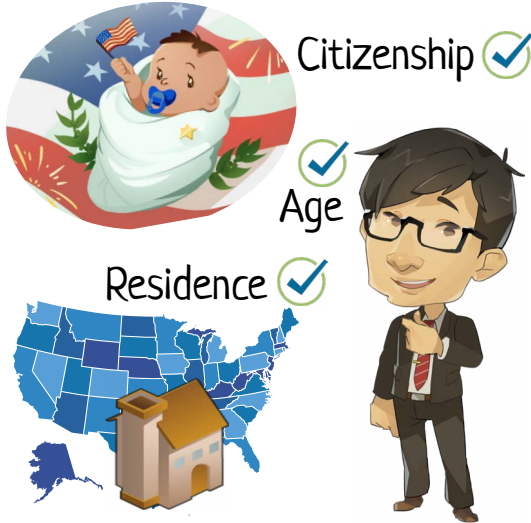


Campaigning: It's a Process

Name: _____

So you want to run for President? (Okay, maybe not this year, but eventually once you meet the age requirement.) Well, be prepared because running for office (any political office) is no easy task. Political campaigns require tons of time, effort, and money... especially if you intend to win!



Get Organized

So what does a person have to do to run for president? To be elected president, you must be a natural born citizen, at least 35 years old, and live in the United States for 14 years. Easy enough. But... most candidates announce that they're running for president at least a year and a half before the election. And that's not all! To be a candidate requires planning, major strategy, and lots of workers to help them get elected. All of this effort and action is part of a campaign. A **political campaign** is an organized effort by a group of people to get a candidate elected to political office. Candidates will use fundraising, volunteers, staff, appearances, speeches, and more as part of their campaign to persuade the public to vote for them.

One Size Doesn't Fit All

Campaigns may be small or large, local or national. They may be focused on getting one person elected or on getting several people who support the same idea elected. It all depends on the type of election. National elections, like presidential or congressional races, are larger and require more time and money. They are often split into phases: **primary elections (primaries)**, where voters—usually members of certain political parties—vote in each state to select candidates for the larger **general election**; and the general election itself, where all voters have an opportunity to vote. Local elections, like mayoral races, require less money and volunteers, but still call for a significant amount of organization and planning to be successful.

PRIMARY ELECTION BALLOT NONPARTISAN OFFICE ISLEY, WI DISTRICT 4	
INSTRUCTIONS TO VOTER If you make a mistake on your ballot or have a question, ask an election official for help. 1. To vote for a name on the ballot, fill in the oval next to the name. 2. You may only vote for one candidate for each office.	
Mayoral Race (Vote For One)	City Council Race (Vote For One)
<input type="radio"/> April Jeffries	<input type="radio"/> Kenji Stabler
<input type="radio"/> Daniel Achebe	<input type="radio"/> Anders Middlebrook
<input type="radio"/> Ann Wyatt (Incumbent)	<input type="radio"/> Lian Swan



Got It. Let's Run!

Still ready to run for president? Well, first you'll need to announce that you're running. You also need to fill out a form with the **Federal Election Commission (FEC)**, the government organization that oversees all federal elections. Next, you have some fundraising to do. Serious candidates must raise (or spend) at least \$5000 in campaign contributions or expenses before they can officially become a candidate. After that, campaigning for the primary election begins!

It Doesn't Stop There

Most presidential candidates need to be supported by a major political party to win. The two major party committees, the Republican National Committee (RNC) and the Democratic National Committee (DNC), hold primaries and caucuses in each state starting in February all the way up to the summer of the election year. And guess what? During all that time candidates are campaigning throughout the country to win votes. They have to work hard just to come out ahead in the primaries. Then in the summer of the election year, the parties hold **national conventions** where they announce who their official nominee will be. Once a candidate has their party's nomination, the race revs up even more and so do the campaign efforts leading up to the general election in November.



Source: Federal Election Commission

Presidential Candidate Barack Obama at the Democratic National Convention in 2008.

Campaigns Inform and Characterize

Sounds like a lot of work, doesn't it? You might be thinking why not just save all the fundraising, ads, and speech-making and just let the people vote. That's one way to think about it, but without campaigns, voters wouldn't be as informed about what the candidates' **platforms** are. Every person who decides to run for political office creates a platform. It's the issues they stand for (not on) and what they promise to do once elected.

In addition to the platform, campaigns help voters get to know the candidates themselves. What kind of people are they? And what were they up to before deciding to run for office? How have their experiences allowed them to understand the problems your community is facing? A candidate's stance, experience, and character are qualities you'll want to consider before casting your vote. Voters find the answers to questions like these and more on a candidate's website, in interviews and television ads, through speeches and newspaper articles, during the debates, and through public appearances—all pieces that add up to just one part of a candidate's campaign.



Cha-Ching! Expenses Time

Campaigns can cost millions of dollars. Mostly because in the United States it takes a really long time to get elected. Our election process is stretched out over months, usually starting in the summer the year before an election and running until the Tuesday after the first Monday in November of the election year. And because of the effort required, many campaign organizations may start months or even years before that. Most run almost exactly like a business with tons of employees and volunteers all working together for the duration of an election season.



Campaigning: It's a Process

Name: _____



Where Does All the Money Go?

As you can imagine, appearances and ads are expensive. On top of that, it costs money to pay the essential staff members who help the candidate come up with plans and strategies to get elected. Campaign staff include paid positions like managers (who create and direct the campaign's plans) and consultants (who help with everything from media to fundraising). Campaigns also include tons of unpaid volunteers who participate in phone banks, calling voters to inform them about the candidate, and canvass in neighborhoods, knocking door-to-door to talk to voters in person, on their candidate's behalf. All of these positions cost money to maintain, from staff salaries to office equipment for volunteers. Along with the expenses for the candidate, like travel and meals, costs can add up pretty quickly.

