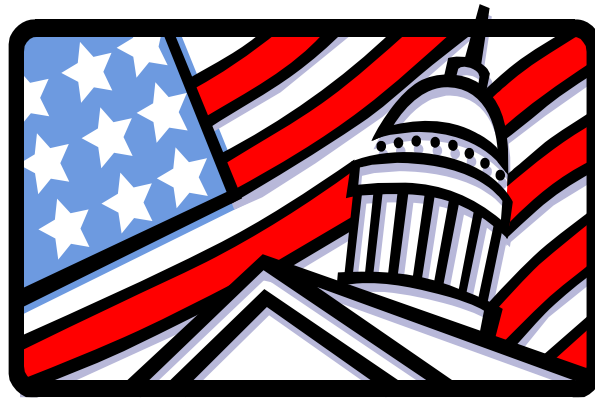


# A RACE WELL RUN

## A GUIDE FOR FIRST-TIME CANDIDATES FOR THE NH HOUSE



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## **A RACE WELL RUN: A GUIDE FOR FIRST-TIME CANDIDATES FOR NH STATE REPRESENTATIVE**

### **Introduction**

Congratulations! You're thinking about serving your community by running for a seat in the state legislature. Even if you aren't politically experienced or well known, New Hampshire's unique citizen legislature makes it possible for you to successfully run for the House. Your eagerness to serve combined with your passion for an issue or desire to make a difference is your calling card.

This brochure has been developed for the NHDP by a group of Democratic state representatives who recognized the need to provide practical information for first-time candidates. We have included many of the issues we were faced with that either were not typically addressed in various organizations' candidate trainings or are not spelled out in the NH election laws ([www.sos.nh.gov/statutes](http://www.sos.nh.gov/statutes)).

### **Before You Announce Your Candidacy**

The best thing you can do as early as possible is talk with a sitting or past Democratic representative from your district or a similar one (go to [www.gencourt.state.nh.us/house](http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/house) to find contact information for incumbents) or with the chair of your local Democratic committee. Then seek out community leaders to ask for their input/advice. Ask what issues are important to them and just listen. Personalized thank you notes show respect for the people who gave you their time, and you'll get positive feedback.

### **Start Your Calendar**

After you've "interviewed" a legislator, find out the dates for filing your candidacy by calling the Secretary of State (603-271-3242), or call your town/city clerk. The filing period is usually a week in June and you should file with your town clerk. Stop by the clerk's office in advance and ask for a copy of the filing document so you'll know what information you'll need when you formally file in person.

### **Sign Up for Candidate Trainings**

Sign up for all the candidate trainings you can find--they're often free or have a small fee and are priceless. In addition to opportunities the NHDP provides, there are several other activist organizations that may be offering training sessions.

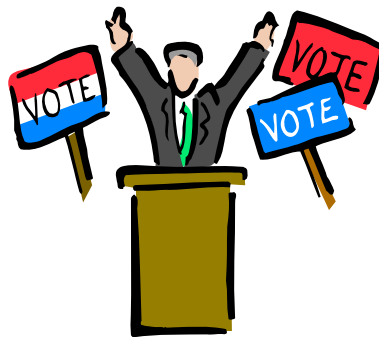
Following are questions about some of the decisions you will have to make and answers that address your possible determinations.

**Q. What is the first thing I need to do?**

**A:** The very first thing you can do is call the Secretary of State and ask for the Manual of Election Laws. Also ask for a map of your district if you don't have one, the political calendar, and the NH Constitution. During the filing period, you can file your candidacy with the Secretary of State through your town/city clerk's office. You must do this within the time period announced or your name will not be on the ballot. The clerks might be able to provide a map of the district or at least the boundaries, or look at your town/city website for district maps. In a multi-town district, you can obtain excellent maps from each town's Public Works Department.

Then *drive* the district. Get a feel for the various neighborhoods--and note which ones, if any, are walkable for doorknocking, where the condominium communities are and if they allow access.

