



Avalanche

1. Background
2. Sample Overview
3. Four Key Findings
4. The campaign moments
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6. Summary



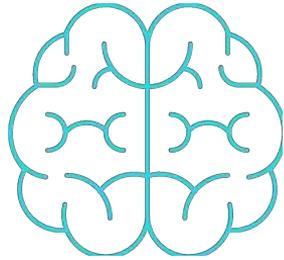
Background:

Our Approach



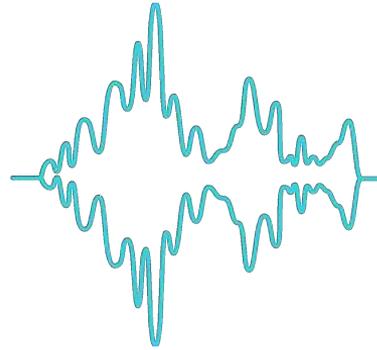
We all know:

How we **think** about things shapes how we **talk** about them



Think

- Priorities
- Values
- Emotions



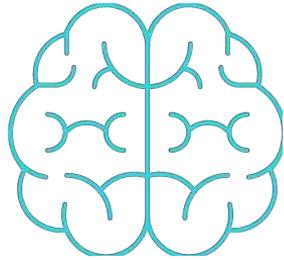
Talk

- Words
- Metaphors
- Tone



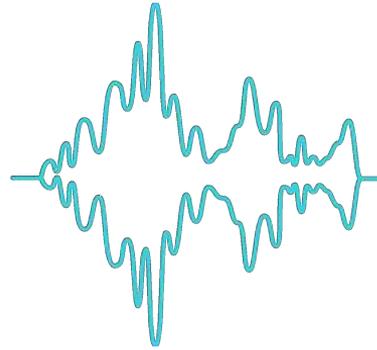
We just reverse this:

Analyze how people **talk** to understand how they **think** and **feel**



Think

- Priorities
- Values
- Emotions

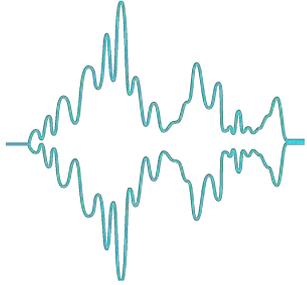


Talk

- Words
- Metaphors
- Tone



The Process



Listen

Prompt with open-ended survey



Understand

Analyze the language to reveal how they relate to the issue



Reflect

Messaging that reflects their priorities, values, emotions, and attitudes



Resonate

Mobilize the base and persuade the opposition



Background: Project Specs



Your Goals



1. Understand what past activities were most useful for candidates
2. Understand what future activities could be useful for candidates

Sample Specs



- ✓ 138 respondents
- ✓ 2018 midterm candidates
- ✓ Self select responses to RFS email and text request
- ✓ No gender skew
- ✓ Representation from cross section of regions and urban density

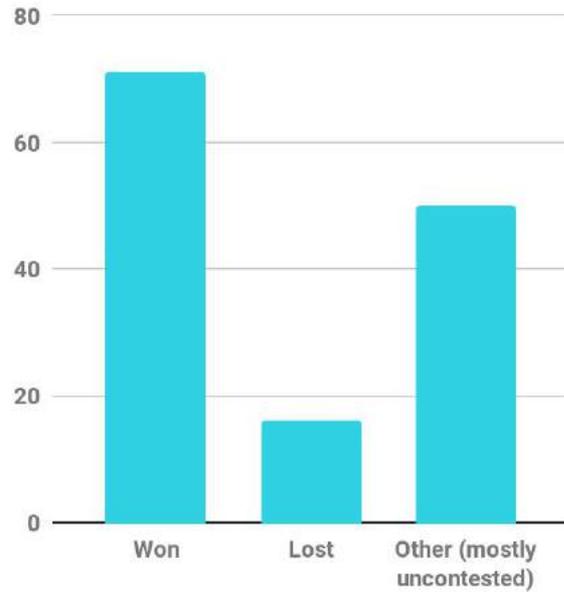
Analysis + Approach



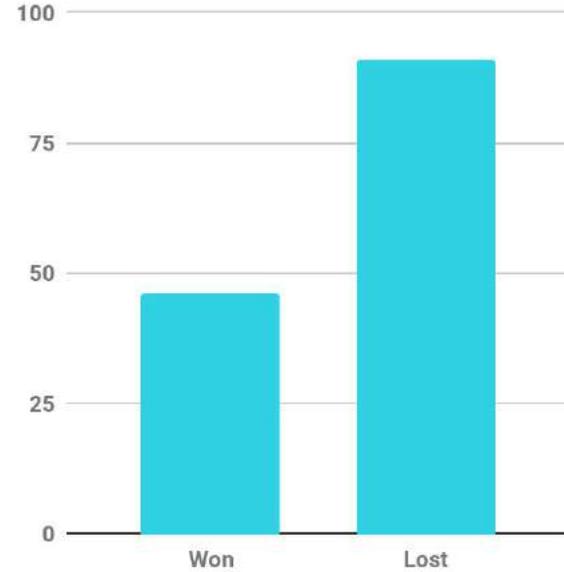
- ✓ Top level findings
- ✓ Deep dives:
 - Three key campaign moments
 - Ranking campaign resources
- ✓ Open and closed-ended questions
- ✓ Linguistic analysis:
 - Priorities
 - Emotion

Sample Characteristics: Victory

Primary Results

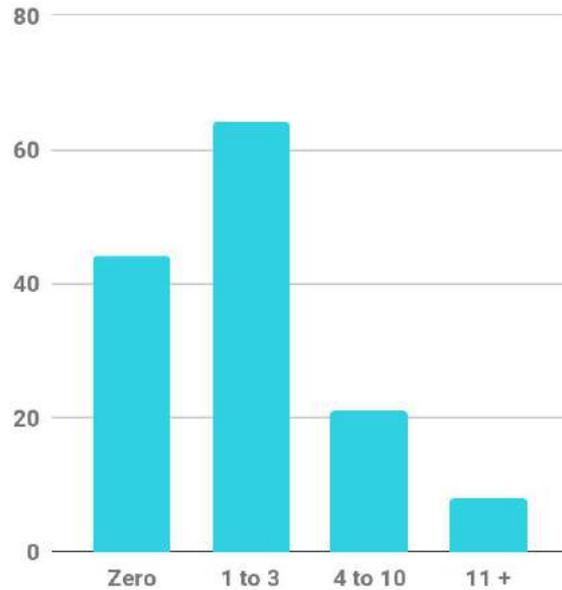


General Results

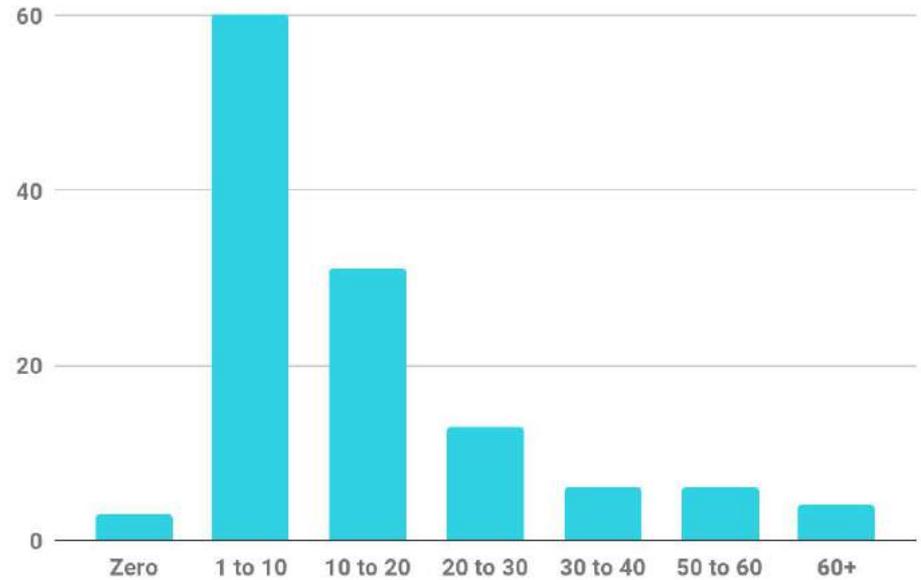


Sample Characteristics: Campaign Size

Number of Staff

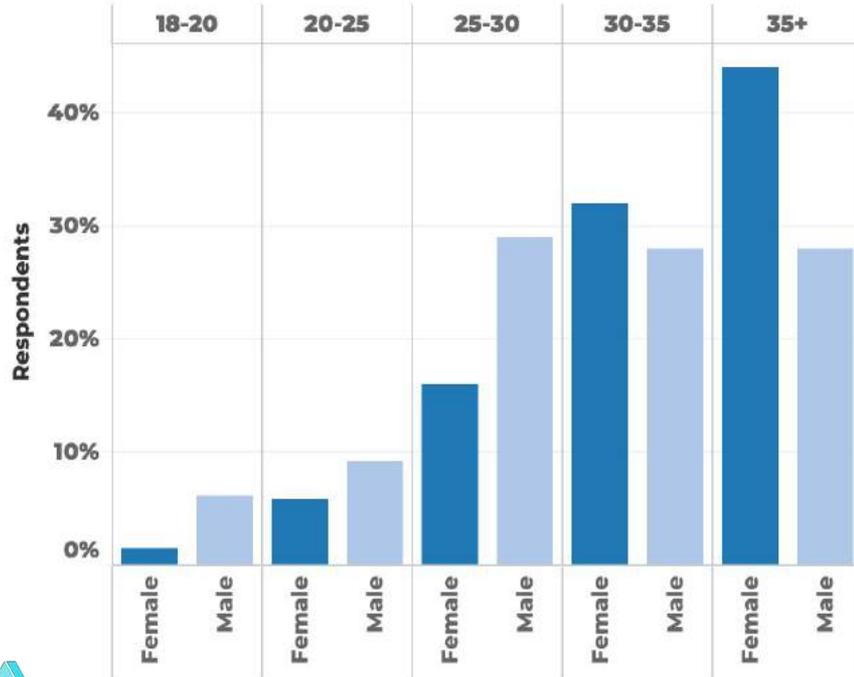


Number of Volunteers

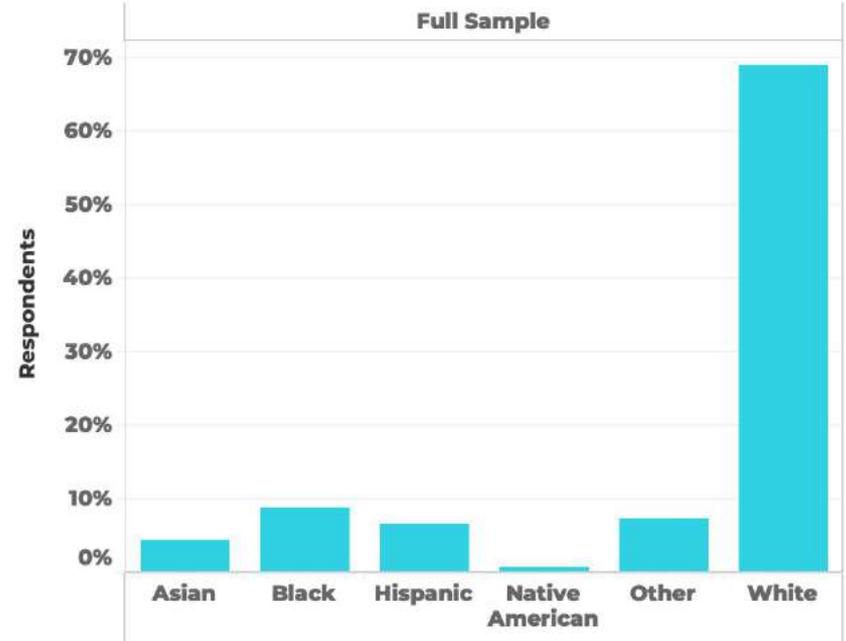


Sample Characteristics: Demographics

Age of candidates by gender



Race of candidates



Overview:

Six Key Findings



Top Level Highlights: Six Key Findings

- A. Validation:** Taking on their identity as a candidate is a key aspect of candidate campaign success.
- B. Local knowledge, networks and insight:** Helping candidates feel supported is one of the most important functions that organizations play - and candidates need more local support.
- C. One-on-one expert support:** Ongoing access to an expert or mentor who has shared experience provides uniquely valuable insight and support. Variables include campaign size, gender, race and constituency politics)
- D. Fundraising as soft and hard benefit:** More complex and more actionable than it seems.
- E. Candidate motivations:** Understanding the motivations of candidates can help to design interventions that will best help them feel validated early on and supported in their effort.
- F. Expectations and experience:** Misalignment between candidate expectations and actual experience is often the underlying reason that a challenging moment is so challenging.



Validation: Accelerating Success

For many first time candidates in particular, breaking through imposter syndrome and stepping into the identity of candidate is key to overcoming other campaign barriers and succeeding in their targets.

Particularly for people who don't feel that they belong in politics:

- woman
- young people
- first time candidates
- people without party support

They use words like: empowerment, affirmed, validated, legitimate

Accelerating the timeline on which new candidates experience validation, could accelerate their campaign trajectory. This could be achieved with intention with current activities, strategic intention, and aggressive timelines.

Campaign activities: hitting fundraising targets, door knocking, speeches and debates. In particular, doing and succeeding at whatever causes the individual anxiety.

Soft experiences: name recognition and media recognition play important roles in validation for many candidates.

Support: organizational endorsements and candidate endorsements from respected leaders, give candidates the confidence to see themselves as legitimate candidates.



Experts: Ideally Ongoing, On-call and One-on-One

Candidates reference ongoing expert advice as critical across the campaign trajectory.

Feeling supported is cited as the most important decision factor. At the moment of challenge, the strength of their connections with other candidates and experts is indicative of the ease with which they move through the challenge. And at the moment of success, candidates cite their relationships with candidates, organizations and experts as key to their success.

Function: subject expert; local expert; someone-that-gets-it.

Experts, mentors, advisors from supporting orgs and relationships with other candidates provide emotional and tactical support that is critical for candidate success. While some experts provide short term tactical or strategic support, candidates benefit greatly from at least one relationship with the following qualities:

Gets it: has experience in a race of my size with my dynamics (race/gender/conservatism), ideally as a candidate.

Ongoing access: trust is established through ongoing relationship.

On call: candidate can reach out with specific questions when they are overwhelmed, confused or in crisis.



Localism: Experts, Understanding, Network

The importance of local networks and local experts is referenced repeatedly at each key campaign moment - and in relation to key campaign resources.

Especially in smaller races, in conservative districts and in places where the democratic institution doesn't have a strong presence - candidates identify a need for greater local insight, support, and capacity.

Local dynamics, local politics and local networks in small races and in districts that don't have strong democratic presence are invaluable.

Investing in supporting local infrastructure and networks between races would help down ticket candidates with both soft and hard support. In particular:

Fundraising networks: local networks to be activated for local races need to be identified and stewarded.

Local advisors: 90% of RFS candidates in this sample have indicated they will mentor. A local mentor early on would accelerate candidates success on many fronts.

Volunteers and staff: folks who have any amount of campaign experience are very valuable to the candidate, have been built and run the risk of being lost.



Fundraising: Actionable Ways To Help

Fundraising is referenced in every context in open-ended questions from candidates, but it's not just about asking for more money.

While first time candidates cite needing more funds; experienced candidates overwhelmingly reference networks, training and related validation that support fundraising.

Men in particular focus on fundraising targets and want more training and support.

Candidates who identify fundraising as a pain point or an opportunity reference the hard benefits like staff and media - but also the soft benefits like a sense of momentum and personal validation. Hitting fundraising milestones builds confidence, but many candidates are overwhelmed in the beginning with little sense of what milestone to shoot for and why, how to actually do it and where to start in their community.

Not knowing what to do: 1st time candidates may not even know they are missing a plan, but experienced candidates know they should have targets and lists and make calls - but often don't know where to start.

