reach voters. Below are some pros and cons of different tactics you could employ to connect with voters.

Whichever tactic you use, make sure the end product is professional, accurate and easy for voters to understand. Consider working with a graphic designer on your core print materials.

### Effective ways to reach voters

- Brochures and door cards
- Social media
- Digital advertising
- Direct mailings
- Letters to the editor
- Attending community events
- Door knocking and phone banking

CONS

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|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| Print Literature                      | <ul> <li>Highly visible</li> <li>Useful in a variety of situations<br/>(door knocking, mailings, parades, etc.)</li> <li>Professional look</li> </ul>  | <ul><li>Production time</li><li>Expensive</li></ul>                      |
| Signs                                 | Highly visible   | • Expensive  |
| Social Media                          | <ul><li>Interaction with voters</li><li>Wide audience</li><li>Cost effective</li></ul>   | <ul><li> Time consuming</li><li> Critics or angry constituents</li></ul> |
| Digital Advertising<br>(Facebook ads) | <ul><li>Highly visible</li><li>Cost effective</li><li>Can target specific geographies or<br/>demographics</li></ul>  | Easily ignored by voters   |
| Email                                 | <ul> <li>Cost effective</li> <li>Direct line of communication</li> <li>Reaches a wide audience</li> <li>Effective fundraising tool if you create a mailing list of high likelihood donors</li> </ul> | Dependent on obtaining email addresses                                   |
| Direct Mail                           | Easy to target voters in your district and obtain addresses  | • Can be expensive if sending to a large number of people                |
| Letters to the Editor                 | <ul><li>No cost</li><li>Able to control your message</li></ul>   | Subject to newspaper's space availability/timing                         |
| Community Events                      | Direct interaction with potential voters   | <ul><li>Schedule conflicts</li><li>Time commitment</li></ul>             |

**PROS** 

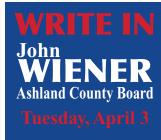


## **© EXAMPLES**



- Sergeant at Arms, Carpenters Union Local 314
- Resident of Columbus for 12+ years
- ✓ Married with 2 Children: Braysen 11, Brielle 9
- Hobbies include camping and target practicing

Paid for by the WI Carpenters PAC as an in-kind contribution to Friends of Brandon Blair





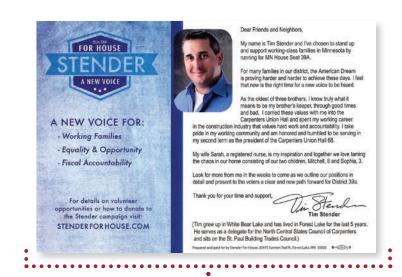
#### ABOUT JOHN

- Carpenter for over 20 years; former Police Officer in Mellen
- ✓ Lifelong area resident; graduated from Mellen HS
- ✓ Married with 3 daughters; 7 grandchildren
- ✓ Boy Scout Master for 4 years
- Outdoor sportsman and passion for horses

Paid for by the WI Carpenters PAC as an in-kind contribution to Friends of Wien

Simple door cards like these introduce you to your community and are easy to produce.

# Learn more about how other UBC members are getting involved: www.carpenters.org/activism/members-in-office



Craft a brief message for voters about why you're running, your qualifications and community connections.

### **O** UNION CARPENTER VOICES

"Our town politics are not politics at all. It is set up to be nonpartisan. I am interested in the community and what goes on around me. [...] Too many people look down on unions, but when they realize that we're good volunteers – and good people – it opens their eyes to what unions are – a good organization. [...] As far as I'm concerned, I think more members should consider what is going on around them, and get involved at any community level they can manage."

Gene Blindauer Local 731 Member and WI County Official

"I can bring my labor background to issues that matter to all Minnesotans. [...] When prevailing wage or PLAs come up, [Senate Minority Leader and UBC member] Tom Bakk and I can explain and make the case why they're valuable – and win or lose, I always bring up jobs and wages."

Mike Nelson

Local 322 Member and MN State Representative

# HOW WE'RE REPRESENTED

Minnesota Governor's Workforce Development
Minnesota State Senator
Minnesota Metropolitan Council
Coralville, IA City Council
Forest Lake Area School Board
Labor Standards Advisory Commission
Reedsville, WI School Board
West Salem, WI Village Board
Iowa Planning Zoning Commission
Cedar Rapids, IA City Council
Greater Lincoln, NE Workforce Development
Ashland County, WI Supervisor
Wisconsin Rapids Common Council



# **ONCSRCC SUPPORT**

NCSRCC and the UBC may provide support for your campaign, including phone banking, boots on the ground and financial contributions. Specifically:

- May be able to donate to your campaign via PAC funds. In addition, your Local Union may also be able to donate, provided they have a separate PAC fund.
- Can help you find other members willing to volunteer to phone bank or door knock for your campaign.
- May be able to furnish some campaign materials through in-kind contributions.
- Connect you with other members who live within the area where you're running.
- Connect you with your local political director(s), who can offer guidance on campaigning, key issues and general strategy.

Reach out! NCSRCC's political directors can help throughout your campaign:

### Richard Kolodziejski

Director of Government Affairs 612-963-2489 rkolodziejski@ncsrcc.org

### Felicia Hilton

Political Director of Iowa/Nebraska/South Dakota 515-491-9293 fhilton@ncsrcc.org

### **Andrew Disch**

Political Director of Wisconsin 608-354-8064 adisch@ncsrcc.org



# • RUNNING FOR PUBLIC OFFICE CHECKLIST

| <br>Identify and research an office  |
|--|
| <br>Research required paperwork and filing deadlines                               |
| <br>Complete and submit paperwork  |
| <br>Attend one or more meetings, as a citizen, of the body you're seeking to serve |
| <br>Determine your budget and fundraising needs                                    |
| <br>Develop a campaign platform and candidate biography                            |
| <br>Research your community and opposition   |
| <br>Connect with community groups  |
| <br>Connect with NCSRCC and your Local Union on what support either can provide    |
| <br>Create campaign materials (brochures, door cards, etc.)                        |
| <br>Create a simple campaign website and/or Facebook page                          |
| <br>Build a core group of supporters to help with your campaign                    |
| <br>Attend appropriate community events as a candidate                             |
| <br>Schedule volunteers for door knocking or phone banking                         |
| <br>Vote!  |