Also, find out what other Democrats filed for State rep races in your district and meet with them. Some of them may have run for office before and can offer valuable experience. This will be much easier if there is no contested primary.



**Q: How do I start my campaign?**

**A:** The first thing some candidates recommend, after you've had that "interview," is ask a small group of local people you trust if they would serve as your campaign advisors. A good friend might serve as your campaign manager, but it's not necessary to have one. Call a meeting, have an agenda, and start with such things as a list of potential supporters and volunteers (who do they know in the district?), a list of new opponents and incumbents' records, and then try to create your campaign slogan, something you'll use on your printed materials. Don't let the group leave without an assignment and a date, time and place for the next meeting. Many training programs recommend that the candidate not run these meetings, but rather one of the advisors.

**Q: What is a fiscal agent and do I need one?**

**A:** Candidates for the NH state legislature must identify the name and address of a fiscal agent when declaring their candidacy with the town clerk. You can be your own fiscal agent or appoint someone else (spouse, relative, friend are all acceptable). A fiscal agent is responsible for reviewing and signing all the financial reports that must be filed with the Secretary of State during the primary and general election campaigns. In

addition, if you do name someone other than yourself, you must include that information on all your campaign material. If you choose, your fiscal agent can have check-signing ability on your new account and can handle all vendor payments and recordkeeping, or you can open a joint account.

**Q: What are the pros and cons of being my own fiscal agent?**

**A:** Having a fiscal agent helps you keep track of campaign contributions and expenditures and allows you to stay somewhat removed from the contributions. This person is your first public supporter, since his or her name must appear on all your campaign materials. A fiscal agent is also someone with whom you can brainstorm campaign strategies. On the other hand, if you plan on needing very little money for your campaign, you can be your own fiscal agent.

Ultimately YOU are responsible for all your reporting, and forms must be signed by you and your fiscal agent, if you decide to have one. You must file receipts and expenditures reports on time; there is no margin for error. You can download the Financial Receipts and Expenditures reporting forms from the Secretary of State's website.

**Q: Will I need a separate campaign bank account?**

**A:** It is recommended that you keep campaign funds separate from your personal accounts. If you plan on asking people for contributions, it's more professional for the checks to be made out to "John Doe for State Rep," for example, than just to John Doe. Many banks will insist that you have a federal EIN (employer's identification number) in order to open a campaign account. You can obtain one over the phone by calling the IRS. Other banks will open a business account for you or your fiscal agent using one of your social security numbers. Ask about bank fees. Also, you and your fiscal agent should have an Excel spreadsheet of all contributions and expenditures.

**Q: How should I name this bank account?**

**A:** Examples: John Doe for State Rep, Committee to Elect John Doe. You need to register a "formal" campaign Committee with the Secretary of State's office.

**Q: How much money will I need for my campaign?**

**A:** Campaign finance rules for NH state representatives can be found on the Secretary of State's website under the NH Election Laws, "Chapter 664, Political Expenditures and Contributions." READ IT. You are allowed to spend \$.50 per registered voter in your district for the primary campaign and the same again for the general election. If you expect to spend more, then you need to indicate on your filing form that you will not accept the state's spending cap for state reps. Town clerks will have a record of the total number of registered voters in their towns. Even though that number may change by the date of the election, it's a good number to use to identify a fundraising goal. If it's likely you won't have a contested primary, you can aim to raise less money, however, getting

your name out during this uncontested primary period is a sound investment, particularly if you don't have name recognition.

**Q: Where will the money come from?**

**A:** According to Emily's List, the successful Washington-DC–based organization that raises money for female pro-choice candidates, you should ask your family and friends for contributions before you ask anyone else. Why? Because they love you and want you to succeed, even if they're not of the same political persuasion. Then make a list of everyone you know in town and get on the phone. You might also tap into political action committees (PACs) that look for candidates to support. And don't forget about asking supporters to hold house meetings for you; these give voters a chance to meet you and ask questions, and for you to ask for contributions.