Not being comfortable doing it: no one likes asking for money when they start - getting candidates over that hump so they experience the momentum is key.

Not having the network to enable for local fundraising: new candidates, especially in traditionally republican districts, often lack the personal or institutional network for fundraising.



Goals and Motivations to Run

Broadly, there are four ‘kinds’ of candidates who are motivate to run:

- self actualizer
- community lover
- reactionary fighter
- rabble-rousing-change-maker

Understanding the motivations of candidates you support (or are nudging from interest to running) could help to design interventions that will best help them feel validated early on and supported in their effort.

These categories cross cut other factors like age, race, experience, and family commitment.



Self-actualizer: running for office is a slow drip sort of thing that they always knew they'd do. They feed off of the energy of name recognition, media or endorsements from other candidates, and benefit from tactical support.

Community lover: is in it for their local community and the people in it. They feed off of one-on-one conversations and connections. They need to feel their vision validated so they feel the permission of their community, especially to fundraise.

Reactionary fighter: is fighting against this moment and rising to the occasion. May need support finding their own story and their vision, and connecting to other perspectives in community. Feeds off of opportunities to crush the opposition in debate and campaign (even if they fear the debate).

Rabble-rousing-change-maker: is shaking up the democratic party and motivated to bring youth, diversity, fresh voices, and perspective to the left. They want to win, but are fighting the party not just the opposition.

Expectations and Experiences: Youth, Parenting, Politics

Misalignment between candidate expectations and actual experience is often the underlying reason that a challenging moment is so challenging.

This is especially true of candidates whose socio-economic position isn't a 'typical politicians,' but shows up across the board.

Supporting candidates with customized understanding and advice early on will help them to prepare for the challenges. Based on other findings this could come through a combination of one-on-one, trainings or other resources to support candidate preparation, especially:

Youth: young candidates overwhelmingly cite their age being a barrier or a challenge in their campaign.

Parenting: home-life is a huge stressor for parents running for office and their partners who pick up the slack.

Primaries: nearly 50% of first time candidates who had primaries cite being blindsided by the intensity and political maneuvering of primaries.

Emergency funds: about 3% of candidates referenced emergency or legal costs during the campaign being personally devastating financially.



Deep Dive: Decision Moment



Deep Dive: Decision Moment

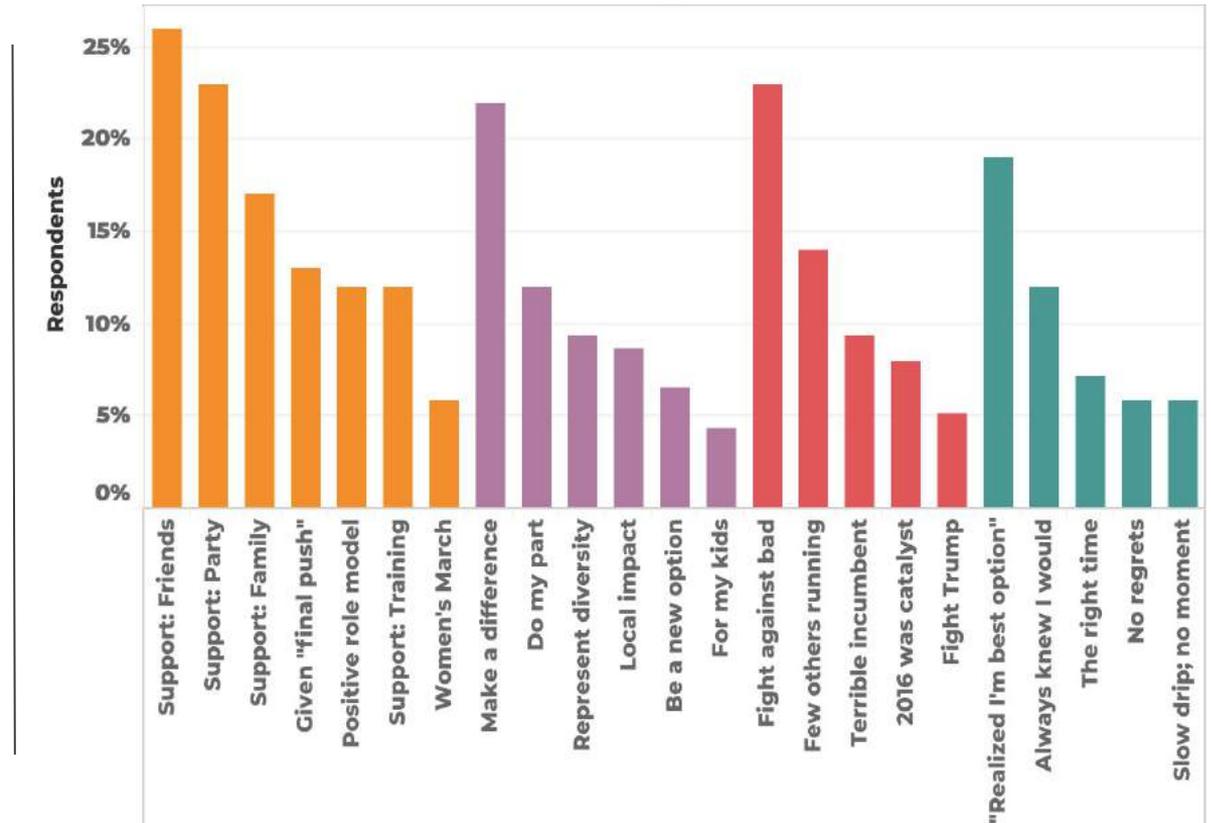
- A. Feeling supported is key:** Across all demographic segments, feeling supported by friends and by the party are the most cited part consideration in the decision to ultimately running. For woman, feeling supported is especially important and for woman, training is a critical aspect of that support.
- B. Gender matters:** When making the decision to run for office, women are significantly more likely to feel both fear and anxiety; while men are more to respond to their frustration and feel excitement.
- C. Race matters:** When making the decision to run for office, people of colour cite feeling relatively more determination and fear; also cite lower care for party support and higher care for peer support and impact.
- D. Funding and money:** Especially experienced candidates have insight into the soft and hard benefits of fundraising and the ways organizations could better support them achieve their targets.
- E. Motivations vary but the experience is similar:** Whether a candidate decides to run because they are 'the best option at the time' or to 'fight trump' or to 'make a difference in my community'; they are more likely to run if they feel local support, party support and peer support, and have a plan for next steps.



Decision Moment: The Moment & the Final Push

The defining features of the moment when a person decides to run, expressed in open-ended responses, clusters into four categories:

1. **Feel Support** - is the most cited aspect. Feeling support from friends, the party, and family leads for all demos.
2. **Positive Impact** - A desire to make a difference through policy or representation.
3. **Frustrated Fighters** - run to fight against something as much as fighting for it
4. **Duty Driven** - Are driven by civic duty to use their position for good.

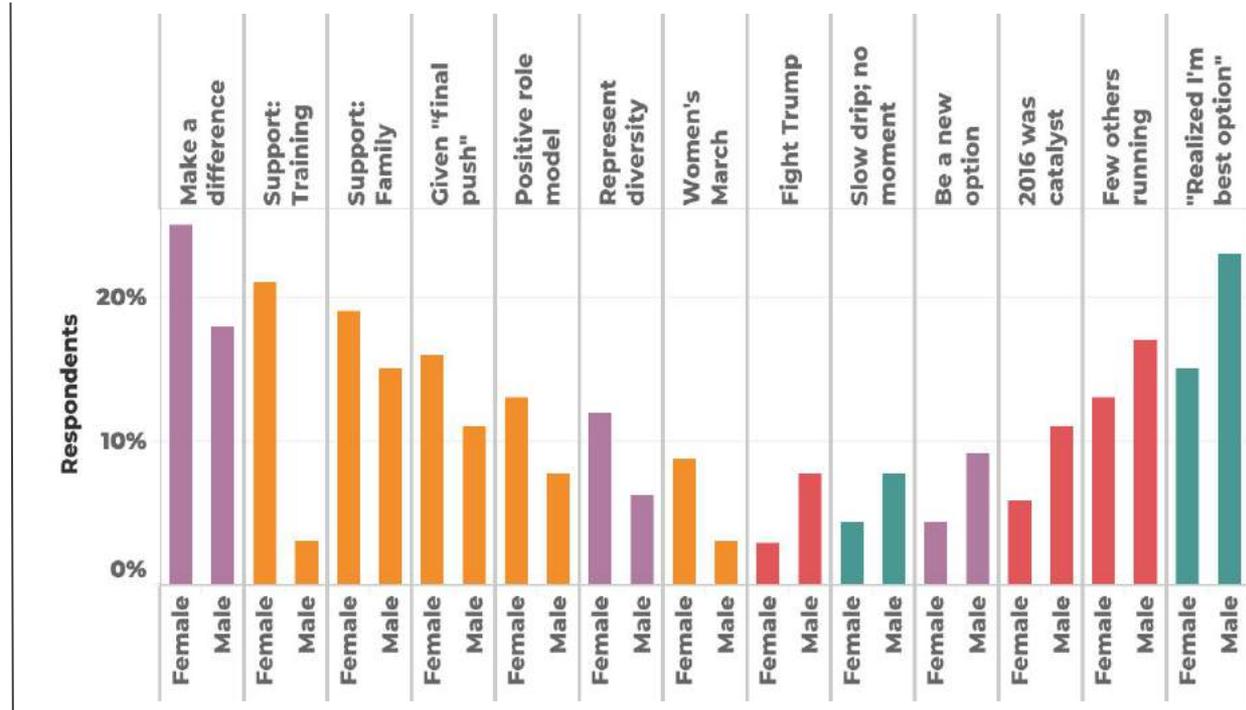


open ended responses to decision moment motivation

Decision Moment: by gender

The support of friends and of the party were the most cited factors in the decision of BOTH men and women. Other conditions skew:

1. **Support** - skews towards woman. Training is cited ten times more often by woman and positive role models almost twice as often.
2. **Impact or Frustration** - Woman skew towards positive impact as their motivation; men cite more frustration with the moment.
3. **Do Duty** - Men are more likely to feel compelled by a sense of being qualified or well positioned.



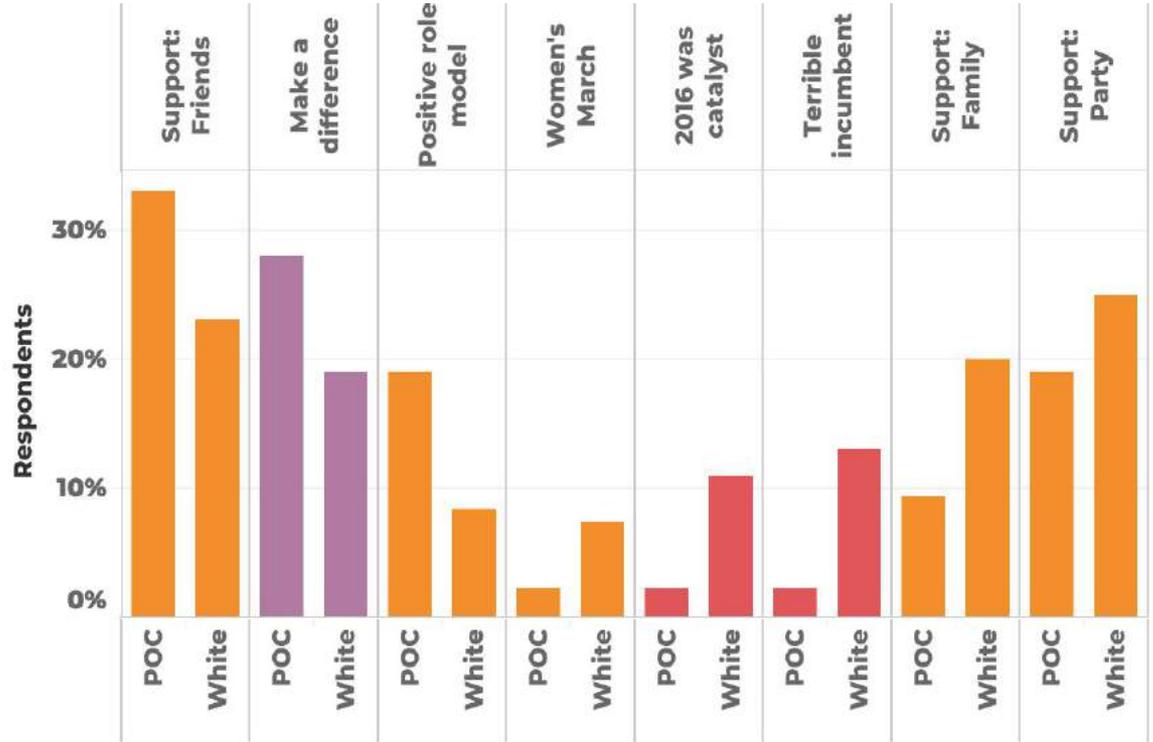
motivation to run skews by gender



Decision Moment: by Race

There are differences in the kinds of support and drive that are most cited by the POC and by the white segments . In particular:

1. **Support** - POC is more likely to cite friends and positive roles models; while less likely to cite 2016 the support of family and party.
2. **Impact** - POC is more likely to cite making a difference.
3. **Frustration** - While there are no racial skews in references to fighting bad or fighting Trump, POC is less likely to cite 2016 catalyst or terrible incumbents.



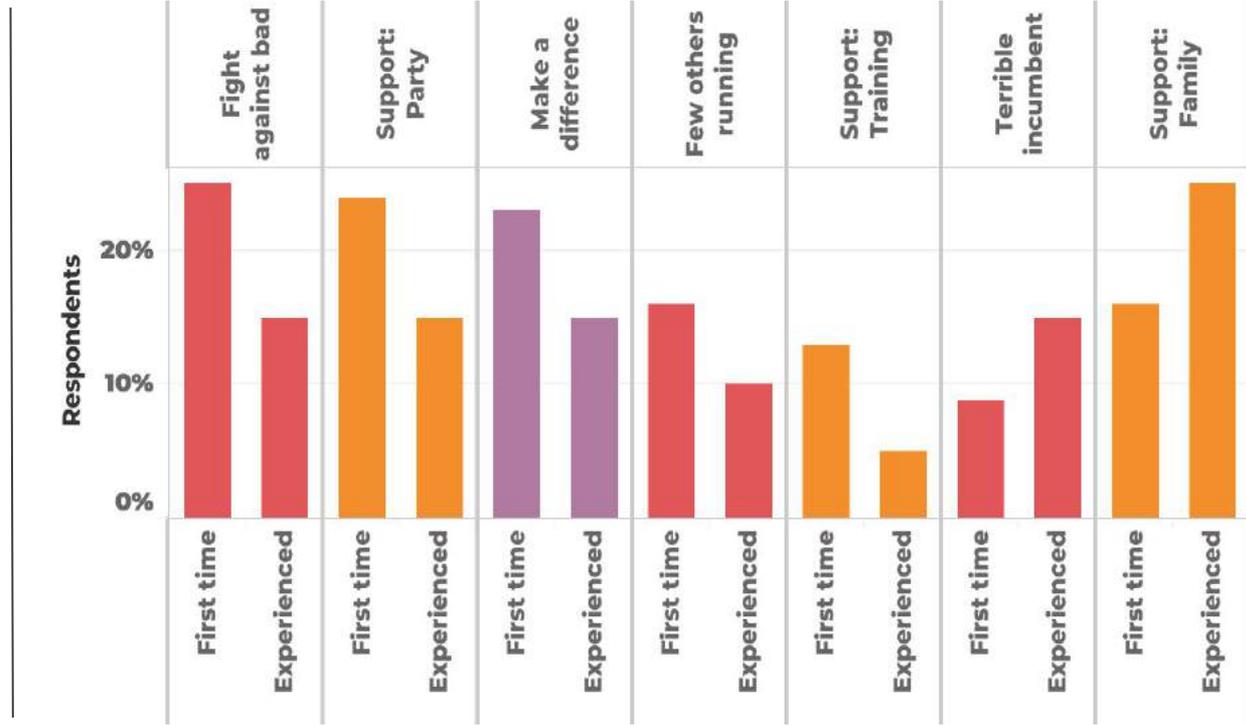
motivation to run skews by experience



Decision Moment: by Experience Level

When considering first time candidates in particular, the importance of training; of party support and of a faith in their ability to make a difference lead.

