



Photo via [Pexels](#)

How to Run for Office If You Have a Disability

According to the CDC, [one in four](#) American adults lives with a disability. Despite this prevalence, people with all kinds of disabilities—whether blindness, autism, or mobility disorders—are extremely underrepresented in politics. You may face some notable challenges when it comes to pursuing politics, navigating stigma and stereotypes throughout your campaign. But don't let this stop you from running for office! With these tips from the [Village of Spring Valley](#), you can run a strong campaign that will help voters see past their prejudices, and set you apart as the perfect candidate for the position you're after.

Assemble Your Campaign Team

A great team will ensure you have everything you need to run a successful campaign from start to finish. As Ecanvasser explains, the structure of [your team](#) will depend largely on your budget and the size of your campaign, but your end goal will be the same regardless—get as many votes as you can! One of the most important people that will help you reach your goal is a campaign manager. Your [campaign manager](#) will oversee your entire strategy, coordinating

everything from advertising to polling, and they will be able to frame your message in a way that identifies your core strengths as a candidate.

You will also need a team of canvassers to help you go door-to-door, someone to manage your social media accounts, and a web designer who can create a professional website for your campaign. You'll also need a professional to help promote your candidacy through campaign videos—you should be able to [easily connect](#) with a great video marketer via job boards. If you're on a tight budget, look to your personal network of friends and family for volunteers to fill any roles that don't require specialized skills.

Another person you will need on your team is a fundraising director to find donors and secure funding. Paying for a political campaign is a common challenge among all candidates, so it's important to work with a good fundraising director who knows how to acquire the donations you need, especially during the [coronavirus pandemic](#).

Attend Political Campaign Training

If you've never run for office before, the entire process can seem very intimidating, even with a great team of professionals on your side. You'll have to make a number of important decisions before you even start your campaign! This is why it's a good idea to take a political [campaign training program](#) that will teach you everything you need to know about developing your message, budgeting, raising funds, and communicating with voters.

For example, the National Council on Independent Living (NCIL) recently launched the first national campaign training program for people with disabilities. In the training series, called [Elevate](#), you can learn the skills you need to run a great campaign from expert political consultants focusing on a cross-disability perspective. If you're on the fence about running for office, participating in a campaign training program may give you the confidence boost you need to move forward with this project.

Keep Your Campaign Accessible

Disabilities also pose a challenge to voters, so if you want to engage your entire community equally, ensure your campaign is [accessible](#). Start by connecting with your voters and learning about their needs. As a person with a disability, you may already have insight into the kinds of barriers disabled people face when connecting with the community, learning about political candidates, or participating in campaigns.

Fortunately, making your information and events accessible isn't hard. Set up your campaign [website](#) and materials so the information can be easily accessed by people with various disabilities. When planning your [campaigning events](#), be prepared with accommodations for people with different types of disabilities, whether this means installing wheelchair ramps, hiring a sign language interpreter, or providing designated parking spaces. You may even want to actively reach out to the disabled community to find volunteers or donors!

While it's true that you may face some barriers running for office, try not to be discouraged. Several people with disabilities have run successful campaigns and won elections. With the right team behind you and the motivation to stick with it through the hard parts, you're bound to have a positive experience giving people with disabilities a louder voice in your community.