Fundraisers are also a way of generating support for your campaign. Friends and neighbors in your district are likely people to hold house meetings for you. Work with your local Democratic town committee for more ideas.

Do consider whether raising a lot of money from out of your district (not including PAC contributions) would be a political liability. And also consider the advantages and disadvantages for you personally accepting PAC money.

Many candidate trainings cover fundraising in some depth, so we won't do it here.

**Q. What kind of financial reporting is required?**

**A:** After you file your candidacy you'll receive the first campaign finance report form. Your reports must show funds raised and funds spent. There are four reports required over a few months' period (RSA 664: 6—II and II-a). Write these dates on your calendar and *don't be late!* As soon as you receive the form, *make several blank copies* before you fill it out. Also, make sure to keep copies of your completed reports.

**Q: Where will I find volunteers?**

**A:** Just like fundraising, you should begin by asking your family and friends. Asking people to volunteer for you is just like asking people to vote for you or give you money; you have to ask. Once you have spoken with your friends and family, ask everyone that you talk to about your campaign to volunteer for you. Getting people to volunteer the first time is the hardest thing. Once they come and volunteer, assuming that they have a good time and like you, more likely than not they will return. In the best scenario, they will have had such a good time that they will bring someone with them. You just have to get them to take that first step towards volunteering.

Never hesitate to ask someone to volunteer. If you come across someone while phonebanking for example, who is very excited that you called, ask them to come to your next phonebank, sign making party or labeling event. The worst thing they can do is say no, while the best thing is yes! Make sure you always get all their contact information, especially phone number and email. Once you generate this list, **DO NOT LOSE IT**. It will come in useful during your re-election campaign, fundraising or any other campaign event you may have once you are elected. Always follow-up with a thank you email, note or phone call to your volunteers so that they know you appreciate their help. It goes a long way and people remember these acts of kindness.



Everything that you do as a candidate could be considered a volunteer activity. Whether you are canvassing, phonebanking, doing a mailing or holding a sign, it's always better when you have volunteers. Not only will it demonstrate to others that people support you, but it's great to have others help you reach more voters. Make sure that you and your team are on a first-name basis with your volunteers. Nametags and introduction questions, such as "What book are you reading now?" are a great way for people to remember name/faces, and they also break the ice.

The most important thing about volunteers is to always ask them to volunteer and thank them when they do.

*"Volunteers are not paid--- not because they are worthless,  
but because they are priceless."*

**Q. When should I start campaigning?**

**A:** This summer is not too soon to start getting to know the voters in your district, particularly if you don't have name recognition. You can get your district's voter registration list for a fee from your town clerk or ask your town Democratic committee if it's planning on purchasing one. Also ask the NHDP--its list is more specific, ie, which voters are most/least likely to vote in elections. After you've studied your district's map, it's efficient to divide the area into smaller sections by streets and print out sections as you need them for walking/driving.

Although some people will tell you that no one pays attention to politics until the fall, many of us found it very informative and worthwhile to take our lists and knock on doors early to introduce ourselves to voters. But first, buy a pair of *really* comfortable shoes.

Starting early gives you an opportunity to hear what voters care about, which can help define your positions. Some candidates develop a biography leave-behind piece as an introduction. This is not the same as the position piece you'll use in the fall. If you're already well known and have a particular position on an important issue, you can campaign on that issue relentlessly.

Take notes on your discussions with voters and refer to them when you knock on the same doors or lit drop in the fall. If you're highly motivated, drop those folks a note that they'll receive within a day or two of speaking with them.

If you don't have a heavily Democratic district, do not neglect reaching out to Republican and Undeclared voters on your list. Every vote counts.

Most trainings will cover doorknocking at length. Be sensitive to how early/late you ring voters' doorbells. And in this neck of the woods, be aware of when Patriot games are broadcast--it may not be wise to interrupt! (Tip: Even though it's awkward to knock at dinner time, that's when people are home.)

