

Finding Your Political Power— Elected or Not

Ready to Run 2026
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In this session we will:

- Listen to the stories of women leaders
- Discover opportunities to become involved in political parties, and local, county, and state governments
- Take inventory of who we are and what we bring to the table
- Plan our next steps
- Create a system of accountability so we follow through





LEADERSHIP STORIES






What is one thing you
want to change?





If you want to change something you must...

- Correctly identify the decision maker
- Know how they got their job
- Understand the process they use to make their decisions



Elections can make
people feel stupid.



Demystifying government and political parties

- What do they do?
- Why are they important?
- How can you participate in them?



The “F” word.



Local governments come in two flavors

- General purpose local governments
 - Examples: Counties, municipalities
- Special purpose local governments
 - Examples: School districts, sewer districts, fire districts

Demystifying NJ municipal government

- What are they called?
- How are they different from each other?
- What do they do?
- Why are they important?
- How can you participate?

Demystifying county government

- How are they different from each other?
- What do they do?
- Why are they important?
- How can you participate?

Demystifying state government

- What does it look like?
- What does it do?
- Why is it important?
- How can you participate?

Demystifying political parties

- What do they do?
- Why are they important?
- How can you participate?

Ideas for getting involved:

Show up at a Democratic or Republican Club meeting

Run for your county party committee

Explore the website of your state, county or local government and look for opportunities to get involved

Volunteer to help someone who is running for office
(municipal, county, state, federal)

More ideas for getting involved

Attend a meeting of your school board, municipal government, or county government

Ask your local elected officials or your municipal clerk how you can apply to serve on a board or commission in your community

Apply for a position on a state board or commission (see supplemental materials 3.5)

Even more ideas for getting involved

Read publications that cover local, county, and state government regularly so you know what is going on

Get involved in your community– recreational sports leagues, the food pantry, programs for senior citizens, go to community events

What is power?

What is organizing?

How are they related?

Take inventory

What are my interests?

What are my skills?

Who do I know? (To what communities am I connected?)

My plan...

What is my goal?

What are three things I will do to achieve
it?

Holding myself accountable....

Exchange email addresses or social media accounts with at least 2 people at your table.

Commit that at least once in the next three months you will send them a message and ask how they are doing and what they have done to implement their plan.