

# Ledyard Democratic Town Committee

## CANDIDATE'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Thank you for your interest in running for local office! You are not alone in this endeavor - you have a team of Democratic Town Committee volunteers behind you!

**Any candidate for public office who receives the support of the Ledyard Democratic Town Committee should be aware of their responsibilities to the campaign and to the DTC.**

**A candidate should:**

- **Understand the office for which they are running.**
  - Speak with a mentor who has experience in that office/with current elected officials and the Ledyard DTC chair. Ask them to share their experiences, election procedures, and answer your questions.
  - Read past minutes from the board/commission to understand issues that have been addressed in the past.
  - Attend meetings for the board/commission prior to the election to understand issues that are being addressed in the present, to observe how the board/commission functions and to be better able to speak to the issues during the campaign.
  - All interested candidates should begin attending meetings of the Town Council (TC) and Board of Education (BOE), especially sub-committees where all the “work” is really done. Going to meetings will help candidates be able to answer resident questions.
  - Candidates should be prepared to ask questions at meetings, or raise concerns about issues. If those issues and questions are not addressed, those can become the letters to the editors that candidates write to get their names out there.
  - CT Association of Boards of Education (CABE.org) offers a helpful campaign strategy session to BOE candidates. Democratic State Central Committee (DSCC) offers several programs for Town Council candidates that are incredibly useful to attend as well.
  - Become familiar with State Election Enforcement Commission (SEEC) 2021 Guide to Municipal Candidates and other relevant SEEC procedures (<https://portal.ct.gov/seec>)
  
- **Be a team player.**
  - Write a short (no more than 100 words) campaign bio.
  - Attend campaign meetings
  - Meet deadlines for photos, brochures, etc.
  - *Fill out necessary paperwork required by the state (e.g., campaign finance material) and file when required.*
  - Keep other candidates and campaign workers informed of issues as they arise so they can be addressed.
  - Be flexible and positive. Embrace suggestions and offers of help.
  - Not mandatory, but very much appreciated: donate to the DTC to help defray campaign expenses. The party does a lot to support the candidates (brochures, mailers, database, social media), and welcomes contributions to that effort.

- **Campaign:**
  - Knock on doors, write letters to the editor, make phone calls, use social media: get the word out about your campaign, and the entire slate, to friends, neighbors, co-workers, and anyone else who votes in Ledyard.
  - **Know your goal.** Our November 2020 analysis shows that if you are running for TC or BOE, you need at least 2,100 or 1,900 votes, respectively, to ensure that you will win the seat. The good news is that's LESS than the total number of registered Dems in town!
  - Face time with voters is of primary importance. Candidates need to go to the voters, not wait to have the voters come to them.
  - There needs to be multiple “touches,” which is why CTVAN is so important. Door to door work is imperative, then record the information about the visit in CTVAN. Follow up all visits with a postcard, text or phone call. Make a second, and if possible, a third face to face visit to any folks who were a “maybe.” Send “likely” and confirmed voters a GOTV message (either text or phone call).
  - Attend town meetings: know what’s going on, and take a stand.
  - Participate in debates, candidate forums, campaign events, and meet-and-greets.
  - Submit requested candidate information to the media.
  - Attend town events and talk to people. SMILE, BE FRIENDLY, BE POSITIVE!
  
- **Before anyone runs for elected position, ask yourself a few questions:**
  1. Do you have the support of your family?
  2. Will you walk door-to-door to speak with voters?
  3. Why are you running?

The answers to these questions give you and our team a few immediate ideas on the route the campaign will take.

  1. Do you have the support of your family?  
*If you don't, your life will be a misery of conflicted demands on your time and attention.*
  2. Will you walk door-to-door to speak with voters?  
*If you don't, you will lose. This is a hard truth but a proven reality.*
  3. Why are you running?  
*Voters will ask you this every day and you will ask yourself this question every night.*

The Ledyard Democratic Town Committee already supports you and members will work hard to achieve your election, but volunteers only put in as much energy as they see the candidate investing.

## **WHAT CAN CANDIDATES EXPECT FROM THE DTC?**

The basic slate procedure is:

1. Candidate names are submitted to the Nominating Committee;
2. The nominating committee interviews candidates, and creates a recommended slate
3. The slate is presented at the LDTC caucus
4. Candidate bios and reasons why they want to run are shared to the whole committee
5. Slate is voted on.