Attend local meetings/events that focus on issues you're concerned about: eg, housing, healthcare, the environment. Take the time to introduce yourself to people who share your interests. Be sure to mention that you're running for office. These are great opportunities to hand out your campaign cards and literature. Be prepared; know your issues.

**Q: When does the campaign get in high gear?**

**A:** After the Labor-Day weekend (don't forget to march with your supporters and signs in any Labor Day Parade in your district!). Be prepared to spend as much time as possible campaigning during this very short six-week period of time, particularly on weekends.



Over the summer you created your post-Labor Day plan, so:

- You know what events will be held in your district that you want to attend or be invited to speak at--they're on your calendar and you've contacted the event planners.
- You have made a week-by-week schedule that includes what you'll accomplish.
- You have stayed in contact with your city/town Democratic committee and found out what resources it can offer your campaign--take full advantage of this and help out the whole ticket in return.
- As soon as you identified a supporter, you asked if they'd put up your lawn sign, so now you have a head start on that list. Keep adding, and decide when to put them up. If you see signs for other Democrats on a lawn, ask the homeowner if you can add yours. (Don't forget to read the rules of sign placement on the

- Secretary of State's website, and be a good citizen and collect all yours within a few days of the election.)
- You have identified dates early for an event or two for which you might have people assist you in preparing a mailing or for a fundraising event.
  - You have checked out opportunities to be interviewed on your local public access TV station and your local newspaper(s).

**Q: What campaign materials will I need?**

**A:** It's up to you and your budget and what makes sense for you. The first thing you need to do is pick your color scheme, design a logo (which might be no more than picking a type face/s) and develop your slogan--which might be as simple as "Vote for Jeanne Doe for State Rep." The following is a list of materials, in order of importance for consideration.

1. Campaign Literature (eg, trifold, pocket card, palm card, door hanger)—these are your most important materials. They should have a brief bio of yourself and where you stand on important issues. Try to give your literature a hook that makes people keep it around, like having key municipal phone numbers printed on one side—city hall, schools, etc.
2. Business cards—An easy way to give someone your phone number and email so that you may give them more detailed answers to their questions.
3. Lawn signs (with sticks or wires)—be conservative in your estimate of how many you will need, and remember, they're better on people's lawns than the side of the road.
4. Election Day handouts at the polls—these can be overruns of your campaign material.
5. Printed adhesive name tags or buttons—buttons and stickers (bumper or lapel) are only a good idea if you are able to raise enough money to easily pay for your other materials.



- Get a professional color photo of yourself for your literature. Some candidates include a photo of the whole family. If you're going to use a professional printer, try to furnish them with a digital copy of the photo, which you'll also need if you have a website.
- Remember to use a union printer. Organized labor is a key ally of the Democratic Party and the right to organize is one of the key tenets of being a Democrat. There is a list of union printers in the area at the end of this document.

- Decide on your slogan, your typeface, and your message. Carefully craft your handouts so that voters know what you stand for. Your issue brochure is the most important piece in your campaign chest of materials. Keep it simple and brief.
- Don't forget to factor in how many mailings/lit drops you plan when you consider quantity for your print orders. Order more than you think you'll use and have copies on hand everywhere you go. The more you order at once, the cheaper the per piece cost will be.

**Q: How do I get the media to cover me and my campaign?**

**A:** You must have an “earned” media strategy if you want to get on the radio or television and in the newspaper. Do you know who writes the local political column in your weekly newspaper? If not, find out who does and introduce yourself as a candidate. Ask your friends to write letters to the editor in support of your candidacy. Write an op-ed on an issue that is important to you and your community. Tape your campaign events and have them aired on cable access television. Call in to public affairs radio shows in your area.



**Q: How do I reach voters in inaccessible housing (eg, condos, apartment complexes)?**

**A:** The best way is a mailing, using the voter registration list. Make sure you budget for this and find out if your local Democratic committee has a stamp for bulk mailing. Note that in large condominium complexes, mail may not get delivered without an apartment number, which the voter lists usually do not include. If you include a return address on your mail you'll know how many did not get delivered.

