

Running a Grassroots Campaign for Local Office

A Campaign Guide for Democratic Candidates, Staff, and Volunteers



Developed by,
Jen Fuentes, UCDW Campaign School Coordinator
(845)332.6600
jenfuentes77@gmail.com

In collaboration with,
Ashley Dittus, UCBOE Deputy Democratic Commissioner
The Ulster County Board of Elections
ashley.dittus@gmail.com

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1. Introduction

Welcome prospective Democratic Candidate and Campaign Staff/Volunteers! This manual shall serve as guide and resource. Running for local office is an important step and should not be taken lightly. You will be committing your time, energy, and foregoing a certain degree of privacy under the lenses of public scrutiny. However, the benefits of candidacy win or lose, can be immeasurable. Shaping the public dialog about issues you believe is important; advocating and achieving public policy objectives that make people's lives better, while making new friends along the way is a beautiful thing.

Take a few moments to think about the following before you commit to running (Modified from "Politics the Wellstone Way," p. 13):

- *Do you have a sense of how much time you will have to work? Do you have employment or family obligations that will prevent you from putting in the necessary time?*
- *Do you earn an income through professional services to the political entity for which you intend to serve? Are you prepared to forgo that income to avoid an ethics violation?*
- *Does your family agree with and support your decision?*
- *Can you summarize your reasons for running in three sentences? One minute?*
- *What is your base of supporters that you start with? Do you see a clear path to expand that base?*
- *Are you ready to raise money? Are you prepared to ask your friends and family to make contributions to the campaign?*
- *Are you ready to door-knock every day if necessary?*
- *Do you have good talented people who are not afraid to say no or offer frank critiques?*
- *Do you see a clear path to victory? Do you have a plan to win?*

If none of this scares you off, then keep reading.

This guide will help you answer some of these questions, but ultimately you need to be realistic about what you are getting yourself into. Another thing to contemplate is understanding the political party you will be representing. The Democratic Party, while diverse, stands for a specific set of values and ideals. We are seeking candidates that share these values.

The Ulster County Democratic Party stands for the following principles, and everything that we do as your Democratic representatives should be based on these principles:

We believe diversity gives America strength.

- ⇒ We believe in the dignity of the individual and the enormous potential of collective action.
- ⇒ We believe in working constructively, for the benefit of all Ulster County citizens.
- ⇒ We believe in conserving our natural resources and protecting our environment.
- ⇒ We believe in open government, fully accessible to the public.
- ⇒ We believe in a strong, equitable public education system.
- ⇒ We believe in bridging our differences, not segregating and demeaning one another because of those differences.
- ⇒ We believe in fairness for working families and opportunity for enterprising people.
- ⇒ We believe that taxation should be fair and based upon the ability of the taxpayer to pay.
- ⇒ We believe that there is a strong role for an honest, open government that supports peoples' lives and dreams.
- ⇒ We believe in caring for the needy, the sick, the disabled, the hungry and homeless, and the unemployed.

Does this sound like what you stand for? Yes?? Then the Democratic Party wants you!

2. Message and Campaign Goals

The first question you should ask yourself is why are you running? Is there a public policy you would like to change or sustain? Can these goals be addressed by the local office for which you are running? These are *essential* questions because running for local office will require “campaigning,” which really means inspiring local voters to select you as their representative. Running for office is an intense, emotional experience. Too often people decide to run but do not have clear answers to why they want to be an elected representative. The first thing you should do is complete the following questions and put together a “short version” and “long version” that includes not only the traditional vanilla work history, but also your leadership and participation in the community which you hope to serve. This can (and should) easily be modified later for your first “palm card” or introduction to voters and come in handy for a press release when the media comes calling.

1. I am running because...
2. My biography includes...
3. My values as a candidate include...
4. These are my plans as an elected official... (2-4 measurable and specific goals you want to achieve)

For example:

My name is Jane Doe and I am running because I believe I am the most qualified person to lead this County Legislative District. My experience in the community, developing real policy solutions to problems that impact our families, such as the newly refurbished park that I helped organize to address lapses in child safety and the annual neighborhood cleanup that I spearheaded to improve the quality of life for Smith Street residents, make me uniquely qualified to address the needs of our neighbors in the 10th County Legislative District. As a manager of XYZ Corporation I strive to bring out the best in my employees, fairly weigh competing narratives, and I am not afraid to make the tough decisions needed to bring success to my company. As a dedicated parent of two elementary school children, I am skilled at planning, budgeting, and the art of negotiations. All of these experiences will help me serve you well in the County Legislature.

I believe in the power of collective action to transform our community. With me justice and fairness are not slick campaign slogans, but values that guide my decisions in life. My family shares many of the same economic struggles of our residents of the 10th District; the quality of our services has been in steady decline but taxes are higher and the cost of living keeps rising. Together, we can reshape the priorities of our county spending where it matters most.

As your County Legislator, you will always have a voice in my decision-making. I will be instituting monthly constituent meetings to solicit opinions and feedback so that the best ideas and perspectives can be cultivated. As a longtime advocate for children and families, I will make it my top priority to add funding in our county budget for Project 123 so that more of our neighbors can enjoy this program. Finally, I will coordinate with my colleagues in the legislature

to repair and better maintain County Route 66 for the safety and security of ABC Township. The value of this effort will improve the quality of life for local residents and promote tourism.

Note that your message should not be about your opponent. If your goal is to get voters thinking about you, the last thing you should be doing is mentioning your opponent who, if an incumbent, begins the race with name recognition advantage.

A good message has several components. It should be credible. Nothing is more cringe-worthy than listening to local candidates promise to address specific policy issues that are the jurisdiction of the state or federal government. It might be a popular message, but if it doesn't stand the test of credibility because you can't really do anything about it, just don't say it. A credible message is grounded in the local community for which you hope to serve and based on the values, issues and policies you really will fight to achieve. Less is more when messaging. Resist the impulse to provide a dissertation with supporting documentation. Short, power-packed turns of phrase will resonate better with voters. Know your stuff, but keep the messaging simple. Connect your message to values we all share such as equity, equality, democracy, preservation of our environment, ethical government/business practices. President Obama was brilliant at engaging in a conversation – starting with a bit about himself, the “I”, “You”, and finally the “We/Us.” A conversation that told the story about how we have so much in common, here is what we can do together. It inspires and speaks to shared values. It was credible because the person listening felt they were a part of the conversation. Finally, never be afraid to be authentically you. Even when the average voter is not interested or even supportive of your policy positions, they will choose authenticity and integrity in a candidate.

3. The Plan

So you have a vision of what you would like to accomplish and you have begun to shape your message. Your next step is to put together a campaign plan of action. You wouldn't consider building a house without a blueprint. You also should not jump into a campaign without a well-organized plan. A campaign plan should include the following:

- I. Campaign Narrative – summary of approach and core values that will guide your candidacy
- II. Data Analysis/Targeting
- III. Roles and Responsibilities of Campaign Team
- IV. Budget/Fundraising Strategy
- V. Field Plan- Schedule/Timeline

I. Campaign Narrative

This will be a brief one paragraph “lay of the land” that describes the political contest and clearly spells out the core message and values that will drive your campaign. Have you heard the phrase “stay on message?” In the thick of a campaign you will need to be flexible enough to address issues that are thrown at you, but stay disciplined and stick to your core goals, values, and vision. *You* drive the narrative of what the campaign will be about. It can

be helpful to have this spelled out right in the first section so that you can avoid the inclination to respond to attacks.