When considering more experienced candidates, the support of family takes precedence; and the incumbency is more likely to be considered.



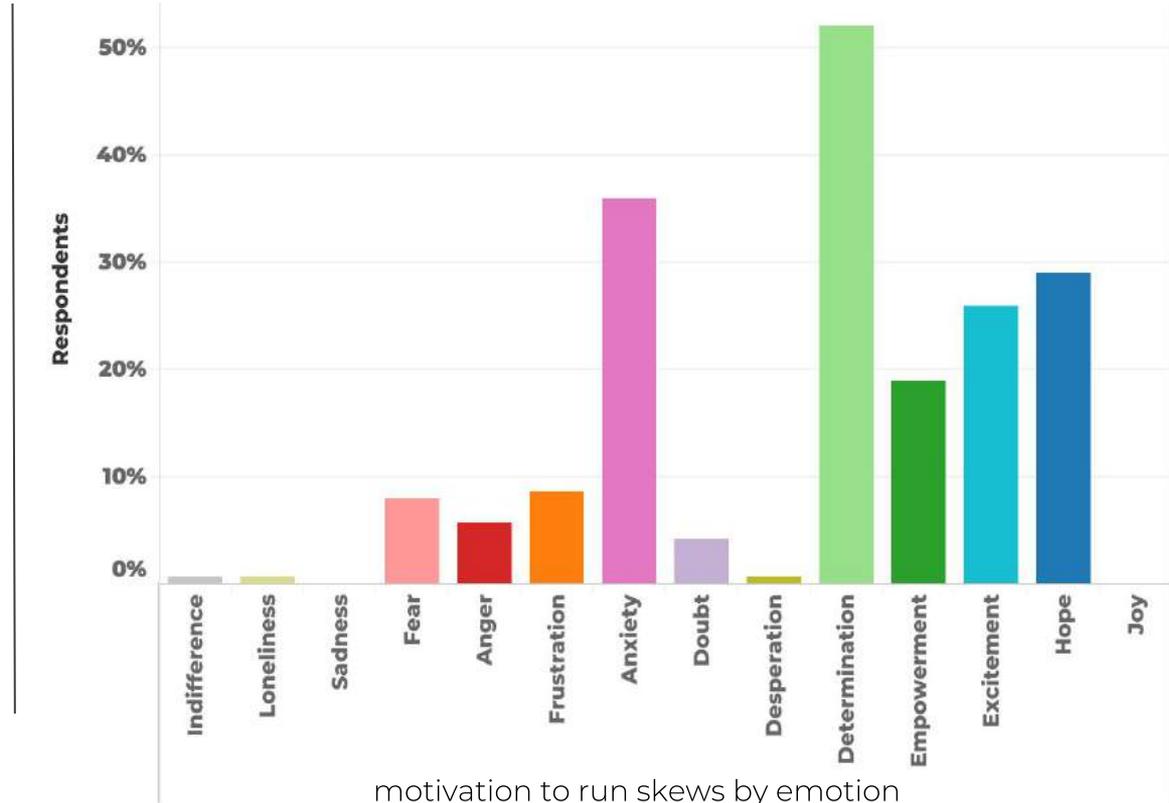
motivation to run skews by experience



Decision Moment: Emotion

Determination and Anxiety are the most cited emotions at the decision moment - and are often expressed in combination. Anxiety and excitement together is also common.

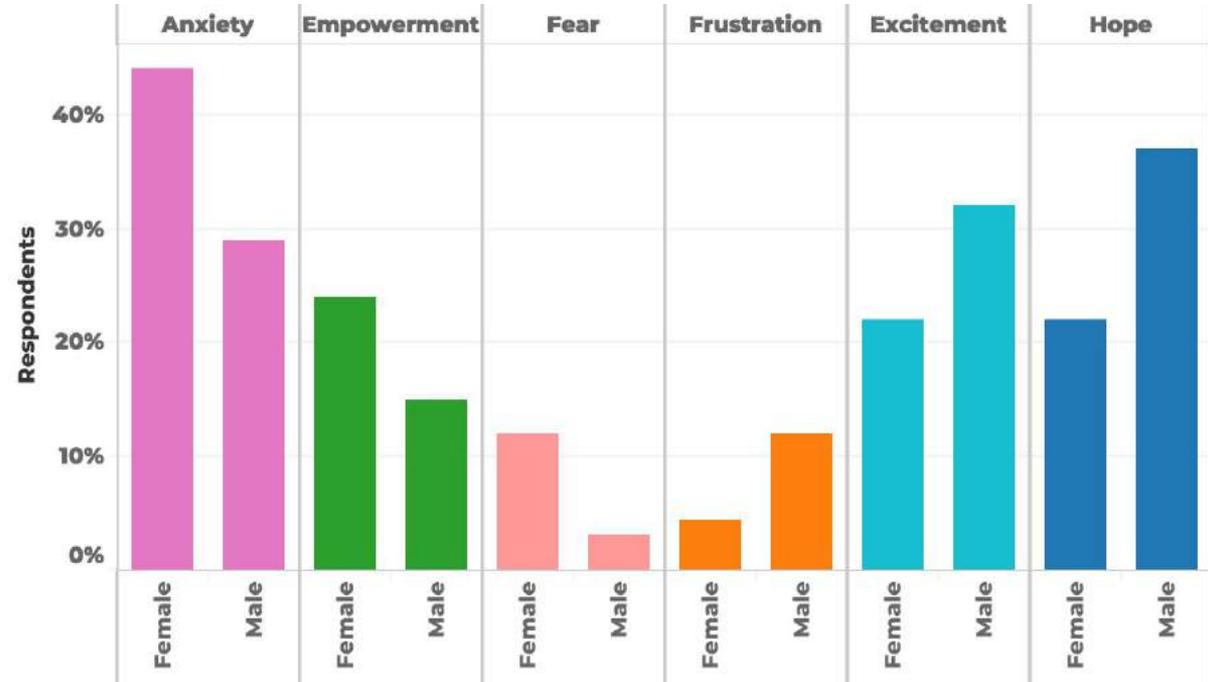
First time candidates are relatively more likely to express anxiety - which is often about uncertainty and sense of imposter syndrome - while **experienced candidates** are relatively more likely to express Fear.



Decision Moment: Emotion Skews by Gender

Determination is the most cited emotion across all demographic skews - however men and women's emotional experience varies on other dimensions:

- **Woman** are more likely to report feeling anxious or fearful - often relating to gender biases, imposter syndrome and family balance.
- **Men** are more likely to report feeling frustration with the system and excitement or hope about their race.



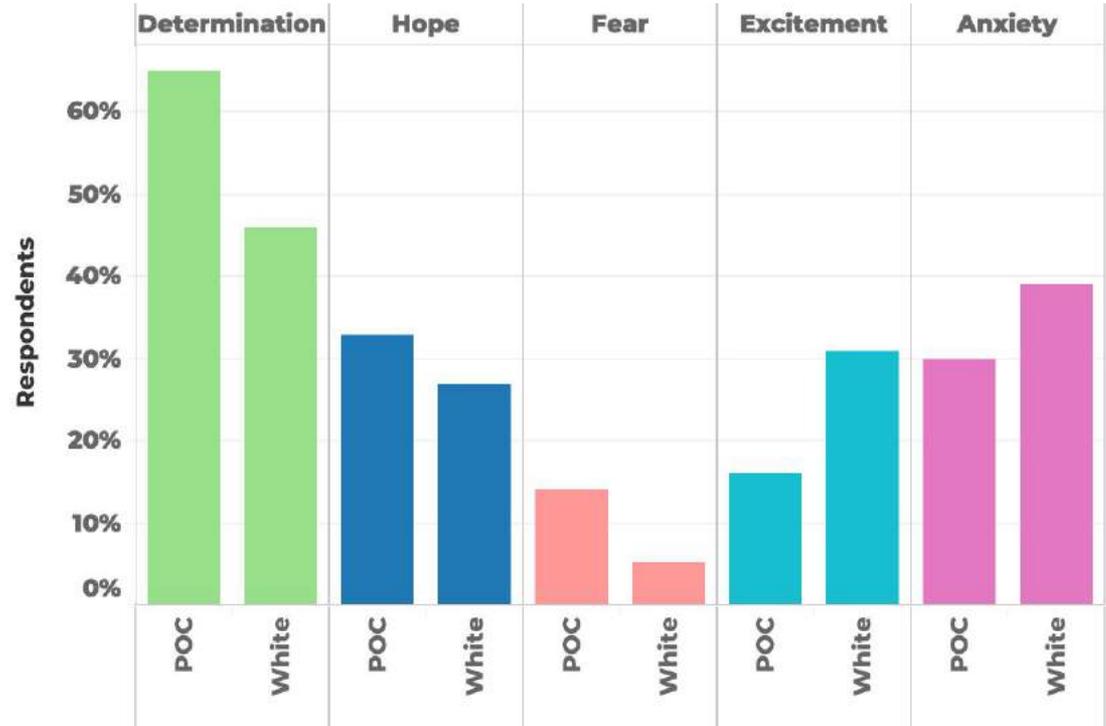
emotional skews by gender men and woman



Decision Moment: Emotion Skews by Race

Determination leads for POC as it does for the entire sample - among POC it leads by an even greater margin.

The POC segment cites being more likely to feel fear and less likely to feel excitement.



emotional skews by gender men and woman

Making it Real: Anxious and Determined

Anxious

I've never been a candidate. I needed help. And fast. I needed a community and I needed support, locally all the Dems had been doing was losing.

- Female, First-time, 30's

I was anxious because I had imposter syndrome, and as someone new to politics, did not know what to expect. I knew that I was facing a difficult challenge running as a democrat in an area that is 2:1 republican.

- Female, First-time, 30's

The anxiety was caused by never having done this before and just being generally unsure of what I was doing - as well as once our children arrived home, trying to be the best mom, best wife and best candidate I could be all at once.

- Female, First-time, 40's



Determined

I was moved to run for office mostly by something my grandfather had told me shortly before I graduated from college: , if you want to do anything with your life, Devin, you need to leave this area. I decided to run to try and change that paradigm so future generations didn't have to be faced with the same choice between home and career.

- Male, First-time, early 20's

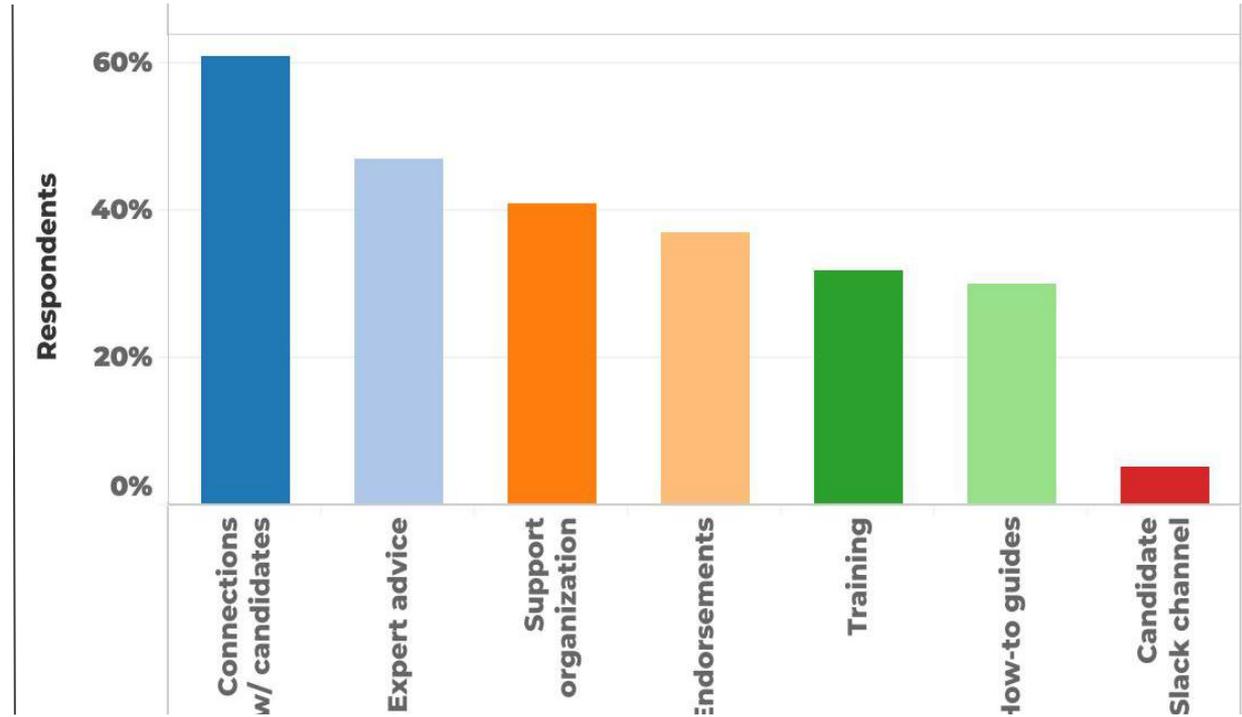
I was talking with my then 9 year old son about some of the hateful words that President Trump's had said about women. He said he was angry about how bad the President behaves and that we need to make him change. I decided then and there that if we wanted change I had to run for office.

- Female, First-time, late 30's

Decision Moment: Most Useful Resource

Although there are skews reported on the usefulness of resources at the decision moment - the hierarchy remains relatively stable. Skews:

- **Woman** are twice as likely to list organizational support and referral to training programs as men.
- **Men** are relatively more likely to cite resource materials as being their most useful resource, and twice as likely to cite endorsements.
- **First time candidates** are twice as likely to cite reference materials.



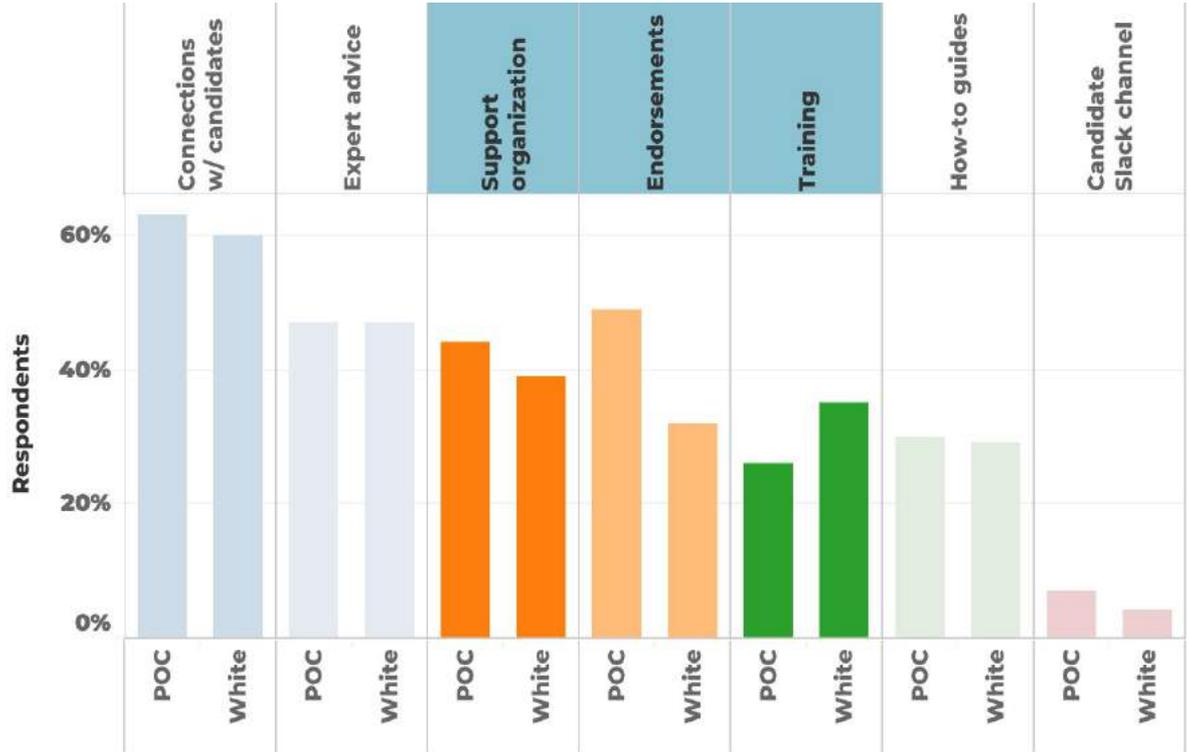
most useful resource



Decision Moment: Most Useful Resource by Race

Knowing organizations will endorse them and having support in the very first steps is especially valuable for people of color in deciding to run for office.

