

## **Helpful Hints for Starting Your Campaign**

### **Before You Become a Candidate:**

- Talk to friends and family. Let them know that running for office is a huge commitment of time, energy, and money. Make sure you address their concerns, and discuss what kind of help you can expect from them.
- Make a spreadsheet of everyone you know. Include recent mailing addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses. This might be a good time to catch up with folks you haven't seen for awhile! Add a column for donor history. (You'll fill this out later.)
- Make a list of your greatest accomplishments. What are you most proud of? This can include your children, your business, the home you own, your education, or your twenty-year teaching career. How would you sum up your accomplishments in a single sentence?
- Make a list of people who would be good spokespeople on your behalf. Is your state senator a personal friend? Would the local police chief be willing to talk about your past support for the police department? What about the principal at the local high school? These are endorsers and validators – people who would be publicly supportive, whose names you could use in materials, ads, and letters to the editor.
- Read through the KDP's Filing and Compliance Information Pages for Federal or State Candidates at: <https://kansasdems.org/training-hub/>. You can also contact your local County Elections Office or Secretary of State to get all information available on the process of filing as a candidate and deadlines.
- Prepare a crisp, dynamic, 30-second answer to this question, which will be repeated 5,000,000 times over the course of the campaign: "Why are you running for office?" Memorize the answer. Practice delivering it confidently and with a smile.
- Get high resolution pictures taken. This should include headshots, pictures with your family or pets, and pictures that can be used in advertising and materials -- so pictures with seniors, families, and workers; and pictures in environmental and industrial settings. Make sure these pictures are in jpg files on your computer and can easily be emailed.
- Polish your public persona. If you're on social networking sites, review the information available to the public and make sure you're putting forth a professional image, bio, and story that you can be proud of as a candidate. Use your new headshots in your Facebook profile!
- Buy your domain name for your website. Try to get your name, as in "JohnSmith.com." If your name is taken, pick something like, "VoteJohnSmith.com" or "VoteForJohn.com."

You want to pick a domain name that could stay with you through multiple campaigns for different offices. This will be your permanent online identity as a political figure. So avoid having the year or office in the domain name, as in “JohnSmithForDogcatcher2012.com.” With that said, be sure to buy variations of your name to keep it out of your opponent’s hands!

- File to run! Don’t forget to file the paperwork for your candidacy with the appropriate election authority. Make sure you know the legal rules of your campaign (including rules about fundraising and spending) by heart.

### **After You Become a Candidate:**

- Meet with movers and shakers in the community. This might include local elected officials, union leaders, religious leaders, community activists and more. These meetings should be used to ask for their advice as well as their support. Treat them as partners in this campaign. (This can also and should also be done before you become a candidate.)
- Start researching donor history. Use databases like OpenSecrets.org to figure out what your friends and family can afford to contribute.
- Get money in the bank. Set up a bank account, and start asking for money.
- [Request access to the voter file](#). The KDP will make an in-kind donation of Votebuilder access to all Democrats who have *filed* to run for office.
- Ask for volunteers. You need help and you shouldn’t be afraid to ask for it. Even at the earliest stages, volunteers can help you research your donors, organize your contacts, set up your office space, and host small events to introduce you to their friends.
- Set up your website. Make sure your website has the basics, like contact information and ways to donate and volunteer.
  - Prioritize a splash page that has:
    - A quick bio and “why you are running”
    - A donate button/link (To set up an online donation page, go to [https://secure.actblue.com/pending\\_entities/new](https://secure.actblue.com/pending_entities/new))
    - Form to collect online volunteer signups
- Make a schedule. In the early days of your campaign, it’s important that you have the discipline to manage your own time. Set aside several uninterrupted hours each day/week for fundraising. Stick to your schedule no matter what.

Contact the Kansas Democratic Party at [info@kansasdems.org](mailto:info@kansasdems.org) if you have any questions. We are here to help!