II. Data Analysis/Targeting

a. Data Analysis/Win Number

First step, find your win number. What is your “win number?” A win number is the total number of identified “yes” voters you need to find before Election Day. For example, let’s say that the office you are seeking holds elections every two years and the average votes cast is 1,260 out of a total 4,300 eligible voters. Your win number should be 750 to give you a little padding (50% plus padding). You collect your average votes cast by examining past election results that can be easily collected from the local board of elections website (see resources section). A few tips in collecting your win number:

1. Always use the years in which your office is up for election. Local offices are considered off-year and are conducted in odd years. During Presidential years (every four) and Congressional years (every two) there are an influx of voters that generally don’t pay attention to local town and county races.
2. Resist the inclination to believe your race will be different and that somehow turnout will be unusually high. In frank terms, if someone has not thought it was important enough to vote since 2008, they will probably not vote for you even if they say they will. Unless they are a family member or close friend welcome the supporters and code them as a yes vote but **do not count them in** as you collect enough verifiable yes votes for your win number.
3. Keep in mind other inconsistencies that can throw off your expected turnout on election day. As you examine the history of the race did you find that several of your election samples were uncontested, or had no opponent? Were there other “top of the ticket” races that drew higher than average turnout, such as a special election of County Executive? Did the boundaries of the district change?

It is not always easy on local races to get an exact number, but an approximation will be sufficient. The goal is to get as close as you can, using data that will be similar to conditions in the race you will be undertaking. This number can be modified slightly as you get closer. A win number is important because it can take a daunting job – like getting 4,300 voters to support you – into an easily managed target of 750 identified “yes” voters.

b. Targeting (districtwide/ward system)

The main thing to think about here is who will you be talking to? You have your win number, but where will you find them? Again, the Board of Elections can provide you with a disk that includes a voter file of every registrant in the district. As was mentioned, you don’t need to campaign with all 4,300 voters to achieve a comfortable margin of yes votes on Election Day. Ask them to create this file in Excel and then you can sort or move to another file like Access for even more ability to manipulate the file. In the voter file you will find a wealth of data that can be used to target your list, including:

1. VH- Voter History
2. Gender

3. DOB- Birthdate
4. AB- Absentee Voting history/ Type of Absentee
5. Election districts (CD, SD, LD, Ward, etc.)
6. Party Affiliation

Do not be alarmed when you see the actual voter file and it has what seems like 4,000 fields at the top. You can hide most fields that you don't need and even add your own such as ID, Petition Signer, Notes, etc. The key fields you want to examine are included in some samples below. In your Excel file they will be in one very long horizontal line across the top of your screen:

voter id	First name	Middle initial	Last name	suffix	Street #	Street address	Apt #	City	State
Zip	DOB	Sex	Area code	Telephone	Reg date	Party affiliation	Town	Ward	District
Congress	Senate	Assembly	County Leg	(The next five fields for Alt. mailing...)	Voter history*				

*Voter History will be in a long string – GE General Election, FP Federal Primary, SE Special Election, PP/PE Primary

The voter file will allow you to see how many are registered in each party. Using our hypothetical 4,300 voter district, let's estimate the following as registration statistics:

- 1200 DEM Democrats
- 1100 REP Republicans
- 1300 NOP No party
- 325 IND Independence
- 175 CON Conservative
- 75 GRE Green
- 100 WFP Working Families Party
- 25 OTH Other

You should consider anybody who voted in *two of the last three local off year elections* as **PRIME** (voters most likely to come out). You want to know how many primes in each party – even the ones that are not likely to vote for you- so you have a sense of what your opponent is also working with. Next let's examine the party affiliation now that we have a list of "Primes," or voter registrants who are very likely to come out during your election cycle:

Once you have your voter file organized by the party, you should *sort by voter history*. This is the best indicator of voter participation. In local elections there are "generally" less voters that participate in off-year elections. Sometimes a major local issue can drive interest, such as a significant referendum, so take all relevant issues into account, but as a general rule, your primary target list of voters should initially include all of the people who generally vote in off year elections. Remember in the hypothetical the average of actual votes was 1,260. Now go back to your database and sort within the "VH" columns. That stands for Voter History and in

some cases goes back to 1996. The columns will be empty to extensive depending on how often they vote.

Total Registered Voters	Total Prime Votes	Party
1200	375	DEM – Democrats
1100	475	REP – Republicans
1300	250	NOP – No Party
325	150	IND – Independence
175	80	CON – Conservative
75	25	GRE – Green
100	15	WFP – Working Families
25	5	OTH – LIB, WEP, RTL, etc.
Total 4300	Total 1375	

So looking at your pool of reliable voters you should notice that just targeting the 375 Democrats will not get you to a reliable win number. You will also need to add the 250 NOP, the 150 IND, and the 40 GRE AND WFP, however you are not done yet because everyone from your list of 815 voters will not be supporting you. It hurts, I know. You can assume that your Republican opponent will also be targeting the likely supporters they perceive as favorable and going for REP, NOP, CON, and IND.

Next is the tedious but valuable way to getting a working list of people you will be talking to during the campaign trail. Do you belong to social clubs, or a religious congregation? How about your immediate neighbors and co-workers? Do your kids/spouse sports belong to teams or clubs? First review the list of Prime Voters of every party that is not already added to identify those individuals that you have a positive personal relationship with and add their names to your target list. Next go to the full list of registrants. Always keep the “Primes” highlighted or bolded so as you work towards your win number you can have the most realistic picture of likely voters. It can also help during GOTV because you know which voters may need some extra hand-holding to get to the polls. Have a “review party” with your family members and campaign advisors and get to work finding a pool of targets. In some places like the City of Kingston or Woodstock, you are going to have a rich pool of Democrats. The task becomes harder in areas where registration favors Republicans or No Party Voters, but by tapping into your familial and social networks you can get there.

Let’s suppose that brings your number to 900 identified target voters. Still not enough. Finally, add in more voters from the less than ideal prime list. A good target would be Democrats who voted in at least 1 of the last local elections because Democrats will be your natural base of supporters. Don’t assume support, but Democratic registration suggests you share a common policy value system. Another good prospect would be brand new Democratic voters with no or very little history, especially those your campaign personally registers to vote. Just do some

estimating by age and date of registration and you have that category. Voting is a habit, and a personal conversation from the candidate to a new voter can make a big impression.

With a win number of 750, a comfortable final target canvass list should be around 1,100-1300 voters. A few tips:

1. Sort the target list by Town/Ward/ED so you have a good idea of where to begin. A good rule of thumb is to start where you have weakest name recognition and save your own neighborhood for later.
2. Once you have your final target list, keep on sorting it to further refine your messaging by category. For example, do you have something important to say about seniors or women in your district? Send a mail piece or do a phone bank targeting just that group.
3. Never tell a voter they are "Prime or Non-Prime." For example, "I am not finding you on the list from the campaign. You probably don't vote very often." There are many reasons why they may not be on the list and you really don't need to share them with the voter. Many voters are convinced they are registered in a certain party or stretch their voting history. It is also worth noting that every time someone moves they must update their address. If the voter uses the long form they may omit party affiliation and get dropped from the party list.
4. Track your voter contacts at the end of each day. Collect e-mails, update phone numbers, and add a column for "identification code." For example, "I ran into Joe Smith at the grocery store and he was really excited I was running for office and asked if he could volunteer in some way to help." Or "I spoke with Jane Doe about my running at the park. I assumed she was a supporter, but she didn't seem to give eye contact and was very short during our conversation and said she had to get going."

All of this being said, there are amazing tools and resources that can help you sort and target your list. Under certain circumstances, the Ulster County Democratic Party can provide access for your campaign to use the NYSVAN which is a paid voter database service with amazing targeting capabilities. For more information, contact your Town Party Chair. The NYSVAN is only as good as the data that is entered so the more people who log on and update information, the better quality the data will be for local off year elections.