Having accessed to training or knowing training is available is more likely to be an important consideration in deciding to run for the white segment.

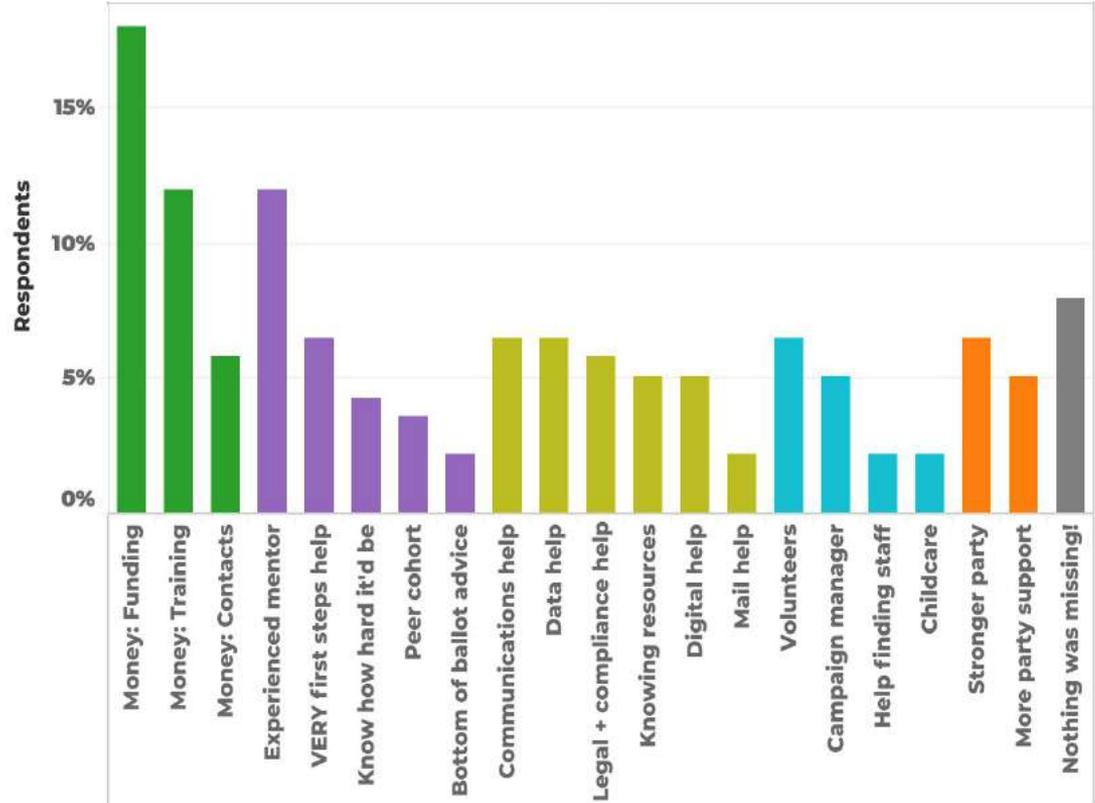


most useful resource

Decision to Run: Missing Resource

There are five categories of resources that candidates cite missing at the decision moment:

- **Funds** - is as likely to be about fundraising training and contacts as cash.
- **Experienced Support** - early access to experienced local contacts, peers and mentors.
- **Tactics** - earlier & more support on comms, data, and legal for experienced candidates.
- **People** - staff and volunteers, especially for 1st time candidates.
- **Party support** - lack of party support undermined feelings of hope and empowerment.



missing resource



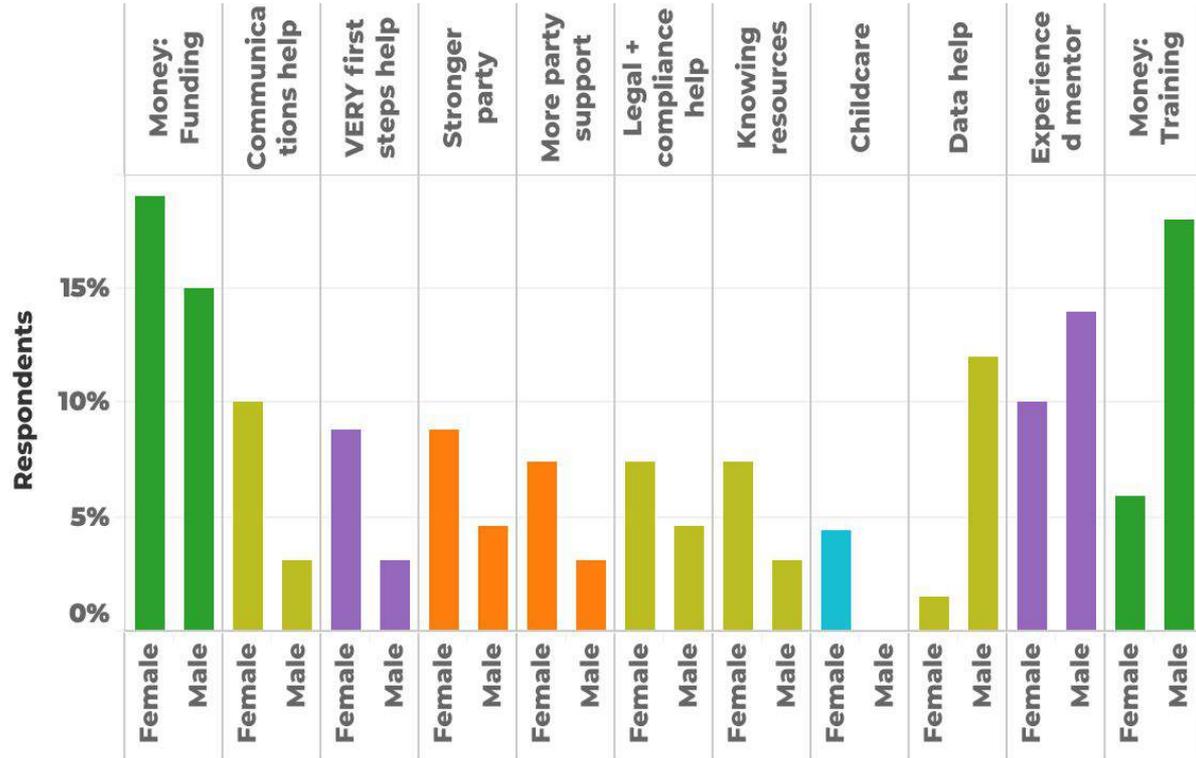
Decision to Run: Missing Resource Skews by Gender

Female candidates especially call for:

- Campaign funding
- Communications support
- Strength or support of party
- Support in the initial and legal aspects of the campaign
- Childcare

Female candidates are less concerned with:

- Data support (over and above the skew amongst female towards first time candidates - who also cite data support less than experienced candidates)
- Fundraising training



missing resource



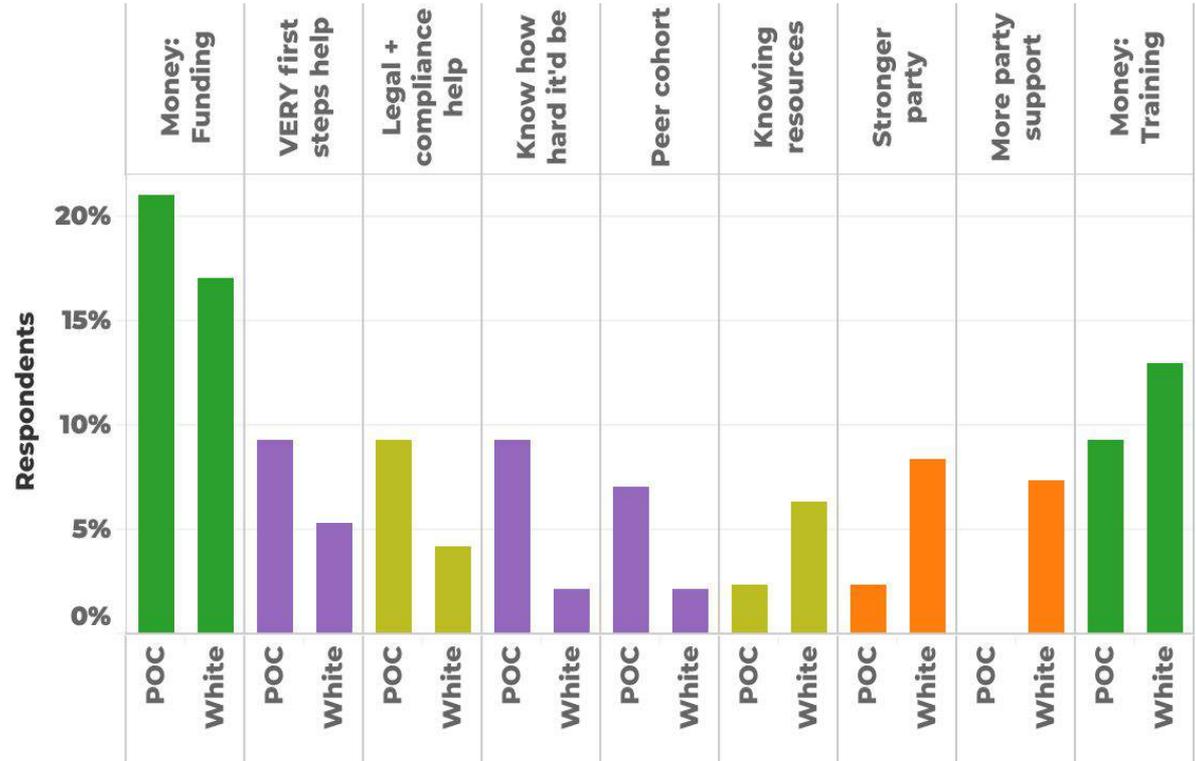
Decision to Run: Missing Resource Skews by Race

Candidates of color especially call for:

- Campaign funding
- Clear expectations about how hard it will be to run
- Support from peers and experienced mentors
- Support in the initial and legal aspects of the campaign

Candidates of color are less concerned with:

- Strength or support of party
- Training and tactical resources



missing resource

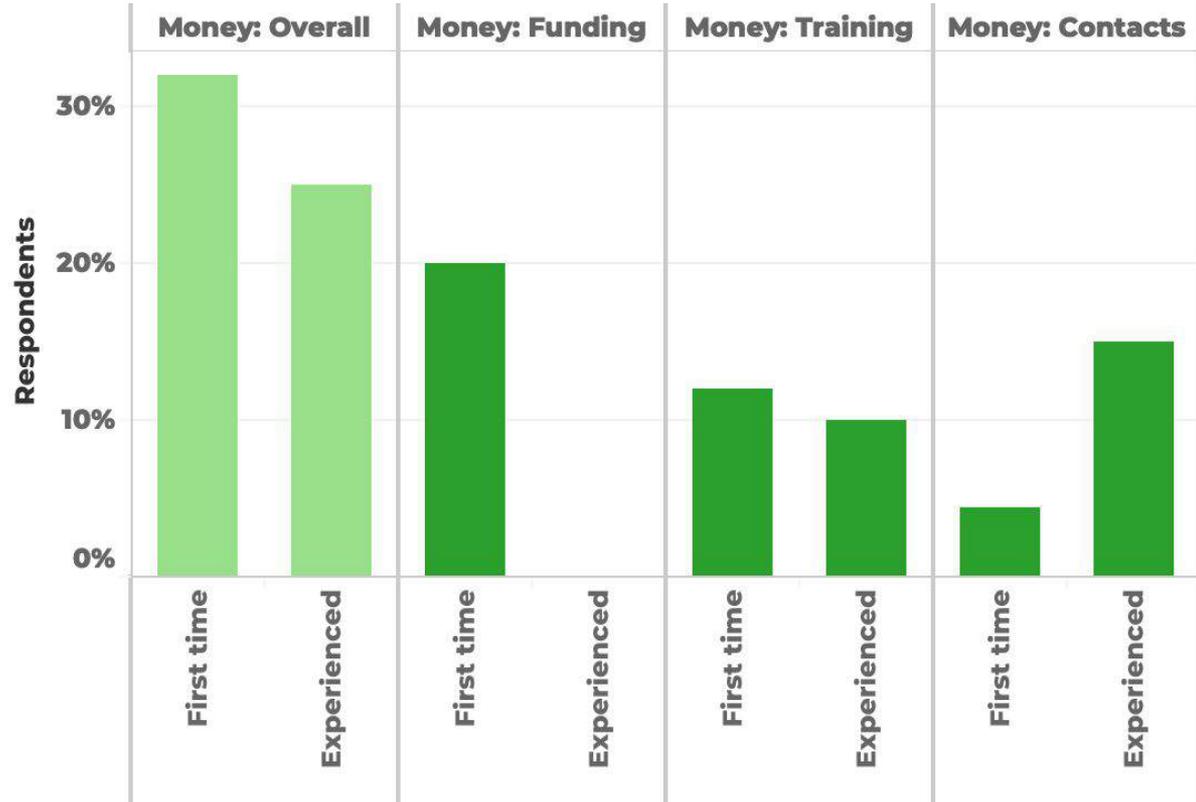


Decision to Run: Reference to Funding and Money Missing

Overall references to money as the missing resource skews male, towards first-time candidates and people who worked throughout the campaign.

The specifics are informative:

- **First time candidates** are more likely to mention money and are the only segment to feel they need more donations directly.
- **Experienced** are more likely to feel the need for more contacts & network.



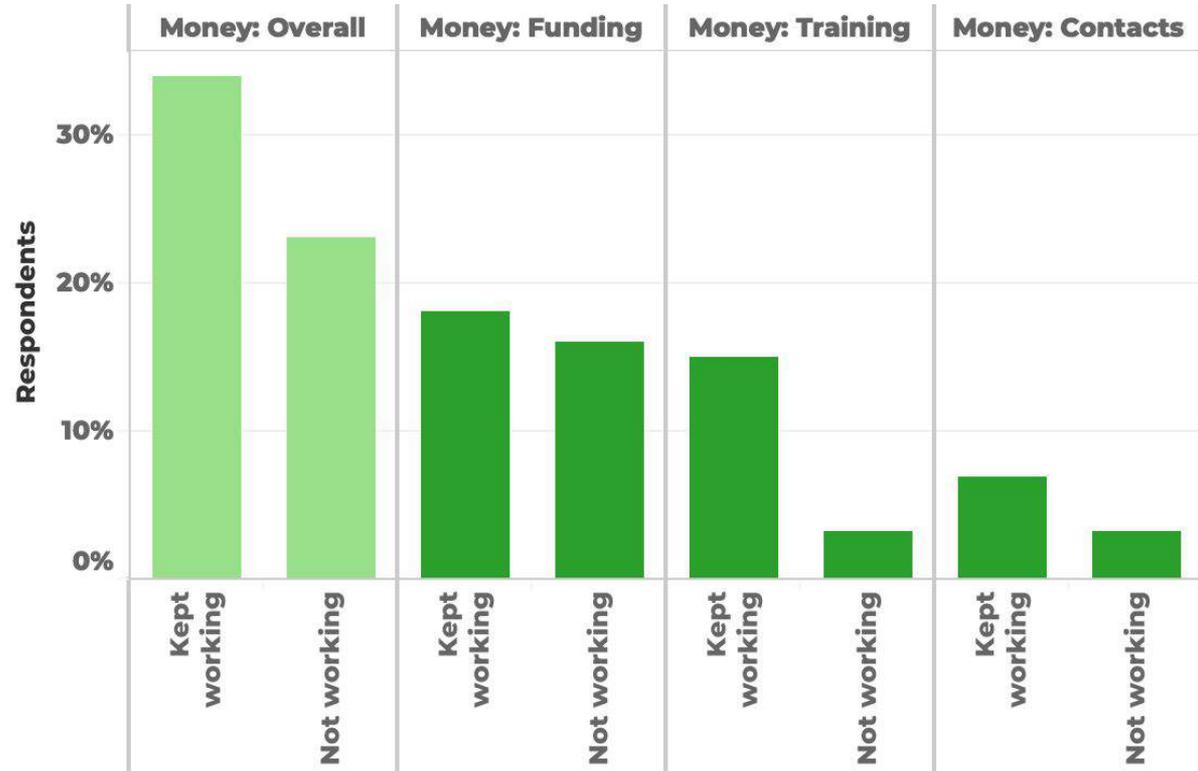
missing resource money by candidate experience



Decision to Run: Reference to Funding and Money Missing

Among those who kept working throughout their campaign, money was more likely to be cited as a gap. For this segment, the immediate pain point was the campaign, but many also reference ongoing personal financial challenges.

