



WIRE *for* **Women**

Don't be afraid and don't fear being afraid. —Anon

Campaigning in a Pandemic

There are no rules about how or how not to run for office under the current shelter-in-place circumstances. Candidates must do the best they can in a manner in which they feel comfortable. Here are a few tactics some women are using, and if these ideas make sense to you, you might wish to consider them.

1. If you have not completed your **Campaign Plan**, this is an excellent time to do the research and get it done. If you have run previously, try to determine what worked well in the past, what you have learned, and what you might do differently this time around.
2. If you have completed your plan, you might need to tweak it a bit given the current circumstances. For example, if you were planning any large gatherings or months of precinct walking, alter and rework your plan accordingly. These changes may also require revisions to your budget.
3. **Fundraising** plans may be altered. This does not mean you cannot do any fundraising, but sensitivity and creativity will be required.
 - a. Start with your Tier One group of best friends, family and close advisors. They know you are planning to run and probably are 100% behind you so this group should be a relatively easy “ask”.
 - b. Your Tier Two group: Fundraising with acquaintances, neighbors, people you work with, party with, play sports with, etc. might be questionable. The pandemic makes it impossible to meet one-on-one, so you will need to find other ways to introduce yourself, which also might require budget revisions. If you feel comfortable contacting this group of people, explain that you are running for _____, why you are running, and that you feel strongly about _____; therefore, you hope they might support your efforts with a donation of _____.

\$_____. Always be sensitive to where the voters are emotionally and be creative with new ways to connect with individual voters.

- c. Your Tier Three group: people you do not know. Local political people, current and former elected officials, business and community leaders, etc. can be a hard group to ask for money at this time because they are essentially “cold calls” and you don’t know how they are reacting to the present SIP environment. BUT there is no harm in calling them to introduce yourself and ask for their advice. This way you can kill two birds with one stone by meeting new people and getting good advice. People love to be asked for advice (keep it specific) and it is likely they will be happy to talk with you. The message here is that you can do fundraising, but you need to be very sensitive to the people with whom you speak. You may get some criticism for campaigning at this time and if so, just apologize, and realize that you can never please all of the people all of the time.
4. This is a good time to familiarize yourself with the various **social media** platforms and learn which ones might be of help to you. You have time now to do this research and prepare materials to use later. It’s also a good time to design or redesign your website into an attractive tool for your campaign.
5. If you have not already, this is an excellent time to identify and sign up individuals who wish to work on **your team** (volunteers, precinct walkers and Finance Committee members).
6. Now is also the time to hone your **prime message** for the voters. Test out your main policy issues on friends and readjust as necessary.
7. Practice your “**elevator speech**” with family and friends.

In summary: you can accomplish a great deal during these unsettled times. Be creative, be sensitive and keep your campaign team in the loop about what you are doing, what you are not doing, and why.