III. Roles and Responsibilities of Campaign Team

Many candidates make the mistake of trying to do too much themselves so having a good team dedicated to helping you get elected is important. At a minimum, if you plan on spending money you will need a designated campaign treasurer. There are two routes. If you plan on spending less than \$1,000 you can file a simple form with the Ulster County Board of Elections. Most local candidates will need more than \$1,000 and your treasurer should file with the state board of elections. Each campaign is different, but here are some different roles and campaign responsibilities that you will want to consider:

1. **Treasurer** – Every penny collected must be accounted for. Even if you are spending your own money all receipts must be accounted for. Again, if your receipts and liabilities will be less than \$1000, schedule a visit with the Ulster Board of Elections to file paperwork.

If it is more than \$1,000 you file with the state. Get to know this website because it is all clearly spelled out: **elections.ny.gov** and it is not so onerous that you cannot easily comply. It should be noted that failure to comply could land you in jail or owing money in fines and penalties so spend a few moments reading the information provided. In New York, there are two routes. Candidate Discloses all or Authorized Committee discloses all.

- a. "Candidate Discloses" - A candidate will file the Candidate Campaign Finance Registration Form And/Or To Request NYSBOE Filer ID# and PIN (CF-04). You will use this ID/PIN information to file regular reports disclosing campaign receipts, expenses, and liabilities.
- b. "Authorized Committee Discloses" – Have you ever written a check to a candidate using "Committee to Elect" or "Friends of" followed by the candidate's name? This is an authorized committee. To create one, your first step would be to authorize someone to file on your behalf using the designated form found at the NY board of elections website.

Whatever route you decide to go, there are three election reports filed in connection with EACH Primary, General, or Special Election. These are due at the following times:

32 Day Pre-Election

11 Day Pre-Election

10 Day Post-Election for Primary Elections or 27 Day Post-Election for General or Special Elections. The NYS Board of Elections can provide you with a filing calendar based on the election dates.

Note: Candidates and/or their committees must file three election reports for all elections in which the candidate appears on the ballot. This is also applicable when an "opportunity to ballot" petition has been filed for a primary election.

Treasurer's must also file 2 annual reports, called the Periodic Reports. The first is filed January 15, the second is filed July 15. Regardless of whether or not you spend or raise money you must file these two reports for every year an account is still open and active.

2a. Campaign Manager- It is also a good idea to have someone serving in the capacity of campaign manager to manage requests –once announced, you will be invited to everything from church chicken BBQ's, nonprofit fundraisers, to town celebrations. Managers help keep things organized with all the moving parts, review campaign messaging, and serve as a sounding board. Your campaign manager has to be willing to objectively evaluate your performance and be willing to say no or not good and bring you back to reality. For this reason, a significant other is not always the best choice because you want to keep your family in the role of support. There will be times when you need it. Anyone who steps forward in a visible role in the campaign will be subject to public scrutiny so choose wisely. A Campaign Manager will also coordinate volunteers and make sure each partner in your campaign efforts is on task. Each Town/City Committee has veteran campaigners and this should be your first place to start looking.

2b. Field Manager- On larger races, think Town-wide, the City of Kingston, or Countywide, having a designated person to organize your field program can be very helpful. In these instances, you will probably need volunteers or paid staff to cover your canvassing shifts and organize phone banks. A good Field manager will coordinate all of your direct voter outreach and should be able to make adjustments as you identify strengths and weaknesses in certain areas of your district. The Field Manager works hand in hand with your Database Manager so that all of the intelligence collected in the field is uploaded to your master campaign file. The Field Manager will also advise the Campaign Manager regularly so that your strategy is data-driven and relevant to your needs.

- 4. Fundraising Chair-** It can be a good idea to keep the tasks of required financial reporting and fundraising separate because fundraising is primarily about event planning. For local races a simple cocktail party at a local restaurant, coupled with direct solicitation calls to close friends and family, is likely to provide you with all the needed resources. At the time you are putting together a committee, put together a budget that includes all of your literature, yard signs, and any expenses you plan on incurring. Your budget should drive how aggressive your fundraising strategy needs to be. Use your budget as a fundraising strategy. Compare “I could really use your financial support in my campaign” to “I am raising funds to purchase yard signs and I need another \$200 to place my order.” Another funding strategy that is not inherently a huge money maker, but can help you build your grassroots outreach is having “house parties.” These are smaller gatherings, that if done correctly really helps build momentum for your candidacy.

House Party Tips:

- a. Do- Solicit Hosts for your parties strategically. If you live in a town with 7 Election Districts, try to spread them out. Ask potential hosts who are well liked with deep connections to the neighborhood you are targeting.
- b. Do- Invite people you don't know, in addition to supporters in that area. It seems like common sense, but if you keep inviting the same ten supporters not only will you not earn any funds and burn out your loyal supporters, but you are not earning any new votes. Try coupling your house party with aggressive canvassing in the neighborhoods near where it will be held. Have a postcard invite at the ready for those “Primes” who you want to deepen your relationship with by inviting them to the upcoming house party. Generally, they are not going to show up, but they are likely to remember you on Election Day.
- c. Do- Have a sign-in table and donation jar at the door and circulating after the candidate speaks. Make sure your candidate makes an ask for funds at some point during his or her speech/question and answer. Seed your donation jar with a few large bills.
- d. Do- Track and identify all of your guests into the campaign database. Use this as an opportunity to build volunteers and vocal supporters.

- e. Do NOT- Use house parties as an alternative to going door to door to your targeted list of voters.

5. Other Tasks:

Scheduling:

A designated scheduler is a good job for a close family member or significant other that knows your calendar well. Until you become a candidate, you can never imagine that you would be invited to so many events. You should also plan on meeting with important community, faith, non-profit, and political constituency leaders within the district (grassTOPS organizing). During these meetings you want to talk about your campaign, but also identify what are critical issues for these leaders and spend a good amount of time listening. For example, if you are running for county legislature, meet with the Democratic County Executive and other current Democratic members of the legislature to identify what their key policy issues will be. Your job, once elected, is to get things done for your district and to do that you will need to identify partners. You may also have important community institutions in your district that are highly valued by your residents. In Ulster County, think about the importance of Scenic Hudson and the Bruderhoff Communities to the Town of Esopus. Every community has key leaders and stakeholders that you should hear from. Meeting and hearing from these leaders can be very important to identifying issues and honing your message. Many of these meetings will not, or cannot by law, lead to an endorsement, but the information you collect and good-will you share will be invaluable. There will also be fundraisers and house parties, in addition to scheduled canvass and phone banking. A good tool to consider is a campaign "Google Calendar" that can be updated in real time and shared with your campaign team. Google Calendars allows you to designate editing capabilities to a few, while still allowing the rest of your team to see what's on the agenda. You should include your work, campaign activities, scheduled family/away time, etc.

Database Management:

Someone should be responsible for updating and maintaining your lists. It is a time consuming task. Campaigns can maintain their voter files in excel, access, or use an online tool like the NYS VAN. As you go about your outreach you will be "coding" each voter you speak to. Most campaigns use a 1-6 system, where 1 is Strong Yes, 3 is Undecided, and 5 is Strong No and 6 is reserved for moved, deceased, etc. You should track phone messages or literature left at the doorstep even if there was no direct contact. Your Database manager will also create new and updated lists for the candidate and volunteers. Fields you will want to track and maintain by adding to your voter file include "codes" sometimes referred to as ID, notes, email, cell phone, volunteer, and petition signer.