You may want to devote a Saturday morning to saying hello to people in the condo community's parking lot. And don't forget the town's dump, any local farmers' markets, and local sporting events.

**Q: What about sending mail to other voters in my community?**

**A:** Yes, don't stop just at apartment and condo dwellers, you should mail to all Democrats and most Undeclared voters in your district. Have a mailing schedule planned. You should send out at least one mailing, but send out as many pieces as you

can afford. Think through the logistics of a mailing, e.g., how long does bulk mail take to be delivered? How will I get the voters' addresses onto labels and the labels onto the mailer (think "volunteers"). For more information on bulk mail, check out the US Postal Service online at <http://www.usps.com/businessmail101/getstarted/bulkMail.htm>

**Q: Do I need a website?**

**A:** No, but it can't hurt. You can put the website address on your literature and business cards along with an email address. Some Democratic committees have a website and you can usually add a link there to your site or provide copy and your photo to add to the site.

**Q: Should I campaign with other Democrats running in my district?**

**A:** If you're in a district that has more than one seat, you will want to run as a team with the other Democratic nominees. Studies continue to show that team candidates fare better than loner candidates. A team approach can offer economy in terms of campaign supplies and allow you to spread out your campaign vision. Volunteers get excited when they work for the entire "ticket," and a well-managed, team approach can assure that the Democratic message reaches all parts of the district. The NHDP supports the concept of "running as a team," and donations from County and Political Committees are often made to candidates who run as a team. Finally, when you arrive at the House of Representatives you will already know people--your running mates! Teamwork is the way to go. However, this does not preclude you from doing some personal campaigning and having your own campaign literature, by any means.

If you campaign as part of a ticket you can play on each other's strengths. You can make event appearances together and prepare joint campaign literature that urges voters to vote for your ticket while at the same time personalizes what each of you stands for. It's important to spend some time together talking about issues that you can agree on so that you can be clear on what you stand for in promotional materials. It's also important to identify and respect what differences you do have and to not misrepresent each other's stand on issues.

It can be very effective to do a sample ballot as a "team" prior to the election. You can canvass in pairs, but more than that is too confusing. It's great to canvass with a candidate in *their* neighborhood so they can introduce you, and vice versa. It's very important to have your own campaign literature in the Democratic office as well as to hand out and mail. If you do team lawn signs as well as individual ones, it increases visibility for the Democratic candidates.

One of the valuable aspects of team campaigning is the opportunity to get together and share ideas, problems, issues, tips from trainings. Some teams consider a single bank account if the candidates are not planning separate efforts. Agree ahead of time on what and how much you will jointly spend.

If one or more of the Democratic candidates are incumbents you have their experience to draw on. Team visibility in person and with placement of team signs on main thoroughfares is very helpful, especially the weekend before the election.

**RESOURCES:****Reading**

*How To Win a Local Election*, Judge Lawrence Grey  
*Running for Office*, Ronald A. Faucheux

**Union Printers**

Evergreen Press (Contact: Peter Church)  
 60 Rogers St.  
 Unit 4  
 Manchester, NH 03103  
 603-623-2799

Keystone Press (Contact: Don Greenwood)  
 9 Old Falls Rd.  
 Manchester, NH 03103  
 603-622-5222

Simard Printing (Contact: Fran Ward)  
 300 Salem St.  
 Woburn, MA 01801  
 617-598-6967  
 781-932-8885

**Others:****NH Secretary of State**

State House  
 107 North Main St.  
 Concord, NH 03301  
<http://www.sos.nh.gov/> (website has many resources, including political calendar and past state rep. election results)  
[Elections@sos.state.nh.us](mailto:Elections@sos.state.nh.us)  
 271-3242

**NH Democratic Party**

2 ½ Beacon St.  
 Concord, NH 03301  
[www.nhdp.org](http://www.nhdp.org) (website has many resources, including media list)  
[office@nhdp.org](mailto:office@nhdp.org)  
 225-6899