

ELECTIONS, CAMPAIGNS AND SOCIAL WORK

OVERVIEW

- Why are elections important for social workers
- All Elections are Local
- Who Votes?
- Who Campaigns?
- Types of Elections
- The Campaign
- Social Work Roles

WHY ELECTIONS ARE IMPORTANT FOR SOCIAL WORKERS

- Elections determine, to a substantial extent, who decides policies that are important to the profession and the people we serve.
- Elections are critical to the survival of our democracy
- Some elections decide policy directly

ALL ELECTIONS ARE LOCAL

- Tip O'Neil, former speaker of the House and Congressman from Massachusetts, said that All Politics are Local.
- In the United States, all voting is at the state and local levels. In national elections, state voting totals are combined through the Electoral College.

AT THE FEDERAL LEVEL WE ELECT

- A President and Vice President Every Four years
- 100 Members of the US Senate who serve staggered 6-year terms
- 435 Members of the House of Representatives who serve two year terms.

AT THE STATE LEVEL WE ELECT

- State Positions are set by State Constitutions
- Every state has a Governor
- Many have other elected executive offices
- Except for Nebraska, all have two houses in the state legislature
- In some states, Judges are also elected
- Local government elects many different positions

AT THE LOCAL LEVEL WE ELECT

- A variety of county, district and municipal positions
- Mayor, City and County Council
- School Board

WHO CAN VOTE?

- In Federal Elections, **ONLY** US Citizens can vote (18 U.S.C. § 611). There are criminal penalties if a noncitizen votes. There are also a small number of exceptions.
- In a very small number of state and local elections, non-citizens can vote.
- Only registered voters can vote in most elections. North Dakota does not have voter registration

WHO CAN CAMPAIGN?

- Political Parties
- Individuals
- Corporations
- Certain Types of Nonprofits (501(c) 4s, 501 (c) 6, 527 Organizations)
- Government Employees Cannot Campaign because of the Hatch Act
- 501 (c) 3 Organizations Cannot engage in Partisan Political Campaigns

TYPES OF ELECTIONS

- Candidates
 - Primary—Elections to see who gets on the ballot
 - Regular or General—Regular Election of Candidates
 - Special—Elections to fill vacant seats or for other purposes
- Ballot Initiatives and Referendums
- Other Specialized Elections

THE DISTRICT

- All Elections are Centered on a Geographic Area
- The Boundaries of some districts change with changes in population and political situations
- Reapportionment and Redistricting—Normally done every 10 years with the Census.

THE CANDIDATE

- Requirements to Run
- Exploratory Committee
- Petition to Place on the Ballot
- Primary Elections

POLITICAL PARTIES

- In the US, we have two major political parties and many smaller parties
- Parties bring fundraising and organizing expertise
- Parties conduct Voter Registration Campaigns
- There are state and local branches of the national political parties

FUNDRAISING

- Money is crucial to political success
- The campaign raises money from direct contributions.
- Political Action Committees raise money for candidates and causes
- Money comes from political parties
- There are strict rules about donations to political campaigns
- Campaigns report contributions to the Federal Election Commission
- Dark Money is money from unknown Sources

THE PROCESS

- Decision to Run & Exploratory Committees
- Initial Campaign
- Primary
- Campaign in Chief
- Election
- Post-Election Issues

CAMPAIGN STRUCTURE

- Campaign Committee
- Campaign manager
- Consultants
- Paid Workers
- Volunteers
- Research

PROCESSES

- Campaign Intelligence
- Get out the Vote
- Media
- Fundraising
- Events and Meetings

CANVASSING AND GET OUT THE VOTE

- Voter Registration
- Door to Door Canvass
- Direct Mail
- Phone Banks and Robocalls
- Leaflets E-Mail & Websites
- Poll Watching

MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY

- Earned Media vs Paid Media
- Media Types
 - Television
 - Internet-Based (Website, Social Media, E-mail, 19)
 - Traditional Press
 - Alternative Press

ELECTION DAY

- Polling Places
- Voter Suppression
- Voter Assistance and Protection
- Exit Polling
- Election Integrity

POST ELECTION ISSUES

- Press Determinations are not official
- Announcement
- Formal Certification
- Recounts and challenges

SOCIAL WORK ROLES

- Volunteer
- Campaigner
- Fundraiser
- Candidate

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