- **Training and contacts** - skew towards those who kept working.
- **Male skew** - overall men are more likely to reference money as a missing resource and especially, fundraising training.



missing resource money, by work status during campaign



Deep Dive: Greatest Challenge



Deep Dive: Greatest Challenge

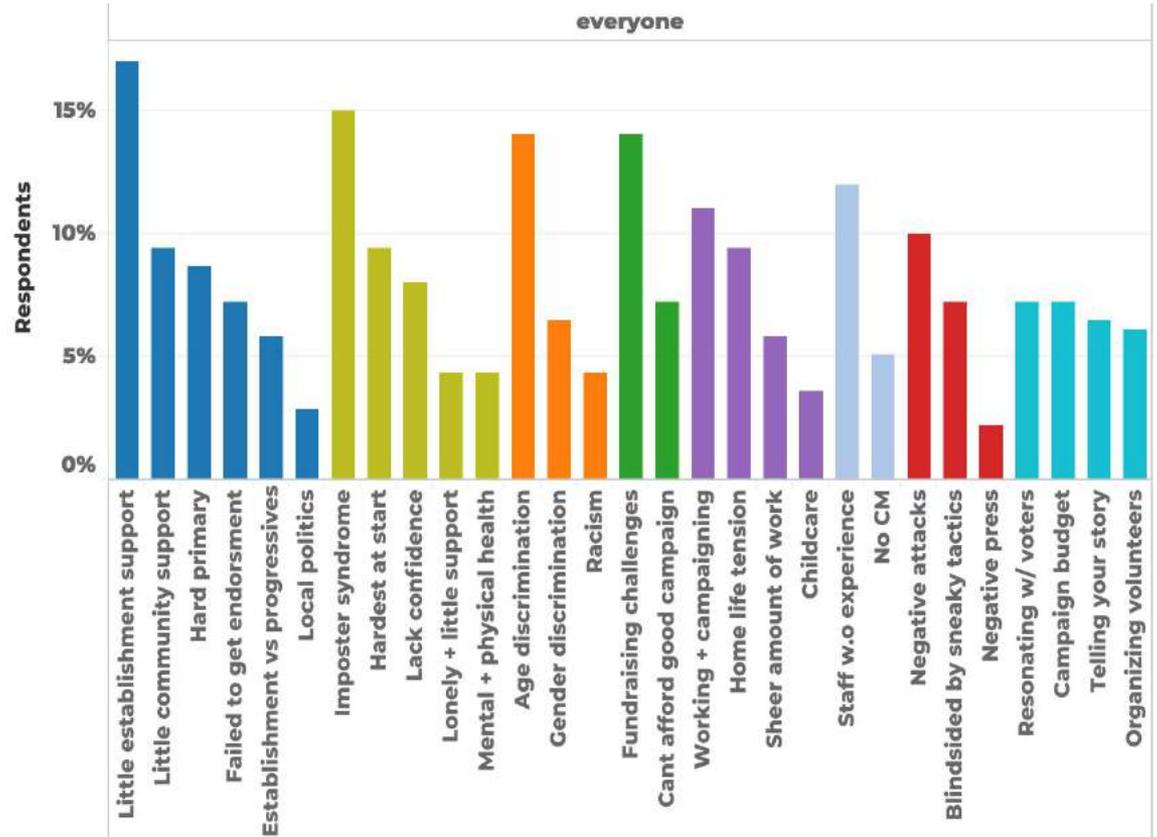
- A.** **There are three broad categories of challenge:** Within the campaign; being a candidate; campaigning and the rest of life.
- B.** **Expectation is important.** A lot of people talk about being 'surprised,' 'blindsided,' or 'shocked' in their discussion of challenge. Whereas folks who don't talk about the challenge in much less emotional terms.
- C.** **Imposter syndrome** is a challenge that leads to more challenges. Many candidates cite experiencing their challenges *early on*, and in particular primaries.. The earlier in a campaign the candidate moves through a challenge the sooner they can own their identity as *candidate*..
- D.** **Discrimination is real and shocking:** Young candidates, woman, parents, POC, LGBTQ all cite discrimination as a challenge, both because of the tactical effect but also because of the emotional toll.
- E.** **Personal challenges need support too:** Almost no one cites a campaign challenge crippling them, but the challenges BECAUSE of the campaign (personal finances, toll on family and relationships) are long lasting.



Greatest Challenge: The Most Challenging Moment

The defining feature expressed in open-ended responses, clusters into eight categories.

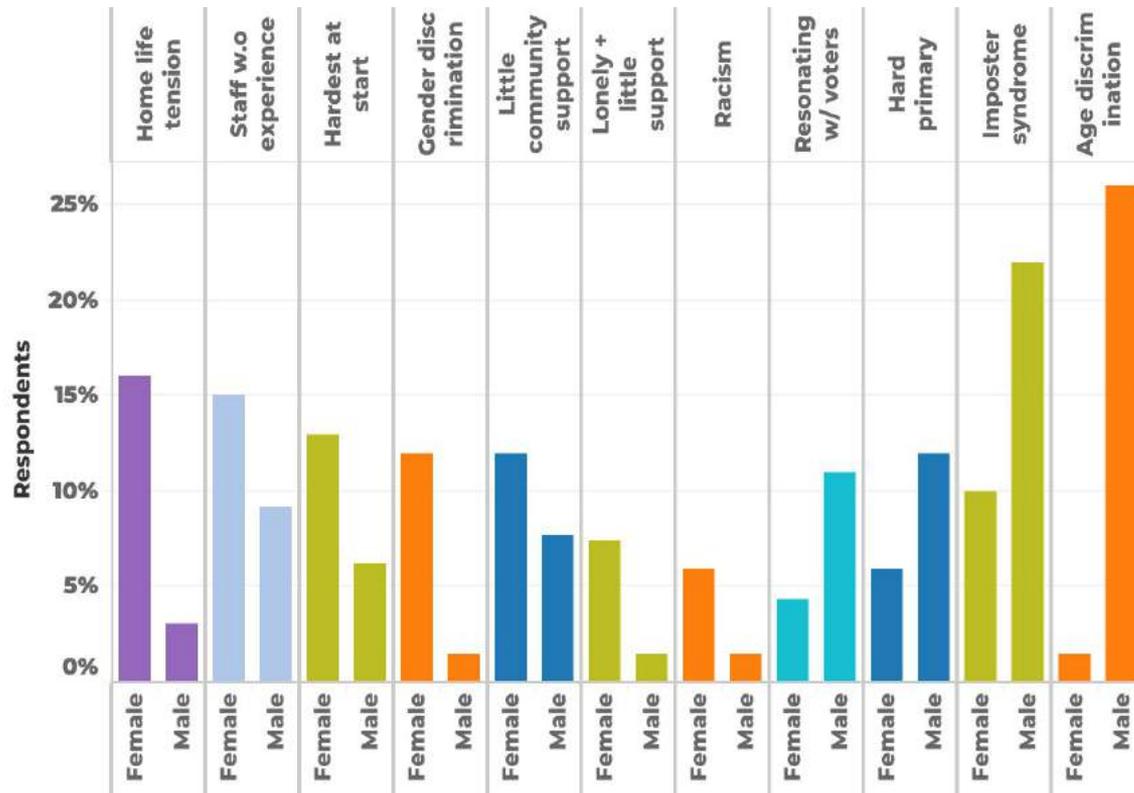
1. **Lack of support** - less support than anticipated at the get go
2. **Self perception** - not confident in self as a candidate
3. **Discrimination** - young people in particular felt this challenge
4. **Money**- Fundraising and campaign financing
5. **Life balance** - managing campaign, work, life and kids
6. **Staffing** - hard to hire experienced staff
7. **Negative attack** - especially hard in primary when less expected
8. **Strategy and story** - not having a clear campaign plan or clear story



Greatest Challenge: Skews by Gender

Most challenges are shared across gender and experience - however the skews are revealing:

1. **Women** - are significantly more likely to cite home-life tensions, gender and racial discrimination and to express loneliness as a challenge
2. **Men** - are significantly more likely to cite age discrimination, though the younger sample skews male (see slide 13)



greatest challenge skews by gender



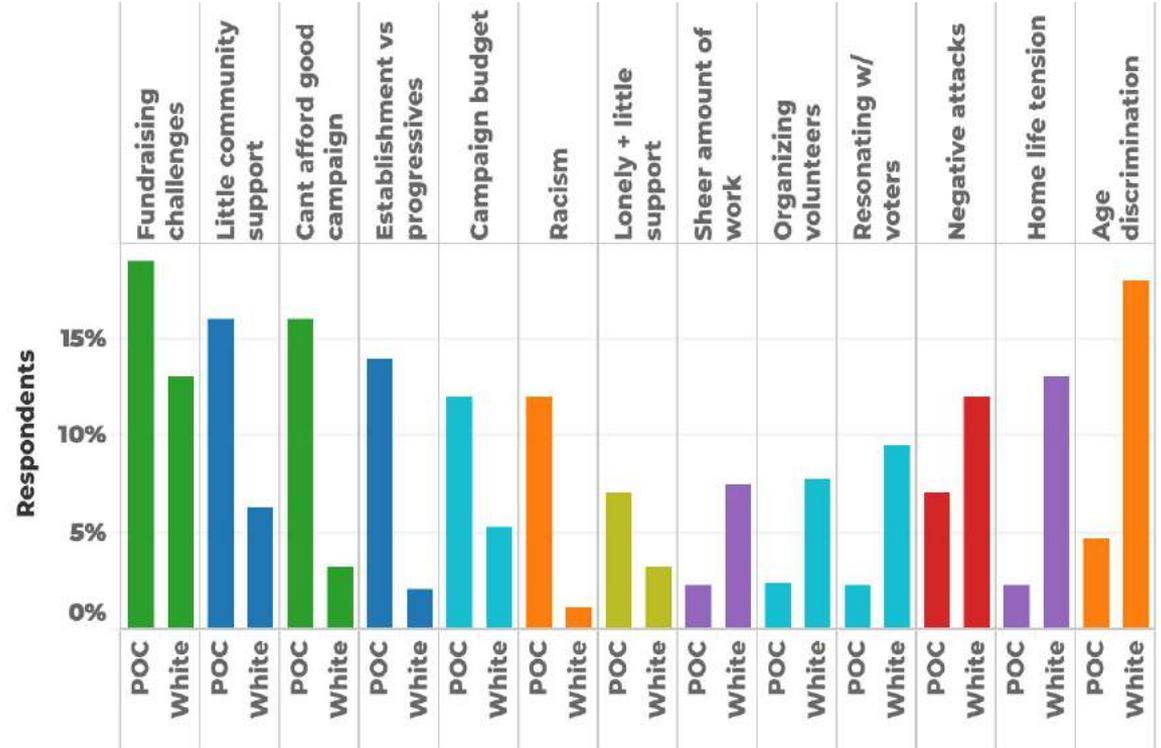
Greatest Challenge: Skews by Race

Candidates of color more likely to cite challenges relating to:

- Lack of Funding
- Lack of Support & Lonely
- “Establishment vs. progressive” dynamics
- Racism

Candidates of colour are less likely to cite examples of:

- Age discrimination
- Balancing the campaign with home life and work
- Resonating with & mobilizing voters
- Generic negative attacks



greatest challenge skews by gender

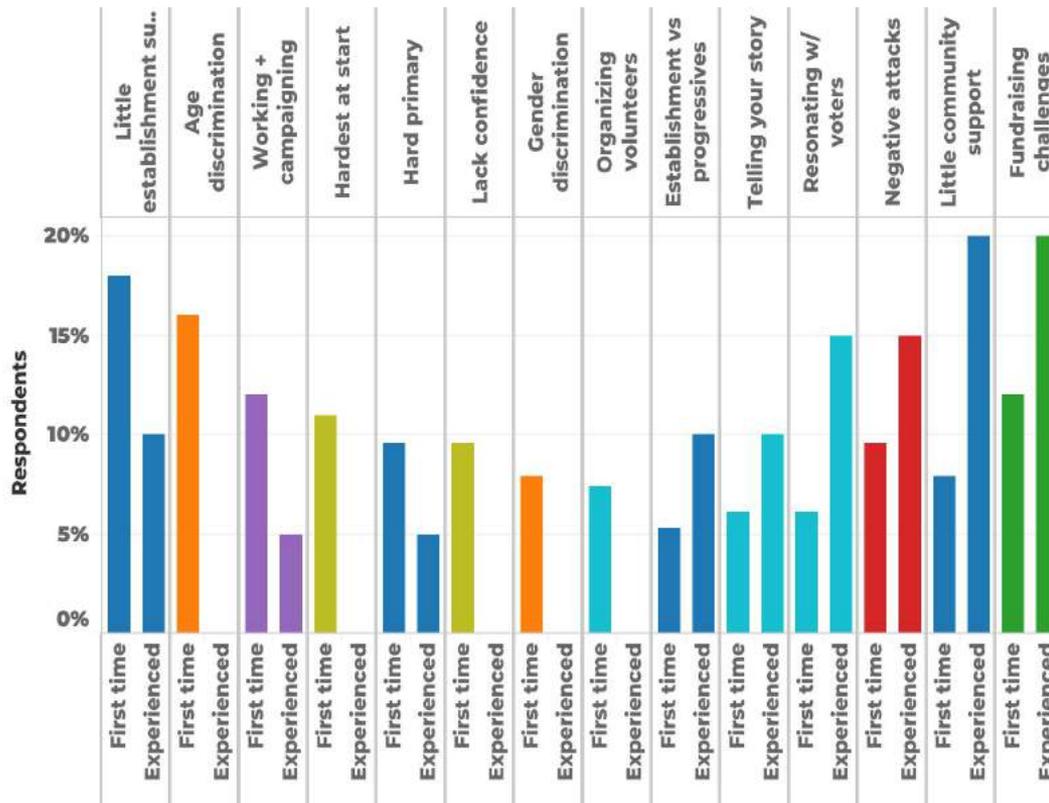


Greatest Challenged: Moment: Skews by Experience

First time and experienced candidates share similar challenges - which a few notable skews highlighted here:

First time candidates: cite higher levels of challenge with the experience of being a candidate - lacking confidence, facing discrimination, getting started, recruiting volunteers.

Experienced candidates: cite higher levels of challenge with the nuance of the campaign - resonating with voters, fundraising, working with establishment.