Communications:

A good communications person generally has some graphic design and/or media experience. For a local race, your communications strategy is best waged door-to-door. There are several tasks of a communications person:

- ⇒ **Online Presence-** There are technologies that can be helpful to get your message out such as email and facebook. A website can be warranted if you are considering something countywide or as a “Team,” but can prove a big drain on time for a small local race. You need to drive online traffic to the website, so you will still need email or facebook to make it useful. If you have a solid field effort that is collecting hundreds of emails you might consider a pay service like constantcontact.com that can help you manage the list and report important information like open rates, but for most people a designated campaign GMAIL account will suffice (i.e. CandidateJoe@Gmail.com). Early in the campaign season a monthly or bi-weekly newsletter that spells out campaign messages and upcoming events can be a nice touch and can be used later in the race to remind people to vote. Facebook is another freebee that can be used to collect supporters and get out events and ideas. It is important that if you do go in this direction, collect enough page likes to show strength. The one characteristic of on-line communications generally is that it only goes in one direction which is not an ideal way to collect information about voters in your district. It also allows non-supporters to collect information about the campaign. Do not assume that page likes on a forum like Facebook is the same as a definite supporter.
- ⇒ **Media-** Once you make the decision to run it is vital to have a press release generated to local and regional media outlets. This can be modified from your biography/campaign vision piece that you already created. For a local race you will generally find that local weekly papers, such as Ulster Publishing, will be more receptive to media coverage, but a good media person will include everybody as a gesture of goodwill. A media person can also issue regular media advisories if you have something important to say on a pressing local issue. Paid advertisements will be covered later.
- ⇒ **Palm Cards/Mailers-** Before you knock on your first door, start designing a simple leave behind rack card, sometimes called a palm card. The less wordy the better and it should be simple and bulleted with information from your biography/campaign vision statement you already created. These palm cards will be left behind at the door if nobody is home or passed out at community events. Don’t get stressed out or spend too much money on your palm card, but once you decide on a campaign design style try to tie all future pieces together visually by sticking with that design theme throughout the campaign for uniformity. There are numerous “fill in the blank” campaign design such as hotcards.com or winyourcampaign.com as well as blank palm card templates such as votercontact.org. Local mailhouses and printers will also design your palmcard, usually for a fee ranging from \$35-\$60/hour.

Designing mail pieces is another task for your communications person. As a rule, do not send letters and instead work with postcards of various sizes. The Ulster County Democratic Party has an indicia - a stamp marking that can be used to allow you to send your postcard mailings bulk rate. Remember to include this in the printed design. There is some research that suggests that mailing is only effective if at least three pieces are sent out. You should also understand that while you have important things to say, most voters will only spend a few seconds glancing at your mail. A small percentage will actually read it front and back so use bullets and highlight key points. A few mailer

themes include: an introductory piece stating your qualifications and key issues; an issue piece based upon one of your key campaign themes, such as economic development (if mailing is a strategy, you can do several of these issue mailers); a compare/contrast piece that highlights differences between you and your opponent; and finally a Get Out The Vote (GOTV) or reminder to vote card that tells everyone where their polling location is and shows a sample of the ballot. In local elections, mail can just as easily be left at the door during your canvassing, saving money and ensuring that most of the pieces will be put in the hands of the intended recipient.

⇒ **Scheduling and Communicating Conference Calls to Team Members-** If trying to put together a weekly in-person meeting of all your campaign members proves difficult, try mixing it up with a conference call. Having an agenda and sticking to it is really important or you can waste time. These calls can be particularly effective during key mobilization periods, such as a nightly GOTV call to principals from the campaign and regular petition check-ins so you have the most up to date information. There are several call-in sites to choose from. Freeconferencecall.com is popular and easy to use.

Try the Team Approach

If all of these Campaign Committee Roles and Responsibilities seems daunting, how about trying a Team Approach where you run as a slate with a common message and shared resources? This can be very helpful, especially for new candidates. Note: A Team Approach can also be done by creating an independent ballot line – i.e. Liberty Party of Lloyd, but this section will cover the coordination aspects of a Team Approach. Independent lines are covered under the Petition Section of this manual.

Pros: A Team allows for (*some*) joint fundraising and (*some*) mailers, shared data collection, group phone banks, etc. A Team can use one overall Campaign and Field Manager, one Communications and Database Manager, and is likely to generate more media attention as a group. It is also easier for your Town Democratic Committee to plug in their support as there is no split loyalties for time and resources. There is a level of enthusiasm that a team can generate that can be very compelling to voters as they will perceive something will get done with a team working together.

Cons: It goes without saying that any team is likely to have at least one “free rider” that does not contribute to the collective effort. Every candidate should be expected to work towards a common goal and this can be difficult if some team members are more popular than others. Coding support into a common database must reference weaknesses for certain candidates. It is also exceedingly difficult to come up with a common vision and goals. Do not assume the simplicity of the “Democratic Team” will be at all compelling and in fact go for something party neutral. The “One Kingston Team,” that sought to tie together the needs of Downtown, Midtown, and Uptown Kingston, is an example of a successful “Team Approach” that brought together the Mayor, Alderman-at-large, one of three County Legislators that covered Kingston, and several Common Council Members. Not every Democrat chose to participate; this question of why some and not all are working

together can be troublesome. Judicial candidates also have limits on the types of policy communication they can have with voters, both at the doors and in mail communications. Joint fundraising can also be challenging. For example, you conduct a cocktail party for “Make Wawarsing Work,” but all of the checks are written out to Friends of Candidate Jane Doe. Start your Team with an agreed budget for Team expenses and avoid frustration later. For example, Team banners, district mailings, Team drop pieces, graphic design contribution, etc. Then you know how much each candidate is responsible for early in the process.

Things you will still need to do independently on a Team Approach:

Even with a team it is very important to have your own palmcard. Your group could come up with one template for all members with a few core messages on one side and allow each candidate to personalize on the other side. You will generally not be canvassing each home as an entire team or you will scare away voters, so individual palmcards that introduce your candidacy to voters are a must. Couple your own palmcard with a Team palmcard. Remember that even if you run as a Team, get huge support as a Team, the voter will need to remember your name when they start circling ovals in on the ballot. Also, unless you create a joint committee and file with the Board of Elections and have that committee pay for every expense, you will still need a Campaign Treasurer and file those reports on your own. Realistically, you will need to spend money so just appoint a treasurer.

VI. Budget/Fundraising Strategy

No plan would be complete without a general idea of how much you will need to spend and how you can raise it. As indicated, a cocktail party coupled with some funding calls to friends and family is enough for most local campaigns. A countywide campaign is another animal and you will need to raise and spend serious money. Some questions to expand your pool of potential donors: Are you an active union member? Sometimes unions are very excited to financially support a member. Are you a pro-choice female candidate? Eleanor’s Legacy does provide small campaign grants. Sometimes the local Bar Association may be willing to host fundraiser on your behalf. If you have a website or online platform like facebook, you can also use a service like Paypal for supporters to easily purchase tickets to upcoming fundraising events or make direct donations to your campaign. Get creative and ask for what you need.

Expenses to Plan for:

⇒ Campaign Literature/Mailings

You will need at least one palmcard. Issue/Comparison/GOTV mailings can also be dropped at the door to save the cost of postage, but you still must plan for printing costs. Reminder #2: If you plan on sending your mailings bulk rate by using the County Democratic Committee indicia, make sure it is included in the design of your mailing.

⇒ Yard signs

Likely to be one of your most expensive items, yard signs come in many different sizes and can be designed with many different types of materials. If you diligently track your locations and collect them, the sturdier versions can last several campaign seasons. Placing signs strategically is important; in the yard of supportive voters is always the very best location. To place a sign in someone’s lawn you need express consent, so the

more yard signs in actual yards, the more people you have identified who are willing to publically state their support for your candidacy. The quantity of yard signs in a district is not generally a reflection of what to expect on Election Day, especially if those signs are lining roadways. Yard signs are a form of psychological warfare that can really get campaign insiders up in arms, but most voters stop seeing them after the first few days. One way to make an impression is blitzing your signs so that one day you have nothing and in a matter of 1-2 days have your district well covered. Finally, some municipalities have local laws regulating the time frame for placement of signage, such as Kingston's which is 30 days prior to the election. Large (and costly) 6x8 sized yard signs also can be a driving obstruction for motorists. Local committee people can be very helpful with identifying smart locations and making contacts with residents who have supported Democrats in past campaigns. It is poor form to leave your signs up more than 48 hours after an election. Make sure you build collection into your timeline.