**The Nominating Committee will choose a slate to recommend to the caucus based on:**

- 1) Will they be good campaigners - based on their energy, personality, commitment to improving the quality of life in Ledyard for all
- 2) Do they represent Party values/platform.

Traditionally, most residents don't start "thinking" about an election until Labor Day. However, groundwork can and should be done throughout the summer.

**After the slate is confirmed, the candidate group works together to develop their election strategy.**

- There usually will be a Campaign chair who is not one of the candidates.
- The group develops the campaign budget, organizes the purchase of signs and mailings, and plans their campaign strategy.
- The LDTC platform serves as the starting point for developing campaign talking points and written material.
- Candidates develop their bios, and create palm cards.
- The Campaign Committee should plan on getting at least two newspaper flyers distributed; one should be a bio of the candidates appearing 3-4 weeks prior to the election, and one GOTV the week before the election.
- If there is money, candidates could do a mailing, but it should be targeted to known "likely" or "confirmed" voters - they are too expensive for a local campaign.

### **CAMPAIGN INFORMATION**

The Democratic Town Committee will provide signs, postcards, campaign literature, and organizational assistance for your Campaign, including "walk lists" organized through the CT VAN (Voter Access Network), through which you will be provided with names and addresses of people to contact in your district. The Ledyard DTC will organize, with candidates, doorknocking, phonebanking, meet and greet, and other events when candidates can work together to contact voters.

It is important that you use only the materials created by the DTC, in order to ensure all legalities are followed and to create a unified imagery and messaging. Campaign Literature, commonly referred to as "Lit" must have specific wording and attributions, and signage is limited by municipal regulations. DO NOT PRINT YOUR OWN FLYERS.

**Candidates need to have three contacts with potential voters:**

- 1) Meet them and introduce yourself. Get a sense of whether they would vote for you. Ask if they have any issues they are concerned about in the City. Offer your literature and tell them your number in case they want to call you later. Even though the election may be several months away, you want to be sure to get their input now.
- 2) Send a follow-up note or postcard: "It was a pleasure to meet you this weekend...I am looking into your question about XYZ". Volunteers will help you with these mailings.
- 3) Phone Call: "Here's what I found out about your issue...Don't forget to vote for me in November...Please call me if you have anything else you want to discuss"

## **WHAT THE DTC WILL NEED FROM YOU:**

**Your Name.** On signs you will be identified by your name as shown on the final voting ballot. Please make sure the DTC Chair is informed of your preferred name (i.e., “Trip Chaplin” or “Charlie Chaplin” or “Charles Chaplin III”).

**Write a Bio.** Write several versions of your Bio. A short one would be only one paragraph, while a longer version would be about 80 words, and (for our files) a full page job resume with all committees and affiliations listed. These texts will be used on the DTC website and on your campaign literature, as well as to provide other information for the press and volunteers.

Make sure to have someone proofread these texts so there will be no need for re-writes. Give these Bios to your District Chair and Town Committee Chair or Secretary.

Later in the campaign you may need to do a version of these texts to answer surveys and questionnaires. Creating these documents in advance will make the process easier for you later.

**Photographs.** Provide the Town Committee with several Portrait-style photographs, each one in both color and in black & white, preferably electronically. These photos will be used in campaign literature, so they should have a flat light white background – no trees or books or furniture.

Have several photos taken, some casual and some formal, so there is a selection to choose from. If you have a color photo with your family, that is also useful.

It is best to copyright all photos, if feasible, in case they are reproduced without permission or altered to be unflattering.

**Friends and Family.** Try to get a group together of reliable volunteers, they will be huge assets during your campaign – writing letters to the papers, assisting with phone calls and mailings, walking with you door-to-door (or driving you in hilly areas). High School & College Democrats will have availability in July and August and on weekends and evenings in the Fall. Retirees have flexible schedules. If you belong to a Union or Fraternal Organization you may get valuable assistance on weekends.

**Though we realize this may seem overwhelming, we will help you every step of the way. We are here to help and you are not alone. Thank you for stepping up to help our community!**