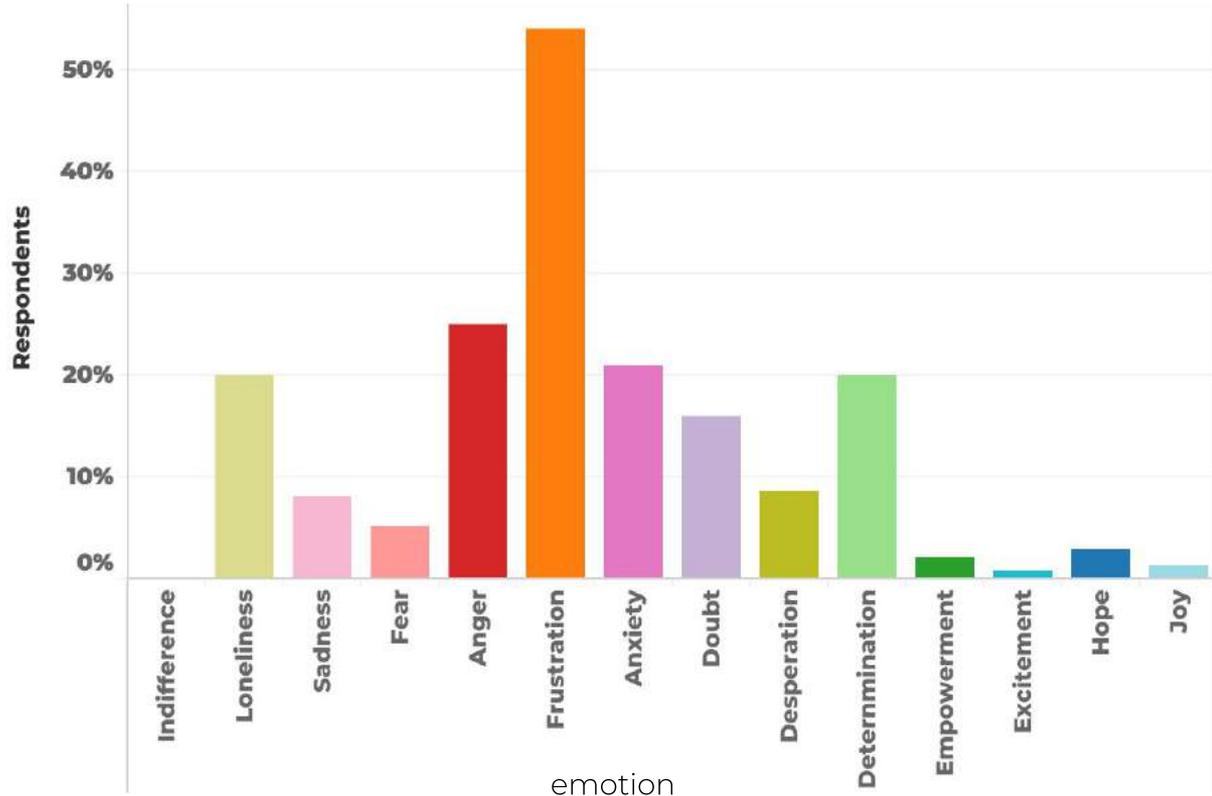
greatest challenge skews by experience

Greatest Challenge: Emotion

Frustration is the most cited emotion at the moment of greatest challenge.

Frustration stems most often from a sense of being stuck without a solution.

Helping the candidate to find the right solution quickly - through advice or resources - is key to moving through the challenge quickly and with minimal drama (which is empowering!)



Making it Real: Greatest Challenge

Personal Challenge

I continued to work while running, so balancing my job (never mind my toddler) was the most challenging thing. There were times I was in the heat of the campaign and a work emergency arose, requiring me to shift gears very quickly. That was very hard. I knew there were times when I was sub par at everything-- work, campaigning, mothering, being married, taking care of myself. My goal was to stay "good enough" at everything. Sometimes I failed.

- Female, First-time, Late 30's

Paying my personal bills, it has been a long haul of running and not working, after I lost, I am still struggling to get a job again.

- Male, First-time, Late 30's



In-Campaign Challenge

My greatest challenge was ensuring I had balance: in family/friends life, and taking care of my mental health and well-being. Not because of any of the attack ads or time, but because of how draining the challenges on our staff were. We had some turnover... it was emotionally exhausting to have such internal conflict ongoing... We needed a rock.

- Female, First-time, Mid 30's

Fundraising was the most difficult part of running for office. My opponent was able to write himself a check for \$22,000, and as a young person running a grassroots campaign, that was hard to match.

- Female, First-time, Late 20's

Initially in the primary resources were lacking, and many supporters thought I would easily win my primary. Those were the hardest days trying to grow the campaign early.

- Male, First-time, Late 20's

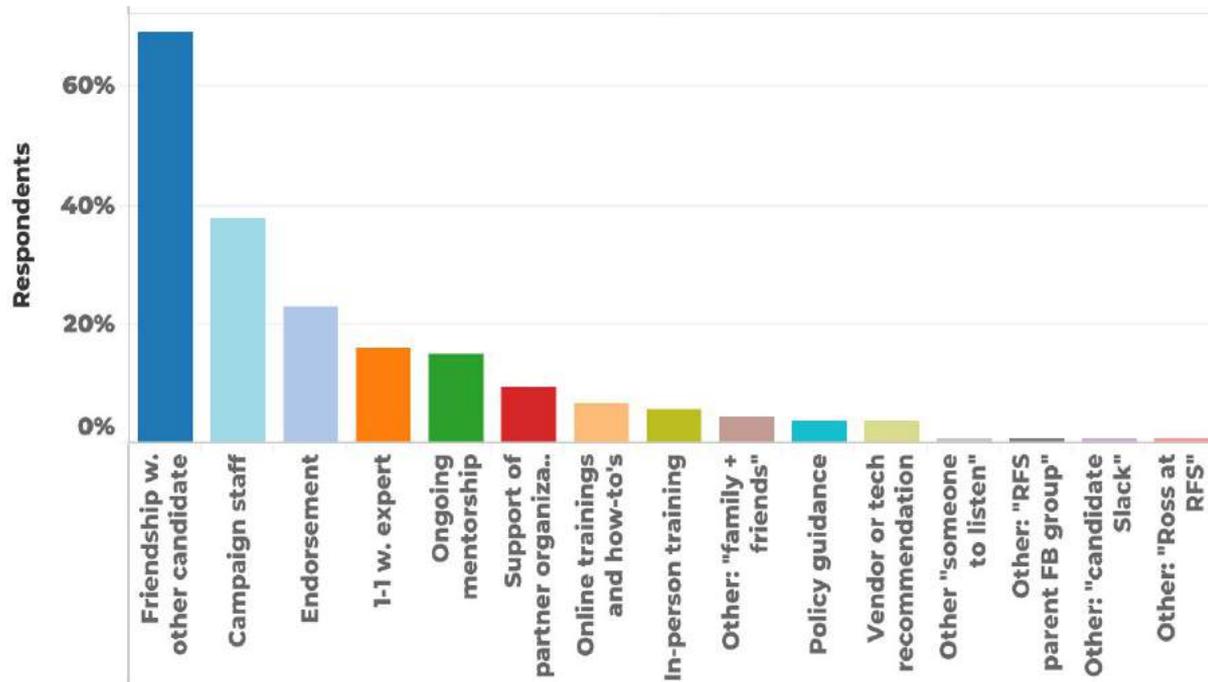
Greatest Challenge: Most Useful Resource

Friendship with another candidate is the leading resource at the most challenging moment.

Candidate friendship is about shared understanding, local expertise, and campaign advice.

Most candidates experience their greatest challenge early in their campaign.

Those who cited endorsements referenced the resources or support the endorsement unlocks.



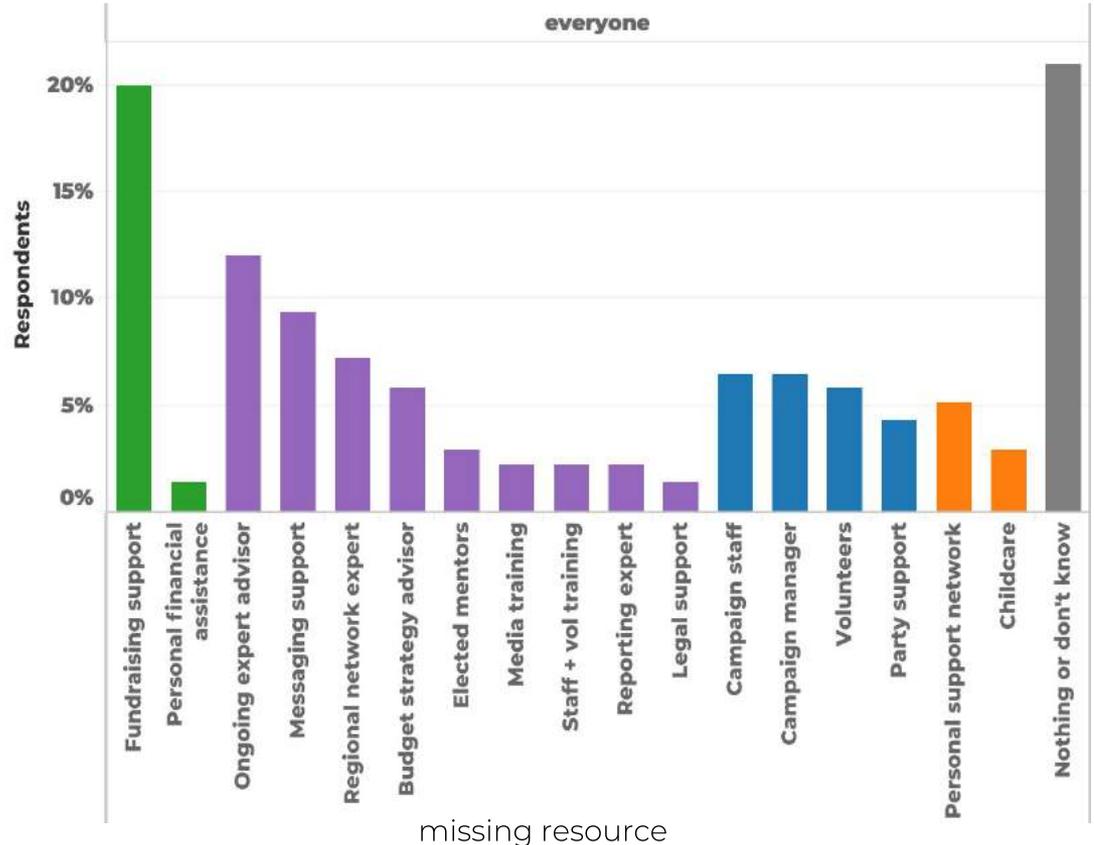
most useful resource



Greatest Challenge: Missing Resource

Candidates cite four categories of resources that they lacked and wanted during their challenge:

1. **Money** - Most cited fundraising support, but for a small segment personal financial strain was the bigger challenge
2. **Campaign experts** -
 - a. early campaign strategy
 - b. with local knowledge
 - c. and ongoing on-call type support
3. **Campaign staff** - Those without campaign managers, trained staff or volunteers, or strong local committees felt that gap
4. **Personal support** - Especially childcare for people with kids!

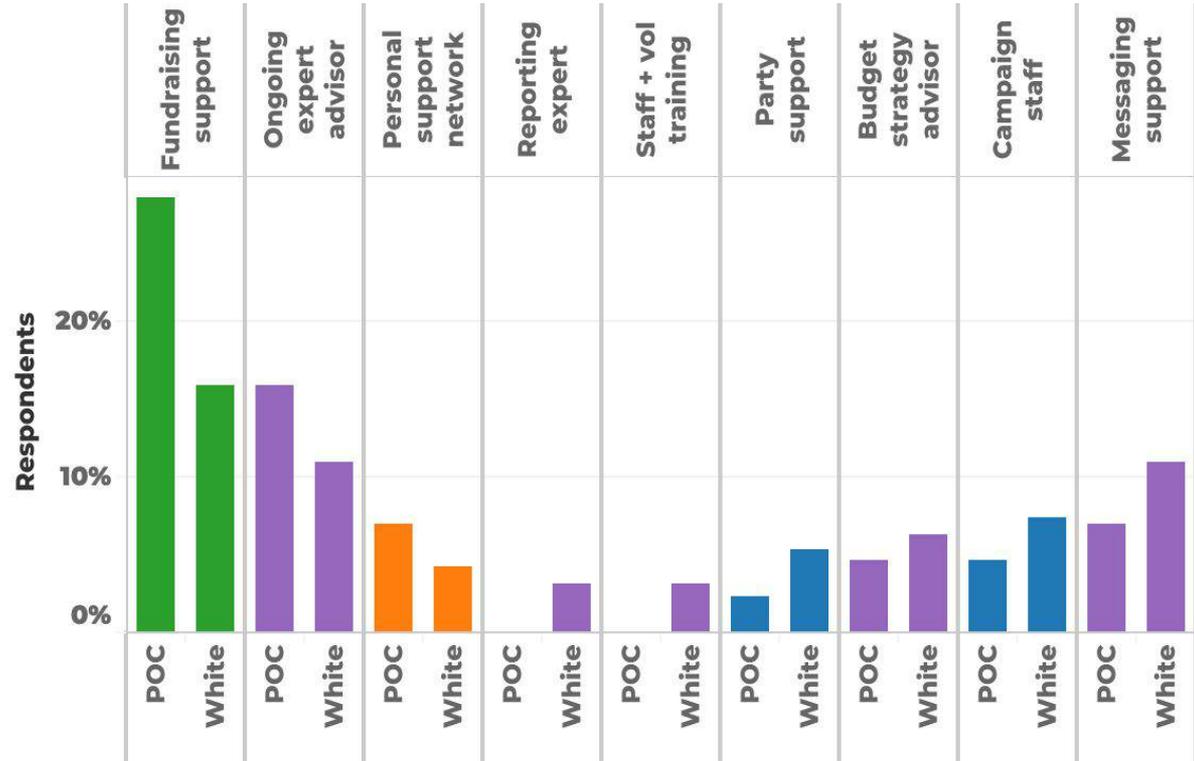


Greatest Challenge: Missing Resource Skews by Race

Candidates of color are almost twice as likely to cite fundraising support as the most critical missing resource.

Similarly they are more likely to cite a need for ongoing expert advisors and a peer support network.

White candidates are relatively more likely to cite a need for tactical resources and support relating to staffing, party, and messaging.



missing resource

Deep Dive: Greatest Success



Deep Dive: Greatest Success

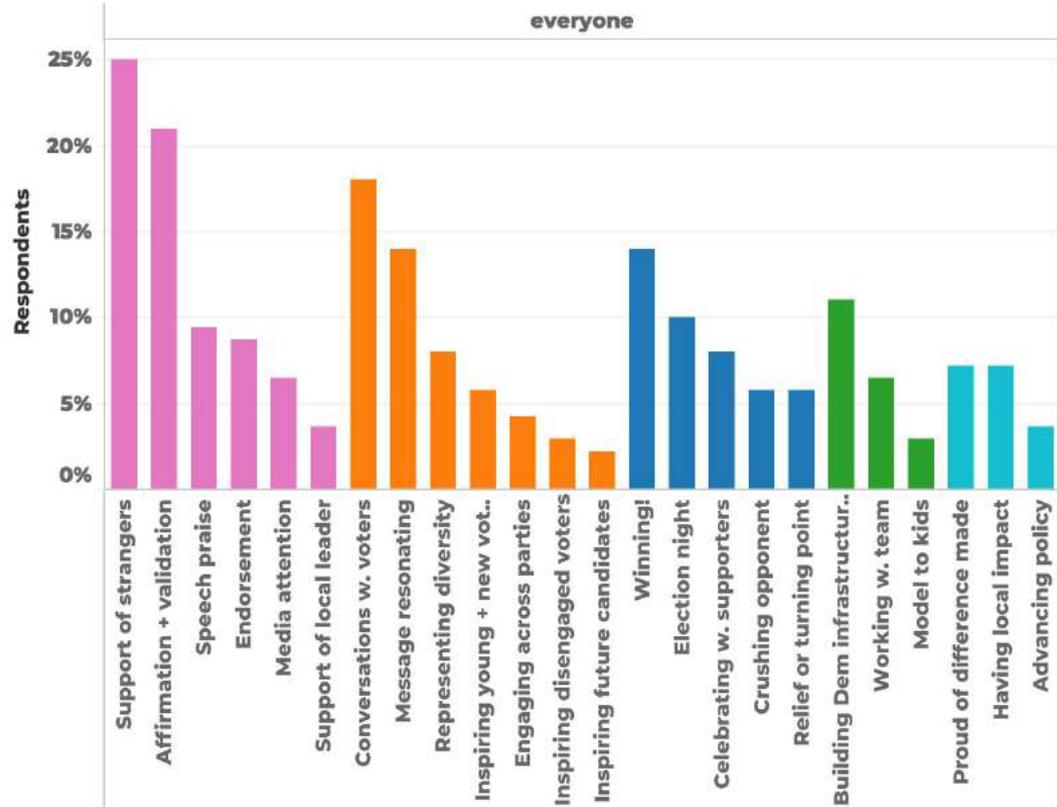
- A. Winning, duh!:** for those that won, winning was a highlight! But for most, it was a complex mixture of the victory, the path to victory and sharing the victory with the team that supported them.
- B. The candidate archetype appears to predict the definition of success:**
- *self-actualizer* → success is recognition
 - *community lover* → success is making genuine connection with constituents
 - *reactionary fighter* → success is crushing the opposition
 - *rabble-rouser* → success is making real change in the institution
- C. Early succes empowers candidates to step into their identity as candidate:** It often involves doing the thing you are afraid of and/or hitting a milestone (fundraising/endorsement/doors) that feels like a turning point and makes the candidate feel legitimate.
- D. Election night:** win or lose, most candidates feel proud of what they've accomplished when they get to the end!