⇒ *Events; both fundraisers you are invited to and the cost of fundraising*

You will need to plan on spending money to attend fundraisers for the Democratic Party and fellow candidates, in addition to the non profits and civic groups that carefully plan their annual appeals for funds around the political calendar. Each fundraiser you conduct will also cost you money for printing/postage and miscellaneous items such as decorations.

⇒ *Staff depending on the size of the district*

It may be that you want a few extra helpers around GOTV to help with literature drops and remind voters to come out. College students can be a great source of help. If the total payment accounts for less than \$600 then you do not have to worry about filing tax paperwork and the responsibility to report these wages is solely that of the "Independent Contractor." A good standard is to pay \$15/hour for canvassing. Remember that each person who is out in the community is a reflection of your campaign so make sure to build in some training time for each canvasser.

⇒ *Phones*

More and more the phone numbers on file that you receive from the BOE are not going to be very helpful. Who calls to update a phone number after you switch from a land line to a cell phone as primary phone? Sometimes the geography of the district and time constraints give candidates few options besides phone banking so there are a few things to consider. Do not even bother to install landlines; even pricing this option is a waste of your time. Sometimes friendly insurance or law offices will let your campaign make calls on designated evenings. You can also purchase disposable track phones or ask your volunteers to use their own cells. It is important to disclose to anyone using their own cell phone that call backs to that line are very likely to happen. It is important that you track your "Wrong Numbers" and "Not in Service" numbers into your database. You will then know to remove this voter from later calls and at the end of the campaign and you can help the County improve the NYSVAN system. The phone numbers in that database are already better than the BOE list because of the efforts from volunteers on state and national campaigns calling these same voters.

Some less and really less important discretionary spending

⇒ Newspaper Advertisements/Radio/TV

The media market of Ulster County is primarily Radio and Newspapers. A growing campaign trend is to create “infomercials” and post them on FB and on your website. 721 Media Center can help with this for the less tech savvy candidates (or those without teenagers at the ready), but it is really not a necessity on a small local campaign. Using these tools are best saved for Townwide/Countywide appeals. Radio is another area that you will be asked to purchase. Always go to local community stations, if you decide to go in this direction which is not advised for local races.

It can be very hard to say no to local newspapers when they come calling for advertisements because during the campaign you will develop relationships through interviews and coverage of your events. Newspaper advertisements in the Daily Freeman for a local race are not an especially effective tool to get your message out because the coverage area is large. Local weekly publications like Ulster Publishing are the better choice and generally more affordable, but still can be a big cost to your limited budget. Think about the type of person who reads these local journals and decide if that really represents your target voter. Also, make sure you have a good resolution photo and well-designed piece that you are submitting. A bad advertisement is much worse than no advertisement at all. If you have a cost choice between doing a mailing or a direct voter contact activity or doing an advertisement, the mailing or direct voter contact is better because it goes to your target. Direct contact allows for a voter assessment and targeted list. Once you are elected you can worry about sending a message to everyone; your job as a candidate is to send a message to those people that are likely to vote for you.

⇒ Campaign Swag – Tshirts, fridge magnets, bumper stickers, etc.

It can be amusing to see your name plastered everywhere; to ensure every family member’s magnet and pencil needs are taken care of for the rest of their lives. The efficacy of tchotchkes to improve visibility is dubious. Campaign veterans have seen it all. Packages of forget-me-nots seeds stapled to palm cards, baseball/football schedules, etc. These are all fun, but mostly a waste of resources. One of the biggest problems with campaign swag is that volume ordering is the general rule of thumb, so you can end up with a lot of 5,000 pens or refrigerator magnets. If you cannot resist. Below are some creative ways to upcycle your campaign swag:

<http://www.homemade-gifts-made-easy.com/refrigerator-magnet-crafts.html>

<http://sustainablog.org/2014/11/election-day-upcycling-brazilians-repurpose-campaign-signs/>

⇒ Billboards – Have you ever been moved to vote by a billboard, or a yard sign for that matter? Yard signs have essentially become a necessary evil and candidates should follow the rule of less is more, but billboards are a complete waste of funds.

V Field Plan – Schedule/Timeline

A good field plan will translate your win number (the estimates votes you need to win) into a workable schedule of events and activities to achieve your required number of “yes” votes for GOTV outreach.

Voter Contact-Voter contact can be classified in three categories – ID (Identification), Persuasion, GOTV (Get out the Vote). In a perfect world, and for very large elections, the first round of voter contact will almost always include ID’ing. It will be a simple, SHORTscript on the phone or at the door that gauges the potential voters understanding of the upcoming election and ends with a “if the election were held tomorrow will you be voting for candidate x or y.” This is simply a preliminary ID to gauge baseline name recognition and support. The most likely first round of voter contact for local candidates will be a combination ID/Persuasion where you will introduce your candidacy and then do some persuasion about the candidates, ending with an ask for support. In the early months of field outreach, many voters will just not have an opinion formed yet, so a bit of issue-based persuasion can be important.

A few tips for talking with voters:

Do- Ask them if you “Can Count on their Vote.” Code appropriately. Initially, it is not uncommon for most voters to be undecided.

Do- Log and Code responses into your database. Saving this task becomes a fool’s errand of deciphering chicken scratch. An effective coding system uses a 1-6 system or something similar. 1 being a strong supporter or someone who has taken an affirmative step to get you elected such as put up a yard sign, volunteered, or donated funds. 2 being a “yes I will vote for you.” 3 undecided or uncommitted. 4 being leaning in the direction of opponent. 5 being affirmatively in support of your opponent. Reserve 6 for folks who should not be contacted, moved, or ask not to be contacted again. Do not confuse 6 with 5. You will not be contacting 4’s and 5’s again, but it is important to track your opponent’s support.

Do- Err on conservative side with coding. Just because someone sort of nods agreement but is otherwise non-committal, they are a 3.

Do Not- Spend a lot of time trying to convince someone who is not supporting your candidacy. In that 45 minute conversation you could have reached other voters.

Do Not- Keep going back to supportive voters until the tail end of the election when you will conduct GOTV. Mailings or postcards to remind them of their commitment are fine in the final weeks. Time is best spent reaching new supporters.

Do Not- Inadvertently campaign for your opponent. While you are campaigning stay on message by talking about your candidate’s goals and objectives not the qualities of the opponent, or lack thereof. It is not helpful to raise awareness and name recognition of your opponent. Stay positive and win with your compelling vision of how things can get better.

It is especially important to schedule door-to-door canvassing and phone banking in your calendar. Before you begin to finalize your timeline, visit the State Board of Elections online for an “**OFFICIAL CALENDAR**.” This includes legal dates such as when you can begin to circulate petitions, when you must file your Wilson-Pekula/Acceptance for minor party lines, etc. (Minor party lines are done a bit differently. You will need to file an “acceptance” and the party must

file an “authorization,” also called a Wilson-Pekula. As a Democrat you do not need to be authorized to run because you are a member of the party.) Our local Democratic Ulster BOE staff is also excellent about assisting candidates. However, it is not their responsibility to remind you of important deadlines. When in doubt call the local office for clarification.

Below is an example of month by month campaign activities:

March – Complete self-assessment, campaign biography, and begin to assemble key members of your campaign team.

April/May – Reach out to key stakeholders, especially your local Democratic Committee to let them know about your intention to run. Will you be seeking the support of minor parties? You should communicate with the leadership of those groups too. Many minor parties have an interview and/or a questionnaire that must be completed for consideration. **Do not assume that you can wait to pursue a minor party! They have the same timeline as the Democratic party. Do not assume that because your Town runs a caucus that you should wait until the outcome of that meeting.**

June- Sometimes in the final days of May, but certainly by the first week of June, the Ulster County Democratic Committee will hold a nominating convention. During off-year, local election years, county offices will be selected. This will be followed by petitioning among registered Democrats within that jurisdiction. Local Town positions can be a bit different.