How Do Candidates Raise All That Money?

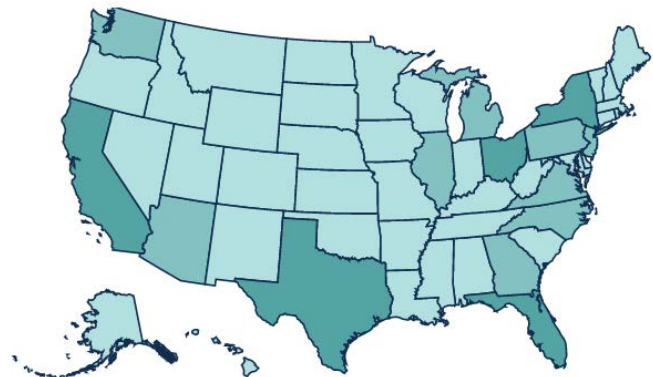
Well, sometimes they can't. In recent years, the cost of campaigns has increased so much that candidates have to spend millions of dollars before the race is even over. Candidates who can't raise that kind of money are forced to drop out during or even before the primary elections. Those who can raise the money, do it in a bunch of different ways.

Wealthy candidates have the option of funding their own campaigns. Others may use **grassroots fundraising**, where they ask many people to donate small amounts of money, often through email and social media. Candidates may also rely on private fundraising events which allow people to meet candidates and pledge their support in person. Individual donors can only contribute so much to a campaign. The FEC sets a limit on the amount an individual can give. (Can you think of any reasons why?) A major reason is to help limit the possibility of corruption.

TRUMP, DONALD J. [REP]

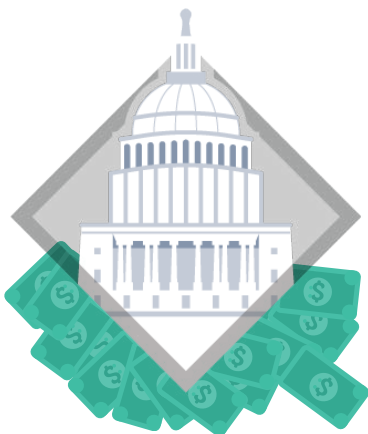
Candidate for president
ID: P80001571

By state, total amount received



Source: Federal Election Commission

The FEC publishes all campaign raising and spending data on their website. Here you can see President Trump's campaign contributions by state for the 2016 election.



Presidential candidates from major political parties may receive public financing through the federal government as well. Candidates can qualify to receive "matching" funds from the government in exchange for limiting the amount of money they spend. To qualify, candidates must first show that their campaigns have enough public support by raising \$5000 each in at least 20 states. Candidates who refuse matching financing can spend as much as they can raise privately with no limits.

Hold on to Your Hat

Campaigns and their donors are not the only money in politics these days. Thousands of organizations also raise and spend money in support of their candidates. These organizations are

called **political action committees (PACs)** and **Super PACs**. Super PACs can spend unlimited amounts of money in support of their candidate, but they cannot give to a candidate's campaign directly. Super PACs will usually spend the money they raise to pay for media messages supporting their candidate or sponsor opposition ads against their candidate's opponent. While PACs are limited by how much they can raise and give to candidates, Super PACs aren't. And individuals can contribute to PACs and Super PACs that support their candidates, too.

Source: Supreme Court of the United States

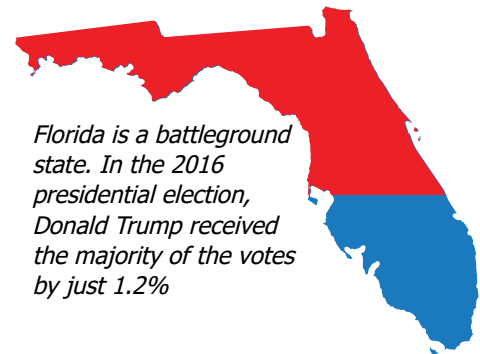


Since it was founded in 1971, the FEC has been in 13 Supreme Court cases. In one of the most notable cases, the decision protected a corporation's ability to donate as much as they want to a candidate, as a right to free speech.

Many people think that the government shouldn't limit campaign contributions. After all, isn't showing support for the candidate of your choice a form of your free speech? Others think that without such limits candidates might be tempted or pressured to repay large donors with special favors once elected. And some people also see campaign contribution limits as a way of ensuring that those with more money don't hold more influence over our leaders and government than those with fewer means. The FEC requires that all campaign contributions be made public. And media outlets like news broadcasts, newspapers, and reputable contribution tracking websites like Opensecrets.org help keep our elections honest.

But It's Not Just a Money Game

No, it's not. Candidates with the most money don't always win. In order to get elected, candidates have to get personal. Voters don't just want to see a candidate on a TV screen, they want to meet them and hear from them in person. Winning an election requires a candidate to focus on reaching people in all states. Oftentimes, candidates focus on states where neither political party dominates called **battleground states**. Campaign efforts in states like these are essential as it's uncertain whether the state will sway red (for Republican) or blue (for Democrat). Electors in the Electoral College, the constitutional system of electors that has the final say on who our president will be, usually vote according to the majority in their state. During their campaigns, candidates work to persuade the majority of voters in as many states as possible—especially in those with a wide range of political ideas—in order to win.



Florida is a battleground state. In the 2016 presidential election, Donald Trump received the majority of the votes by just 1.2%

In the End, Is It All Worth It?

Absolutely. Even though the campaign process is long and complex, at its core, it's about making sure people are able to choose the representatives that are right for them. It's a process, but it's worth it.