Greatest Success: The Moment

The moment of greatest success often represents a turning point for the new candidate, who cement their identity as candidate.

1. **Validating** - Doing the thing you are afraid of and being well received or being recognized
2. **Connecting** - Hearing stories of need in community and receiving positive responses to your message
3. **Winning** - Winning the seat, making gains for the dems or beating an opponent in debate
4. **Building** - Most often in red districts where success is incremental
5. **Impacting** - Advancing a specific policy or agenda



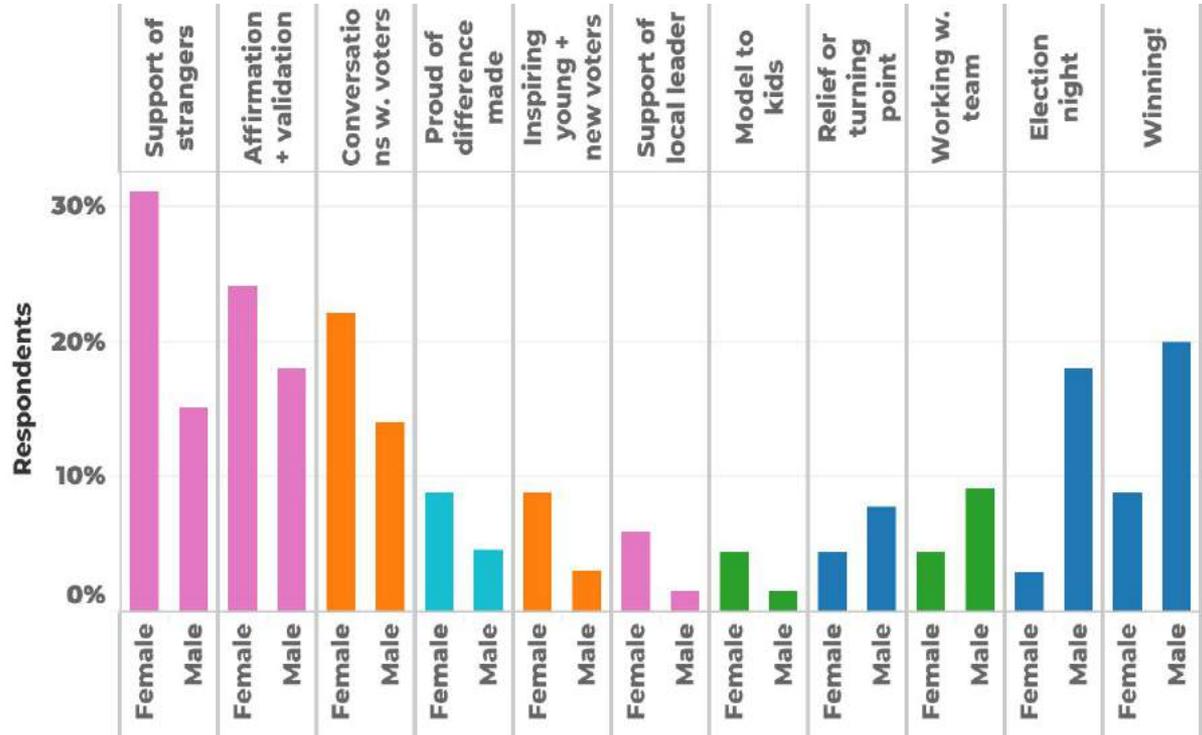
greatest success

Greatest Success: The Moment by Gender

There is no gender skew on many experiences - like resonating with voters which is important to both.

For woman, moments of validation and connection were especially important. Women are twice as likely to cite the support of strangers and significantly more likely to share memorable conversations with voters.

For men, election night was a highlight. This is true of those who won, and also of those who didn't and are likely to also reference the pride or joy they took in building and working with their team, and sharing that night with them.



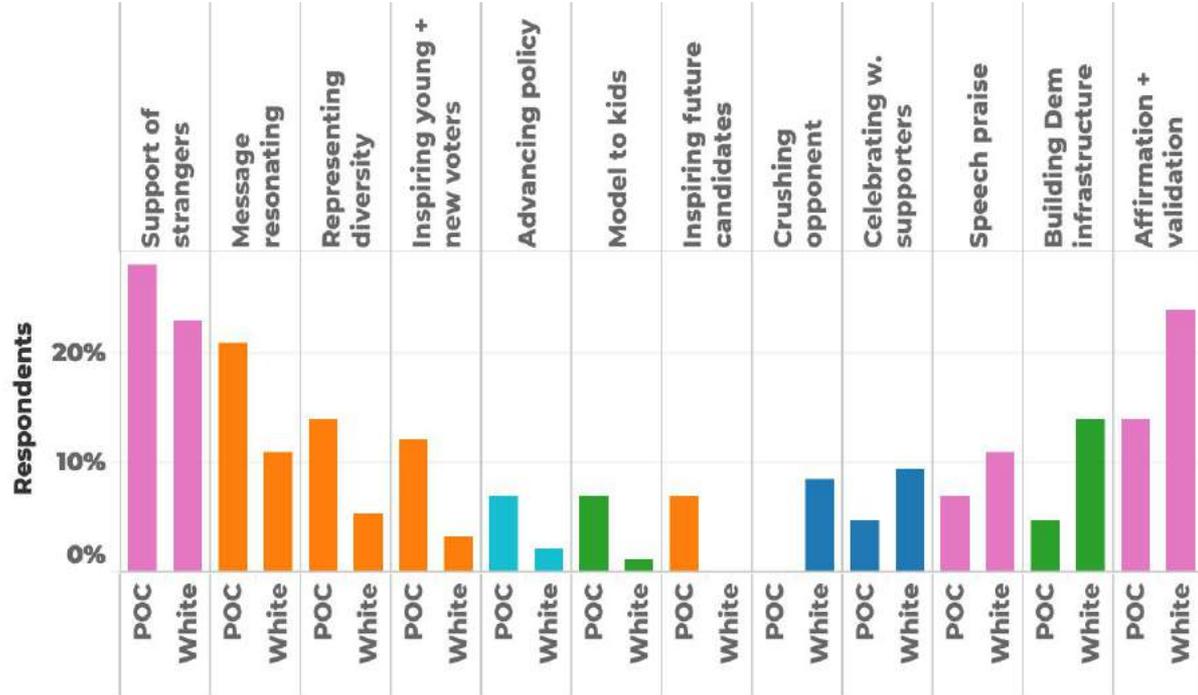
greatest success skew by gender

Greatest Success: The Moment by Race

There moments of greatest success appear to be quite different for the POC and the white candidates in this sample.

Candidates of color skew towards identifying success in terms of **connection** - bringing new people into the political process, representing and inspiring new voters or the next generation, and resonating with community.

White candidates skew towards individual **victory** and **validation**, and towards building Democratic **party** infrastructure.



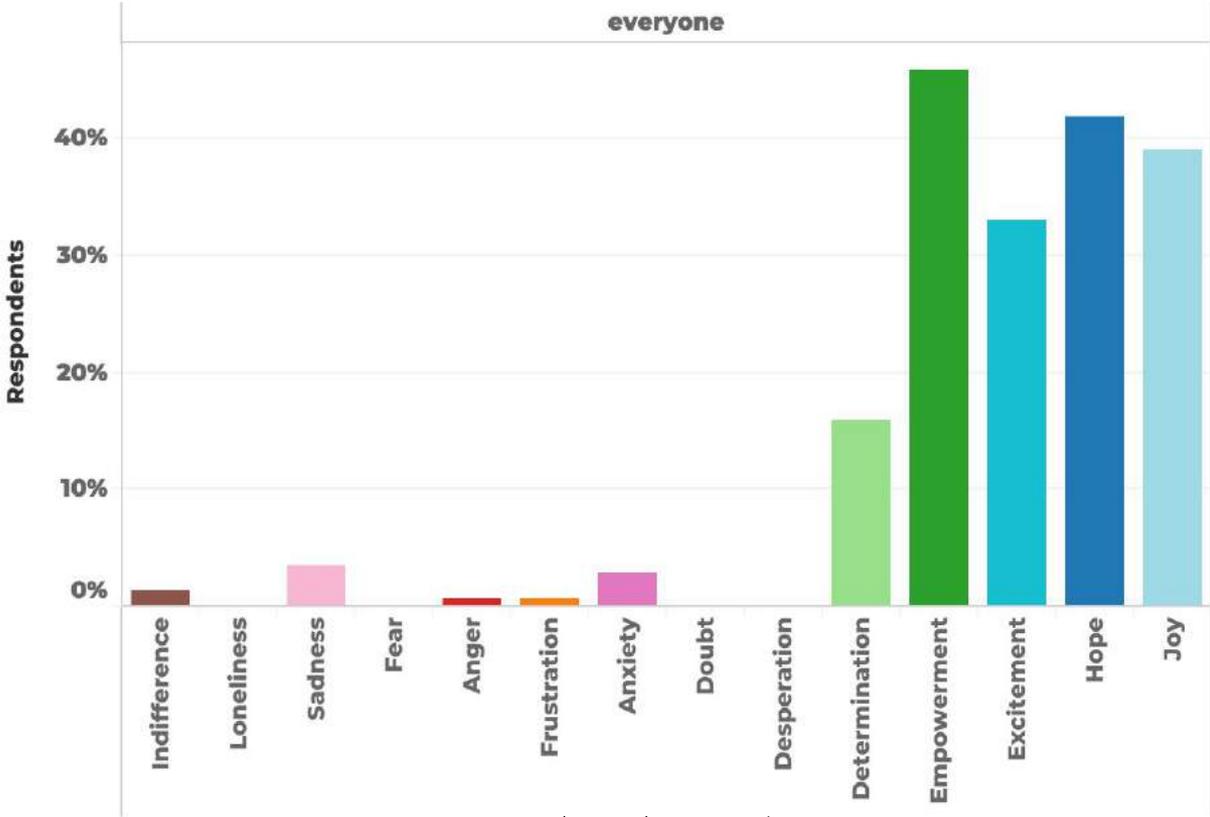
greatest success skew by gender



Greatest Success: The Emotions

Empowerment and hope are the most cited emotions at the decision moment followed closely by joy and excitement across all segments.

The high levels of empowerment in particular point to the importance of an early moment of success as being an enabler for the candidates future success.



greatest success skews by emotion



Making it Real: Success

Validating + Connecting

Winning was joyous but I'm really proud of how we won. Our team elected the first black state rep of the district, we broke the fundraising record, our campaign staff was managed by a women of color, and we had 100 people canvass at one time. Quite simply every time we were told something was impossible, we proved we could make it possible.

- Female, College, White, Conservative, 50's

The greatest moments were connecting with voters. It was the 18 year old who had never voted but who came home from college to vote for me. It was the kids who volunteered for my campaign even though they couldn't vote. It was the sense of community we created and the people we brought in to the fold or out to vote, simply because they were inspired.

- Male, First-time, Early 30's



Winning + Building

The moment we checked the results on election night as a team and the young folks in the room saw that their work had made a difference. The energy in the room was indescribable. Folks were jumping and screaming and crying as if we'd just won the presidency. It was magic.

- Male, First-time, Late 30's

Winning my campaign and becoming the first Latina to preside over this court after having raised \$278,000 from mostly \$25 contributions.

- Female, First-time, Late 30's

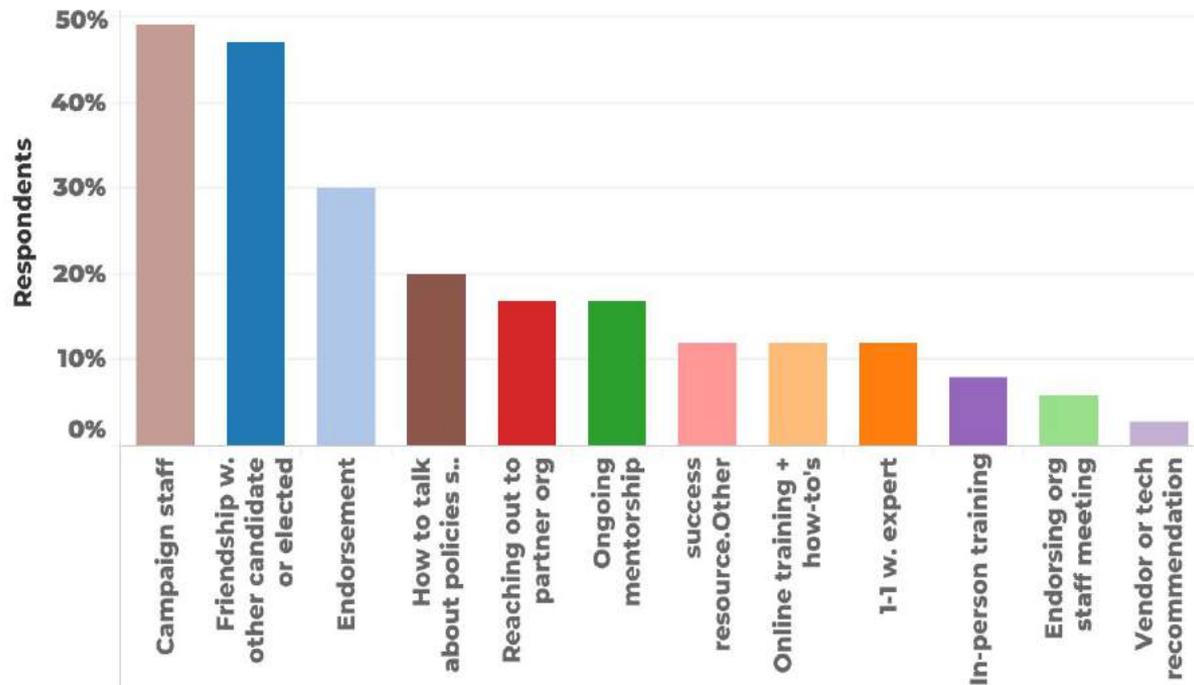
I think the best thing about the Campaign was how my candidacy influenced so many people to get involved for the first time. At one point we had 13 interns from UNC that weren't all interested in politics, they just believed in me as a leader. Expanding the electorate was my goal and we were able to get more young people and more people of color voting this year than ever before.

- Female, First-time, late 20's

Greatest Success: Most Useful Resource

The most useful resources in the moment of greatest success skews towards individual contributions of know how, in particular from ongoing relationships, like the hard work of campaign staff and the advice of another elected official.