To have your name appear on the ballot for a local office does your Town/City run a caucus? During a caucus, your local town party conducts a meeting open to all registrants who will then vote on the nominees. Attendance can be very low so it is important for you to line up supporters and be prepared to identify someone to nominate you (a “First”) and someone to second the nomination. Once completed, the caucus results are final and you either will or will not be the designated Democratic candidate. Making sure you turn out your supporters is essential.

	Petition	Caucus
County-wide Office	✓	
County Legislative Seat	✓	
Town-wide or Town Council	* ONLY in the City of Kingston and Towns of Woodstock& New Paltz	✓
Any Minor Party i.e. WFP, WEP, IND	✓	✓ (some towns do have minor party committees)
County Democratic Committee	✓	

Note: The Green Party generally does not endorse non-party members for public office. You can do an Opportunity to Ballot Petition – see next section on petitions.

If you need to circulate petitions to have your name appear on the ballot as a Democrat – *or any other party*- then the month of June is going to be busy with petitioning. The City of Kingston and the Towns of Woodstock and New Paltz require all local Democratic candidates to petition to become candidates on the official ballot. All other towns hold a Caucus to determine who will appear on the upcoming ballot. Any candidate seeking a Minor Party/Third Party nomination must coordinate with that party and is likely required to circulate petitions on behalf of that third party. Only a registered member of the Minor Party (i.e. Working Families), a Notary, or Register of Deeds can witness signatures. Do not cut corners or attempt to look the other way when collecting petitions. Fraud charges can be waged post petitioning and this can haunt your candidacy. When petitions are required, a minimum of 5% of registered voters in the party for which you are circulating petitions must sign to authorize your candidacy. However, candidates at every level have been tossed off the ballot due to insufficient petition filings. A period of intense scrutiny over the validity of each signature occurs after they are filed. *Consider a MINIMUM of 10% and a safer 20% of registrants your target.* A great strategy is to begin the process of IDs during the petition process. Why wait and waste a visit to a potential voter? Caucuses can happen during the months of June, July, and August so be in touch with your Town Chair for the exact date, time, and location. As you are out identifying supporters you will want to let all of your strong “yes” voters – or 1’s – when and where the caucus will occur.

July/August/September- Generally by the first week in July the petition process is wrapping up. Make sure you are coordinating with your Town Party Chairs to have them submitted. **DO NOT SUBMIT PETITIONS DIRECTLY TO THE ULSTER BOARD OF ELECTIONS.**

Near the end of Major and Minor Party petitions you may not be done yet; additional petition opportunities are available. The first type is called an “Opportunity to Ballot” or OTB. A sample version of this ballot is available at the NYS Board of Elections website. For an OTB, voters sign a petition saying they would like the opportunity to write someone’s name in. Only registered voters who have not already signed for another candidate for the same office can sign this petition. No candidate name appears on the petition and people can write in anybody during the primary election; You may be positioning your opponent to earn another line because it comes down to who can turn out the most voters for the write-in election. Sometimes an OTB will be waged when your opponent (or you) has been authorized to receive that line. In this instance, one candidate’s name will appear and below it will be a write-in box presenting a very challenging contest to steal the line away. There is also the opportunity to create an “Independent” party – the signature threshold is higher and because it is at the end of petitioning it becomes harder to achieve the required number of people who have not already signed a nominating petition. As you weigh the need for these extra lines, just consider the time and effort that is being diverted from your campaign goals.

There will also be an important filing for your Treasurer during this timeframe. The rest of your time campaigning should be spent contacting voters and connecting to community leaders, always remembering to ID and code properly so you can achieve your win number. A good calendar will also include all of your events and scheduled field canvassing/phone banking time. There will be a million community festivals and events, including the Ulster County Fair. These are all good, but try to be selective and choose these events in addition to, not instead of direct voter contact. Ulster County draws many tourists so campaigning with residents of New Jersey is not ultimately helpful. September usually brings an onslaught of fundraising events – be judicious. There are a few political folks who may suggest that people don't want to be bothered with politics until after Labor Day. Ignore them. During your initial campaign planning, if you identified measurable and specific issues, rooted in community needs, voters will be interested in talking about them. Discussing these concerns is not "politics" but helping to build community. Remember all that coding that was done as you went door to door and phone banked? All of the ID's who were undecided should be revisited during the months of late August, September and early October. Now you will be working on a straight persuasion script because you now everyone you visit needs a gentle push to become a supporter.

October-By now your field reconnaissance should put you into range of your win number. If you are still struggling to reach your goal but have visited all of your initial targets and revisited all of your 3's (undecided), you could add in more "less likely Democrats" such as newly registered voters to your pool of targets, but just remember to prepare your campaign to do some extra outreach during GOTV to ensure they end up voting. October is also the month to file more financial disclosures. A big goal this month will be to gather up volunteers for GOTV – Get Out the Vote.

November – GOTV or Get Out the Vote is the previous 4-5 days (Friday-Election Tuesday) before the general election. GOTV is extremely labor intensive because your plan ideally should include 3 "touches" or reminders of various types to ensure that your supporters show up on election day. The only communication that should occur during GOTV is with identified 1's and 2's; you will eliminate communication with any 3's. The time for persuasion to undecided voters is over because you do not want to remind a voter about the election if you are uncertain who they will support. Examples of three "touches" may include:

- ⇒ A "Dear Neighbor Letter" – This is a personal letter to neighbors within a few block radius from an important, well liked neighbor that talks about why this individual is supporting your campaign. This can be modified for larger districts to include one generic letter signed by numerous prominent leaders – i.e. community, business, faith. These can be dropped door to door to each identified 1 or 2 or mailed.
- ⇒ A reminder of election day/ride to the poll call
- ⇒ A mailing with a sample ballot and poll site information that highlights your name
- ⇒ Alternatively, a palm card or door hanger used for a "knock and drop" – a quick knock and if no answer leave the card; A hand written "sorry I missed you..." note is a nice personal touch.
- ⇒ If you mailed palm cards, chances are good that you have overage. Now is a great time to use them to hand out as you go door to door. At this point the voter has likely seen

them, but it just feels good to have something to hand to the voter as you remind them of the coming election.

- ⇒ Visibility on election day– 1. On election morning, tying balloons to yard signs near polling places. 2. Visiting busy school bus stops to remind moms and dads to vote. 3. Holding yard signs at busy intersections during rush hour. This should only be done in high performance election districts.
- ⇒ Remember those “who knows who” meetings you held in the beginning of your campaign? Reminding those folks to reach out to their social networks is important in the final days. For example, if you have two leaders in District 7 who identified 25 people between eligible co-workers, neighbors, and fellow churchgoers have them go back and personally remind those individuals to vote. Social networks can be a more effective tool for gaining votes than many other strategies because people that voters trust and respect are effective spokespersons.

Your GOTV efforts can be very labor intensive because you have a compressed time frame; hence the need for many volunteers.

A Word on Election Day -

Many Towns and Cities have long traditions of baked ham dinners, candidate luncheons, or other Election Day events. These are important for the candidate to participate with, but make sure you still have a team of campaign volunteers doing the last minute turnout calls and door knocking to turnout voters. Not just any voters, but your identified supporters. By GOTV you will only communicate with voters who are coded as 1 or 2 (solid yes votes) because by broadly encouraging everyone to vote you may be reminding your opposition to come out.

