

Running for Office the First Time

Local Government

So where do you begin? The larger the city or town is that you live in; the more important it is to talk with people who have the knowledge you need. The first stop you should always make is at your local government clerk's office or Board of Elections. They are the ones who have all the information you need on available offices. You should also speak to the local League of Women Voters chapter, politicians, political parties and government officials to find out what entry level offices are available. These are all good places to begin your search and some resources for these groups are listed below.

Finding the right race is important. There is nothing more frustrating than running in an election that you're not ready for and getting discouraged. It is important to do your research so you know what you're getting into. With the right preparation and planning, you can build a successful campaign even if you're running for the first time.

The good news is that there are plenty of offices in Durham County and the City of Durham that you can run for, which means there is an office out there for you. However, it's important to note that there is no single form of government for cities and towns and since we can't list each individual office we're going to give you an idea of the type of office you should be looking at for your first race.

Mayor

This position is the executive of the local form of government. In some cities, the Mayor serves in the full executive role, and has distinct powers separate from that of the city council. In other cities, a City Manager is hired by the Mayor and city council and performs most executive responsibilities under the direction of those officers. In this case, the Mayor is more ceremonial, and basically shares the same powers of a city council member.

City Council

These officers are responsible for the hiring of executive staff positions, adopting policy, and approving and monitoring the municipal/ township budget as it relate to local government operations (e.g. trash pick-up, parks and recreation, economic development, public safety, etc). Other responsibilities may be prescribed by city/township charter, constitutional mandate, or other laws.

School Board Members

Members are the trustees of the school district and responsible for hiring a Superintendent, approving curriculum and general education policy, and adopting and overseeing overall budget for a school district's operations.

Townships

In some places, communities are organized into townships rather than by city. In these communities, the Township Supervisor is the executive function of township government. There are other officers usually with executive powers (e.g. clerk, treasurer) that have specific powers. Instead of a city council, these communities have Township Trustees.



A FUTURE WORTH FIGHTING FOR



Candidate Resources

For more information on finding local offices to run for and becoming a candidate visit:

Durham County Board of Elections – <http://www.co.durham.nc.us/departments/elec/index.html>

North Carolina Board of Elections – <http://www.sboe.state.nc.us/>

North Carolina Democratic Party – www.ncdp.org/

North Carolina Republican Party – www.ncgop.org/

North Carolina Green Party – www.ncgreenparty.org

North Carolina Libertarian Party – www.lpnc.org/

North Carolina League of Women Voters – www.rtpnet.org/lwvnc/

Campaign and Leadership Training Organizations

Progressive Majority – www.progressivemajority.org

Wellstone Action – www.wellstone.org

Emily's List – www.emilyslist.org

Truman Project – www.trumanproject.org

Democracia USA – www.mydemocracia.org

Emerge America – www.emergeamerica.org

Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund – www.victoryfund.org

New Organizing Institute – www.neworganizing.com

For more organizations, visit Progressive Majority at www.progressivemajority.org/partners-and-allies

Elected Positions in Durham and Durham County

Citywide Offices

Mayor – Up for election in 2013

Council At-Large Post 1 – Up for election in 2015

Council At-Large Post 2 – Up for election in 2015

Council At-Large Post 3 – Up for election in 2015

City Council

District 1 – Up for election in 2013

District 2 – Up for election in 2013

District 3 – Up for election in 2013

Countywide Positions

Clerk of Court – Up for election in 2014

Register of Deeds – Up for election in 2012

Sheriff – Up for election in 2014

County Commission

At-Large 1 – Up for election in 2012

At-Large 2 – Up for election in 2012

At-Large 3 – Up for election in 2012

At-Large 4 – Up for election in 2012

At-Large 5 – Up for election in 2012

Board of Education

District 1 – Up for election in 2014

District 2 – Up for election in 2014

District 3 – Up for election in 2014

District 4 – Up for election in 2012

Consolidated District A – Up for election in 2012

Consolidated District B – Up for election in 2012

At-Large – Up for election in 2012

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