



Preparing for a **COVID-19** Economy

Launching Your Local's Campaign Operation — Month One

Every IAFF local should be planning for local elections in the coming year, especially if the commitment of local elected officials to the integrity of your department is in question.

If your local has not been politically active in recent years, it's time to start. Campaigns are built from information, messaging and resources (time, money and people) – these steps will help you assess the potential battlefield and your available resources and begin to change things in your favor.



Month One: Gather Information and Assess Your Structure

The biggest mistake campaigns and political organizations can make is to launch efforts without doing the research. Take the time to develop written research on the political landscape in your jurisdiction.

Political Landscape Questions

- Who is in charge – your mayor, council, board?
- Who is on your team? Who is on the other team? Who is in the middle?
 - Be conservative in who you identify as an ally – tangible proof (actions) should be the standard, not happy talk.
- When are the next elections for your council/board/mayor?
 - Who are the challengers in these races?
- Is a pro-fire fighter majority possible to achieve or protect?
- What does the political geography look like? Obtain district maps and list the precincts that make up each district.
- What does the partisan makeup of your races look like? The IAFF can help you use our LAN voter file to assess likely turnout and partisanship in given districts.
- Who are the other players in your area? (organizations, individuals, party structures, etc.).
 - Who is on your team? Who is a potential rival?
- How much do campaigns cost in your jurisdiction – look up campaign finance reports from recent races.
- What does it take to make a race competitive? Primary or general election?
- How many votes does it take to win in each district?
 - Look at past turnout in similar election years – in a single-member district, look at 52 percent of that average turnout.
 - In multi-member seats, how did the top vote-getter do?
- What are the campaign finance regulations in your jurisdiction?
 - What type of entities can contribute (union treasury funds, individuals, voluntary PACs, etc.)?

- What are the limits to candidates? PACs? Independent Expenditure Committees? Party Committees?
- Can PACs contribute to candidates and run independent expenditures, or do they need to be separate?

Assessing Your Local's Political Strengths:

• Money: The Local PAC

- Do you have a political action committee (PAC)?
- If no, open an account immediately.
 - » For a new PAC, determine state and local rules governing the PAC and decide how to start raising money. In hard money states, this may require voluntary contributions from members. In states that allow dues money to be used for political contributions, you still may need to change your local's bylaws.
 - » If yes, what is your cash-on-hand?
- What is your revenue each year for the past four years?
- What is your anticipated revenue for the rest of this year?
- What is your average spending in each election cycle?
- Do you spend on contributions only or also conduct independent expenditures?

• People: Member Involvement in Campaigns

- How many of your members have previously knocked on doors or made phone calls for campaigns as part of your local's efforts?
- Do you have those activists on a list that is accessible?
- Do you have cell numbers and personal email addresses for all your members?
- Do you have certain members of your board or leadership team assigned to be campaign activists?
- Do you have a structure in place to deliver political information to your members?
- Do you talk about local politics during union meetings?
- Do you talk about local politics on your public and private social media sites?
- How many of your members live in your jurisdiction? Within a 30-minute drive?
- Have any of your active members attended the IAFF Political Training Academy? State Political Training Academy? Other political training?