One strategy many communities have used is a “pull operation” on Election Day to determine who has voted. At 6:00am when the polls open, lists of voters are distributed to democratic election inspectors. In theory, seldom in practice, as voters arrive names are crossed off these extra lists. It is an amazing feat to set up poll watchers at each poll site and expect accurate information. Each one of these poll watchers will need to be stationed from 6:00am to 9:00pm and during certain times – the 5pm post work rush for example – it is almost untenable to keep up. A better strategy is to maintain a list of your target IDs at your working Election Day headquarters and periodically send out a runner to take a snap shot of the sign in list of all voters. This list is accurate and maintained by election inspectors. This is faster and opens up more of your volunteers to assist with turn out calls and door knocks to those voters whose names do not appear on the sign in list. Each one of your poll runners must have an official “poll watcher certificate” which can be obtained through your town democratic chair or the county party chair. You will need a separate certificate for each visit to the poll site and a certificate for each Election District. Many poll sites have consolidated to include multiple areas. As a matter of courtesy and law, you should not engage in poll site electioneering and remove all campaign paraphernalia before entering the site. Make your visit brief and be respectful.

4. Petitions and Filing

Campaign petitions are legal documents governed by a timeframe laid out annually by the NY State Board of Elections. You must use the official election calendar that gives you your dates for circulating petitions. If you must petition on the ballot, you will need to collect VALID signatures from 5% of registered party members. To ensure a safe margin after your petitions are scrutinized for errors always choose 10-15% as your real minimum. Petitions circulated prior to or after your petition window will not be accepted.

There are three main types of petitions – Party Designating Petitions, Opportunity to Ballot Petitions, and Independent Nominating Petitions. Read each document carefully. Problems arise when information is omitted or they are sloppy and do not follow directions. Samples of all of these documents can be found at the NYS Board of Elections Website.

<http://www.elections.ny.gov/RunningOffice.html> Once your petitions are finalized, have a second set of eyes check for omissions or errors.

The current political parties are the Democratic, Republican, Conservative, Working Families, Independence, Green, Women’s Equality and Reform parties. As you collect and create ballot lines, only the first two count as separate lines. Every party line after that are co-located. For example, if you are running on Democrat and Green but also decide to petition on to the Working Families and create a new party “United New Paltz” then WFP and United New Paltz would share a line on the ballot and be only one bubble for voters to color in. Every four years the total votes cast for governor determines ballot position. When co-locating lines, it is done based on votes cast during the governor’s race. The more votes received on each respective party line, the higher the position in every subsequent election for the next four years.

Political parties may nominate a candidate who is not an enrolled member of the political party. This is often the case for third party endorsements. You are a registered Democrat will also be running on a minor party line. The minor party (i.e. Independence) must file a **certificate of authorization**, signed and acknowledged by the presiding officer and the secretary of the meeting at which such authorization is given. A certificate of authorization is not needed for nominations resulting from a caucus or for a candidate for a judicial office. You are required to file a **certificate of acceptance/declination**. This is a legal document and must be notarized. Timelines for filing these documents, if required, are detailed in the official NYS BOE Calendar.

Party Designating Petitions are those you will use to have your name appear on the ballot as a Democrat or recognized minor party. The chart on Page 19 summarizes whether you are required to circulate, or if you will be participating with a caucus. A mistake many candidates make is to assume that minor parties, i.e. Working Families Party, can be dealt with after your democratic petitions are complete. All NYS political parties follow the same calendar; do not wait. If your town conducts a caucus in August and you wish to seek a minor party line to allow for “fusion voting,” the process by which all votes on every line are counting toward your final tally, make sure you are following the petition timeline which is completed by early July for these minor lines. Only a member of the political party for which the petition is designated may

circulate, unless a notary or register of Deeds attests they have witnessed each signature and each voter swore their membership in the designated party. The “Statement of Witness” will sometimes add a section for notaries or register of deeds below the main statement. Voters may only sign one petition for each office so if there is a potential primary challenge, get out early. Only the signature dated first will count towards your 5% collection requirement.

Opportunity to Ballot (OTB) Petitions are different from designating petitions because it does not identify a specific candidate. Rather, it allows for the writing in of an “undesigned” candidate effectively opening up a write-in campaign. Many OTB campaigns are for third party ballot lines such as the Independence, Working Families or Green Party. If the political party circulated designating petitions for another candidate, the primary ballot will include that name and space to write in an alternative. If there was NO endorsement and designating petition circulation, then the primary ballot will be a simple write in. The Green Party rarely runs their own slate of candidates. Obviously an OTB comes with risks because you are opening your candidacy to the monumental tall-order of first getting supporters to come to a primary which is difficult enough. You are also asking voters to take the affirmative step of writing your name in. They can, and sometimes will, write in a new person altogether. For example, Republican George Amedore captured the Green Party line away from the Democratic Nominee in 2016 simply by registering a posse of new voters as Green Party members. OTBs, in cases where the party has endorsed rarely succeed, and if you plan on a long period of public service, you are burning a bridge for the future. Many parties chose not to endorse for their own reasons. You must weigh all of this and consider the time you will spend away from your primary focus – persuading voters.

Finally, **Independent Nominating Petitions** allow you to add an extra line by creating a new organization. This is a party you create – i.e. Esopus Good Guys, Kingston Free Parking, Woodstock Peace Party. Sometimes an Independent line can be used to express a policy vision, such as “Kingston Free Parking,” other times it may simply be used to add another location on the ballot for your name to appear. Creating an Independent line is another big time commitment that must be weighed against other campaign priorities.

How to File Petitions

Once your petitions are complete, this is where the Ulster County Democratic Committee shines. In most cases, leaders and volunteers work with candidates to ensure that your petitions are in good shape and properly filed. Every petition is presumed to be valid when filed, if, on its face, it appears to be in proper form and to contain enough signatures. However, a registered voter may challenge the validity of a petition. Written objections must be filed within 3 days after the petition is filed. “Specific” objections must be filed within 6 days of filing the general objections.

If you collect more than 10 sheets of petition pages you will need a **Cover Sheet**, a sample is available at the NYS BOE website. If a cover sheet is required, you will file with 1 Volume. In rare circumstances you may need to file with more than 1 Volume. You should consult a representative of the board of elections for additional guidance if you think this is the case.

The best way to review or “clean” your own petitions is to consider what can be used as deficiency triggers during the objection process. After your petitions are filed any voter with “standing” (living in the district and eligible to vote) can file a “general objection” to your petition based on deficiencies. They have three days after you submit to file a general objection. Then, they will have 6 days to file “specification to objection” – a line by line, page by page summary of deficiencies. Changes can be made to everything but the voter signature. Initial all alterations and scratch outs.

Common objections that can be raised:

- ✓ ***Alterations***
- ✓ ***Missing Dates***
- ✓ ***Duplicate names in same petition/Signed another Petition***
- ✓ ***Address Incomplete/No address***
- ✓ ***Not enrolled in the party stated on the petition***
- ✓ ***Missing/Incomplete Page Numbers***
- ✓ ***Out of Election District***
- ✓ ***Wrong Address stated on petition***
- ✓ ***Subscribing Witness information altered (not initialed)***
- ✓ ***Number of signatures omitted from subscribing witness statement***
- ✓ ***Wrong Town***

You may wish to review your opponent’s petitions employing the same standards in which you cleaned your own petitions. Before you consider filing a general objection, a simple FOIA request will allow you to see what has been submitted before you move it to the next level. You can also request “voter dumps” from the Ulster County BOE – copies of voter registration information for voters you have questions about. Note that if a scribbled illegible signature is what is on file with BOE, that is the legal signature.

Petition Tips:

- Use a list of registered voters – **Do Not** circulate at grocery stores or other public venues unless you personally know the voters and are aware of their party affiliation. Do not leave petitions unattended at a public venue such as a fundraiser or church as each signature must be personally witnessed.
- To the extent possible, have voters complete only the signature and fill in the date, address, and City/Town yourself. This saves on errors, especially in the Town. For example, if a voter lives in Ulster Park, Esopus must be listed. Many voters incorrectly list Kingston as City/Town in the Town of Ulster because that is what their address identifies as. Most people do not realize what TOWN they live in and go by the municipality listed on their address.

