Why Don’t More Women Run?

Political Ambition, Women, and Local Government

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5 WOMEN Who would be good elected officials
What percentage of Wisconsin county board supervisors are women?
19% of County Board Officials are Women
19% COUNTY BOARD
23% CITY COUNCIL
40% SCHOOL BOARD
Change Between 2005 -- 2015

- County Board: ---
- City Council: + 3%
- School Board: + 3%
Year of Parity

- County Board: ---
- City Council: 2105
- School Board: 2047
EXISTING RESEARCH
Women win elections at the same rate as men.
Why don’t women run?
CURRENT

1,609 surveys sent

592 responses

37% response rate

Local elected officials
POTENTIAL

Local elected officials

5 Men
5 Women
5 Leaders
POTENTIAL

Local elected officials
What might be some barriers to running?
Top 10 Barriers for Potential Local Elected Officials (PLEO)

- **Lack interest or willingness to ask for campaign funds**: 58% Potential, 14% Current Supervisors
- **Time away from family or home responsibilities**: 57% Potential, 11% Current Supervisors
- **Time away from other activities I enjoy**: 53% Potential, 12% Current Supervisors
- **Time away from work responsibilities**: 51% Potential, 14% Current Supervisors
- **I lack interest/willingness to meet voters door-to-door**: 41% Potential, 9% Current Supervisors
- **Negative political atmosphere in local government**: 38% Potential, 9% Current Supervisors
- **Concern about the impact on my finances**: 35% Potential, 6% Current Supervisors
- **Spouse, partner or family being subjected to criticism from constituents**: 29% Potential, 6% Current Supervisors
- **I have concerns about reprisals or criticism**: 26% Potential, 5% Current Supervisors
- **I perceive a lack of support for my candidacy**: 25% Potential, 1% Current Supervisors
Amount of Household Chores

Current

Potential

0 to 20 Hours 20 Hours or More
Work Outside the Home

Current

Potential

0 to 20 Hours  20 Hours or More
DIFFERENCES Between Women and Men PLEOs on Significance of Barriers
CONCERNS ABOUT CRITICISM

HESITANT TO RUN AGAINST AN INCUMBENT

FEAR OF FAILURE & LOSING

CONCERNS ABOUT MAKING DECISIONS IN PUBLIC

NEGATIVE GENDER BIAS

UNCERTAIN ABOUT DOING A GOOD JOB
Barriers with Statistically Significant Differences Between Female and Male Potential Local Elected Officials

- I am concerned about race or ethnicity bias against me
  - Female Potentials: 3.40%
  - Male Potentials: 2.40%
- I don't think I would do a good job in elected office
  - Female Potentials: 8.40%
  - Male Potentials: 3.60%
- I am concerned about my "otherness," such as being a new resident, English as a second language, of a different religion, etc.
  - Female Potentials: 14.20%
  - Male Potentials: 3.50%
- I am concerned about gender bias against me
  - Female Potentials: 15.10%
  - Male Potentials: 1.20%
- I have concerns about making decisions in public
  - Female Potentials: 18.90%
  - Male Potentials: 4.70%
- I have a fear of failure/ losing the election
  - Female Potentials: 19.70%
  - Male Potentials: 8.20%
- I don't want to run against the incumbent
  - Female Potentials: 23.90%
  - Male Potentials: 5.90%
- I have concerns about reprisals or criticism
  - Female Potentials: 30.80%
  - Male Potentials: 17.60%
Percent of Respondents that Indicated that they had the Following Abilities or Experiences

- I have attended a political party meeting, convention or event: 52%
- I have an elected official as a family member or friend: 41%
- I have attended a state legislative committee meeting or floor session: 52%
- I have worked or volunteered for a candidate: 42%
- I have served on an appointed local government committee, commission or board: 52%
- I am informed about local public policy issues: 38%
- I interact with elected officials socially: 42%
- I have participated in a leadership development program: 50%
- I have solicited funds for an organization, interest group or cause: 41%
- I have attended local government meetings: 39%
- I have organized an event for a large group: 42%
- I have run an organization, business or foundation: 42%
- I know many people in the community: 46%
- I have interacted with elected officials as part of my job: 46%
- I have attended an event for a large group: 34%
- I have public speaking experiences: 35%
- I have run an organization, business or foundation: 38%
- I have organized an event for a large group: 38%
- I have interacted with elected officials as part of my job: 39%
- I have solicited funds for an organization, interest group or cause: 41%
- I have attended a state legislative committee meeting or floor session: 50%
- I have an elected official as a family member or friend: 51%
- I have served on the board of a non-profit organization or foundation: 43%
- I have attended a political party meeting, convention or event: 38%
- I have run an organization, business or foundation: 38%
- I know many people in the community: 46%
- I have interacted with elected officials as part of my job: 46%
- I have attended local government meetings: 39%
- I have solicited funds for an organization, interest group or cause: 41%
- I have participated in a leadership development program: 42%
- I have public speaking experiences: 35%
- I have organized an event for a large group: 34%
- I have run an organization, business or foundation: 38%
- I have solicited funds for an organization, interest group or cause: 41%
- I have attended a state legislative committee meeting or floor session: 50%
- I have an elected official as a family member or friend: 51%
Are you **qualified** to serve in local elected office?

60%

71%
How would you encourage them to run?
INFORMED ON LOCAL ISSUES
2. KNOWING MANY COMMUNITY MEMBERS
3. ATTENDING LOCAL GOV. MEETINGS
PUBLIC SPEAKING EXPERIENCE
LEADING AN ORGANIZATION OR BUSINESS
What are the barriers to running for local elected office?
WHAT'S NEXT?