

New Leaders Project

AMERICAN MAJORITY

IDENTIFYING NEW LEADERS



When people think about being politically active, they often think about petitions, door-knocking, writing letters and making phone calls. But in order to win elections and change policy, the conservative movement must also focus on finding new leaders who are committed to implementing limited-government principles in our state and local governments. And who knows the issues and personalities of your community better than you? Here's a guide to creating your own leadership identification project in your community.

Make a Profile

The two overarching qualities you want to see in new leaders are commitment and viability.

- **Commitment:** A new leader who can win elections and begin making a difference in local government must be committed to two things: **principles and winning**. Not only do you need someone who will stand strong for limited government even when it means sacrificing a donation or standing alone- they also have to be willing to put forth the effort it takes to win. They have to be willing to ask for votes and money until they've asked everyone, and then do it all again.
- **Viability:** All the commitment in the world won't help a candidate who has no appeal to the voters. Because no two voters are the same, a candidate who can win is one that appeals to a large cross-section of the community through values, personality, background, people skills and issues.

Don't forget to consider one very important potential leader- yourself.



Make a List

Start by making a list of the different community organizations or activities you are involved in- youth sports, volunteering, teaching, business and so on. Each of these include a network from which you can draw potential new leaders, volunteers and donors.



Find a friend or two who will work with you, meet regularly, and create action items that you will hold each other accountable to.

List the people from your networks who fit your profile for a new leader. Once you have a list of names, start digging deeper. **Google is your friend-** look and see what kind of information you can find online about the people on your list. It is important to know a person's views and history if you are looking at them as a leader, and to know what kind of things might come up in a campaign should that person run for office.



For each person, list the qualities that make them a potential new leader.

Make the Case

Many people who would make great community leaders need the extra boost of confidence that comes from knowing that there are others who believe in them and are ready to support them. **This is especially true of women.** If you think someone would be a good leader, don't keep it to yourself—invite them to coffee and ask them to consider running for office.

Before you meet with your potential candidates, think about some of the apprehensions they may have, and some ways you can help to resolve them. Some of the most common concerns are:

- **Time commitment:** Depending on the size of the district, a campaign can be active for anywhere from 3 to 18 months. While a campaign is active, it is time consuming. But eliminating some things from the schedule does not mean they are cutting out their contribution to their community. They are simply investing differently.
- **Family life:** This is an important one that should not be taken lightly. With a good support system, some creativity and flexibility, maintaining a stable family environment does not have to be stressful.
- **Cost:** Do a little research to find out how much recent similar elections cost, and some information that might be helpful for fundraising.
- **Knowledge:** Our government has plenty of lawyers and career politicians- what we need are people who can bring new ideas to the table. With many resources available online and through campaign training organizations like American Majority, the process of running a campaign can really be very simple even for people that are relatively new to the idea.
- **History:** One look at our sitting Congress will show you that people with any variety of past issues can still be elected. The issues and their impact should be carefully considered- but it is how the candidate handles the conversation that makes all the difference.



Most elected offices have affiliated organizations that provide training for new office holders.



If you are going to ask a person to run for office, be ready to commit some kind of financial or volunteer support.



Make it a Long-Term Strategy

As you work through this project, educate yourself and your friends about the election cycles, issues, and the process of becoming a candidate. Don't just go through this exercise once. Pull together maps, lists and calendars and create a plan spanning several elections, setting goals and objectives. There is a constant need for new leaders to challenge incumbents and fill empty seats. If there's not a limited-government candidate ready to run, big-government gets an easy win.



The impact of developing a strategic local recruitment plan can be long-lasting and far reaching. One new face on a town council can completely change the dynamics. Not only do local governments need leaders who can provide careful over-sight and restraint, but your community needs a network of local leaders who are ready and able to lead the charge at the state and federal levels as well. You are an integral part of the network as you motivate and support others as they run for office.