- Set a date for petition cleaning with all of your volunteers one week prior to submission. This allows you time to correct deficiencies and gather any additional signatures you may need.
- Never bring your petitions to the Board of Elections until they are in final form and you are ready to submit. Call ahead and the Democratic Commissioner will happily answer questions or even meet you off site to assist with preparing your final submission.
- Know your dates for submission, filing of acceptances, etc. While the Democratic Commissioner and party representatives are helpful, sometimes sending reminders, it is not their job or requirement to manage your campaign timelines.
- Initial any scribbles or cross outs, **especially if it is in Statement of Witness.**
- This is a straightforward legal document; read it well. If it asks for physical address do not put a PO Box or "" marks.
- Make sure all individuals circulating your petition are registered members of the party for which they are carrying. Any registered member from the State of NY is eligible, they do not have to live in district. This is difficult for minor parties and you can have a Notary assist.
- Complete the Sheet # at the very end. Sheets must be consecutive for the submitted volume and not include duplication. This is very important.
- No white out is allowed or that signature/page will be tossed. If you must correct an error, cross out and initial. You do not get penalized for ugly/messy petitions or even coffee rings, but copies of originals or white out marks will invite a high level of scrutiny for each page and every signature.

Democratic Designating Petition Sec. 6-132, NY ELECTION LAW

I, the undersigned, do hereby state that I am a duly enrolled voter of the Democratic Party and entitled to vote at the next primary election of such party, to be held on **September 10, 2015** that my place of residence is truly stated opposite my signature hereto, and I do hereby designate the following named person (or persons) as a candidate (or candidates) for the nomination of such party for public office or for election to a party position of such party.

Names of Candidate(s)	Public Office or Party Position	Place of Residence (also P.O. address if not identical)
Michael P. Hein	Ulster County Executive	207 Orchard St. Hurley, NY 12443
Anthony McGinty	Ulster County Family Court Judge	11 Charming Bard Rd (POB 400) Rosendale, NY 12472

I do hereby appoint (here insert the names and addresses of at least three persons, all of whom shall be enrolled voters of said party),
 Frank Cardinale 70 Lipton St, Kingston, NY 12401
 Karen Markisenis 30 Manor Pl, Kingston, NY 12401
 Joseph O'Connor 536 Albany Post Rd, New Paltz, NY 12561
 as a committee to fill vacancies in accordance with the provisions of the election law.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand, the day and year placed opposite my signature.

Date	Name of Signer (signature required)	Residence	Town or City
1. / / 15			
2. / / 15			
3. / / 15			
4. / / 15			
5. / / 15			
6. / / 15			
7. / / 15			
8. / / 15			
9. / / 15			
10. / / 15			
11. / / 15			
12. / / 15			
13. / / 15			
14. / / 15			
15. / / 15			
16. / / 15			
17. / / 15			
18. / / 15			
19. / / 15			
20. / / 15			

Name – Whatever you decide for Name is what will appear on the ballot. For example, if your legal name is Jennifer, you may use Jen if that is how most people know you.

Public Office – It must be the exact office you are running for. For example, it cannot read City Council if the specific name is Common Council.

Place of Residence – PO Box AND Physical Address if needed.

Date – Consecutive and not before first day of circulation and not after the date listed under Statement of Witness or last day to circulate.

Signer – Any *registered* voter of the designated party. The signature must match the signature on file with the Board of Elections.

Address – No PO Box and no "" marks. A physical address is required.

Town – ***Pay close attention*** to this as it is a common mistake. Marbletown, not High Falls, etc.

Statement of Witness- Errors here are generally considered fatal. Everything must be completed. Initial any cross offs/strikes. Don't forget to count your signatures. The date must be on or after your last voter signature. Include Town/City, County.

Paginate your sheet numbers at the very end. If more than 10 sheets staple and add a cover sheet.

STATEMENT OF WITNESS

I, (name of witness) _____ state: I am a duly qualified voter of the State of New York and am an enrolled voter of the Democratic Party.
 I now reside at (residence address) _____

Each of the individuals whose names are subscribed to this petition sheet containing _____ signatures, subscribed the same in my presence on the dates above indicated and identified himself to be the individual who signed the sheet. I understand that this statement will be accepted for all purposes as the equivalent of an affidavit and, if it contains a material false statement, shall subject me to the same penalties as if I had been duly sworn.

Date _____ **Signature of Witness** _____
WITNESS IDENTIFICATION INFORMATION: The following information for the witness named above must be completed prior to filing with the Board of Elections in order for this petition sheet to be valid.

Town/City of _____ **County of Ulster** _____ **Sheet #** _____

5. Directory/Resources

a. Boards of Elections

Ulster County

284 Wall Street

Kingston, NY 12401

(845)334-5470

<http://ulstercountyny.gov/elections>

Key Democratic Staff:

Victor Work, Democratic Commissioner – cvicwork@gmail.com

Ashley Dittus, Deputy Democratic Commissioner – Ashley.Dittus@gmail.com

New York State

40 North Pearl Street, Suite 5

Albany, NY 12207

(518) 474-6220

<http://www.elections.ny.gov>

b. Democratic Leadership

Town/City	Name	Phone	Email
City of Kingston	Joe Donaldson	845-853-4046	Water12401@yahoo.com
Denning	Kim Noble	917-848-4583	Kimcollette19@gmail.com
Esopus	Roscoe Pecora		roscoepecora@gmail.com
Gardiner	Mike Kruglinski	845-649-8966	bigkrug@yahoo.com
Hardenburgh	Joy Schluter	845-586-2966	
Hurley	Mike Shultis	845-339-7798	hurleydemschair@gmail.com
Town of Kingston	Edward Kowaleski	845-532-1775	Edkowaleski1985@gmail.com
Lloyd	Robert Haskins	845-834-2972	stonedockcottage@gmail.com
Marbletown	Phil Ryan Theresa Regan	845-339-7858 845-334-9188	pgryan@aol.com theresarnlmt@gmail.com
Marlborough	Mici Simonofsky	845-236-4243	micipo@aol.com
New Paltz	Josh Honig	845-255-1229	J345@earthlink.net
Olive	Mary Ann Shepard	845-706-0101	Mashepard12@gmail.com
Plattekill	Rose Guerrieri	917-502-1958	Brandon733@aol.com
Rochester	Tim Gay Greta Baker	845-626-7204 845-626-5708	timothygay@aol.com gretacw@hvc.rr.com
Rosendale	John Schwartz	845-901-1584	jsch@panix.com
Saugerties	Lanny Walter	845-246-4668	lanny@lannywalter.com
Shandaken	Tom Rinaldo	845-688-9911	tomrinaldo@yahoo.com
Shawangunk	n/a		
Ulster	Marc Rider	845-551-6176	marcrider@yahoo.com
Wawarsing	James Dolloway	845-647-4724	ddolloway@hvc.rr.com
Woodstock	Laura Ricci	845-679-8442	laurawoodstock@verizon.net

c. Organizations

Organization	Contact	Phone	Email	Website
Hudson Valley Area Labor Federation/Upper Hudson Central Labor Council	Beth Soto	845-567-7760	esoto@hvalf.org	Hvalf.org
Citizen Action	Callie Jayne	203-803-7414	cjayne@citizenactionny.org	Citizenactionny.org
Ulster County Democratic Women	Gladys Figueroa	917-716-9033	F1321@aol.com	ucdw.org
Eleanor's Legacy	Brette McSweeney	202-228-7446 x14	Brette@eleanorslegacy.com	eleanorslegacy.com
Working Families Party	Phillip Leber	845-750-1647	pleber@workingfamilies.org	Workingfamilies.org
Indivisible NY19*			*Helpful resources	indivisibleny19.com
NYS Democratic Party*			*Helpful resources	Nydems.org