Endorsements in this context are sometimes the success themselves, and other times an enabler of success.



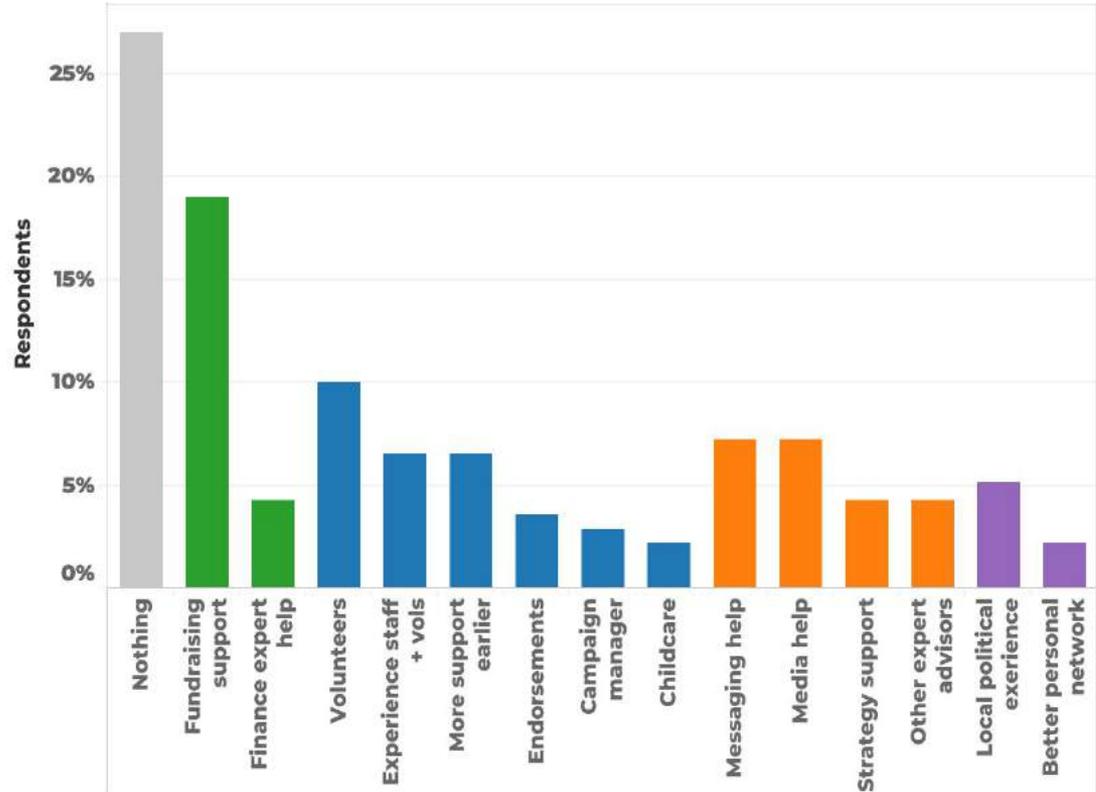
most useful resource



Greatest Success: Missing Resource

Candidates cite four categories of resources that they lacked and that could have enabled greater success:

1. **Money** - Fundraising support and network, especially locally
2. **Campaign staff & volunteers** - More volunteers and more experienced staff and volunteers across the board
3. **Messaging and strategy** - candidates started without a clear sense of story or plan
4. **Local Networks & know how** - support lacked local insight and relationships



missing resource



Deep Dive: Specific Resources



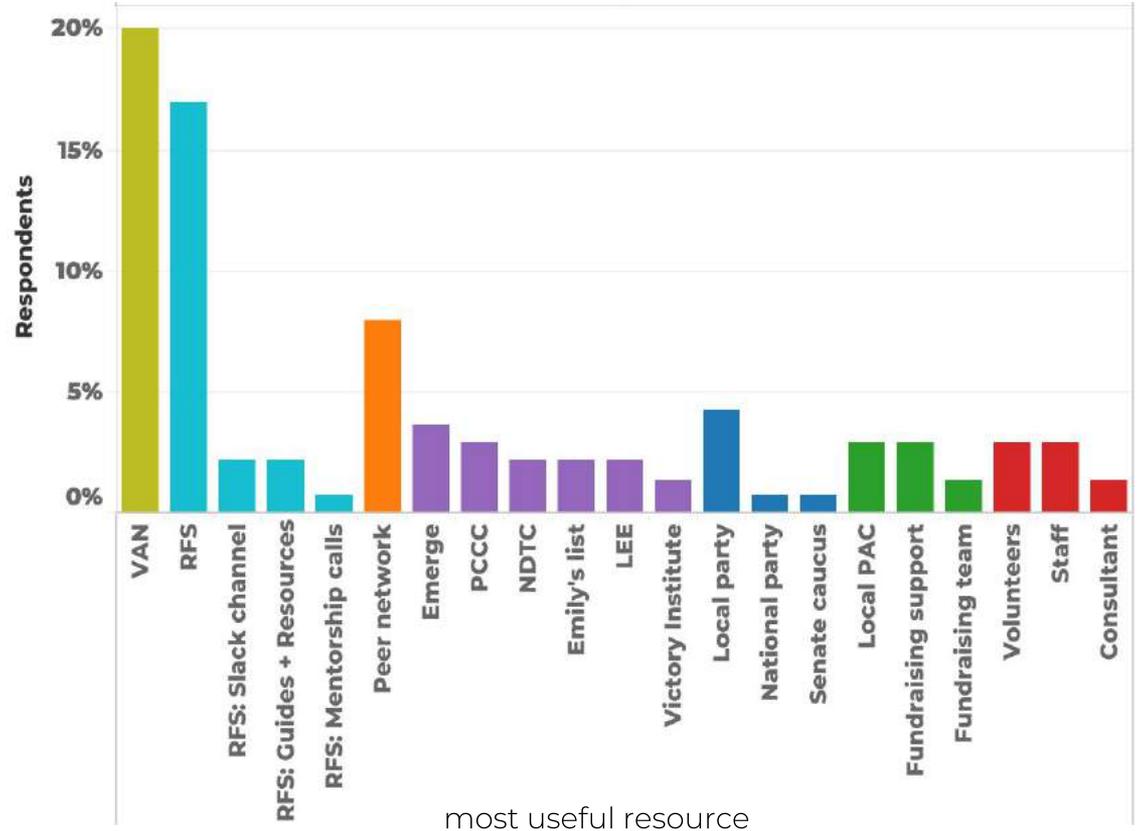
Key Takeaways: Specific Resources

- A. Candidates value RFS:** When candidates who are supported by RFS are asked in open-ended form what the most useful resource has been, 16% cite RFS - second only to VAN.
- B. Candidates value endorsements:** because they perceive endorsements as supporting other goals like media attention, name recognition, and fundraising capacity.
- C. Friendships with another candidate:** is highly valued by all segments of candidates supported by RFS.
- D. Mentorship and training** are valued significantly higher by women than men, who cite appreciating the strategic value and support.
- E. Meetings with one-on-one experts** are not as highly valued as we would expect given the call for more one-on-one support in all the open ended responses, and is particularly low for experienced candidates.
- F. Policy guidance and meetings with endorsing org staff** skew higher levels of support from experienced candidates who could benefit from more nuanced support.
- G. Tech recommendations are the least valued across all segments,** often because they were out of reach for smaller cash-strapped campaigns.



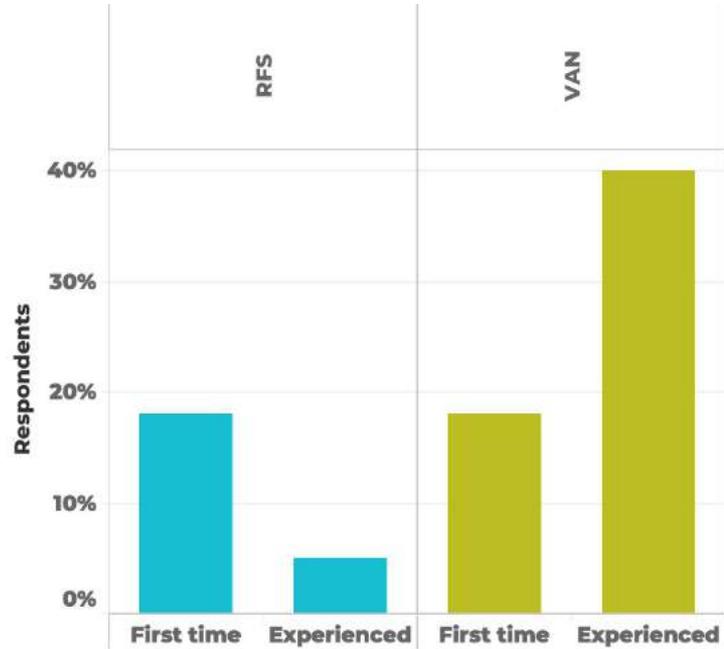
Single Most Useful Resources: Open-Ended

When RFS supported candidates are asked in open ended format what resource was most valuable to their campaign overall, VAN and RFS are the most cited responses.



Single Most Useful Resources: Open-Ended by Experience

While first time candidates cite RFS and Van in equal proportion, more experienced candidates are significantly more likely to cite VAN.



most useful resource skew by experience



Rating Specific Resources: Friendship w. Candidate

Average Score: 8.10

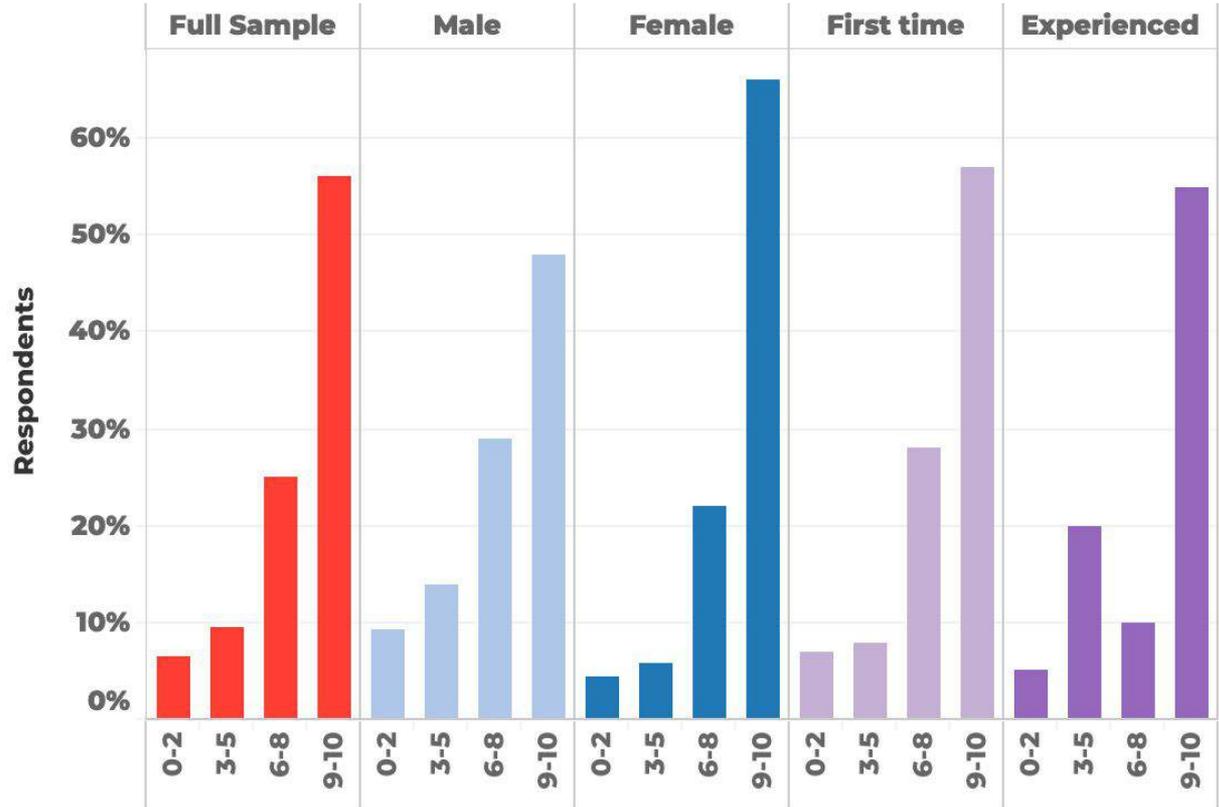
Most highly valued resource, especially among female and first time candidates.

Top Reasons Why:

1. Good advice
2. Solidarity
3. Emotional support

Top Reasons Why Not:

1. Didn't have any
2. Just not helpful



Rating Specific Resources: Endorsements

Average Score: 7.44

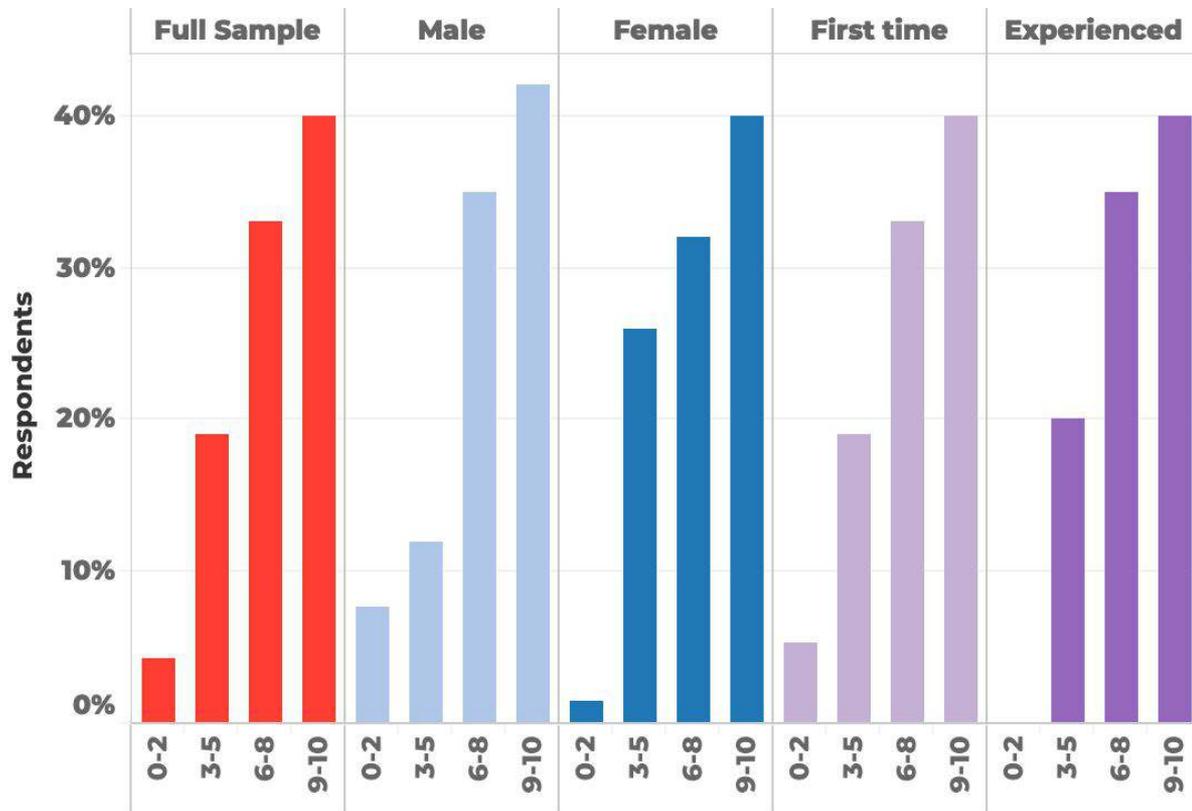
Skews more toward mid range ratings with highest value among female and experienced candidates.

Top Reasons Why:

1. Credibility
2. Media
3. Fundraising

Top Reasons Why Not:

1. Emotional boost only
2. Small impact
3. Depends on organization



Rating Specific Resources: Expert 1-1's

Average Score: 6.11

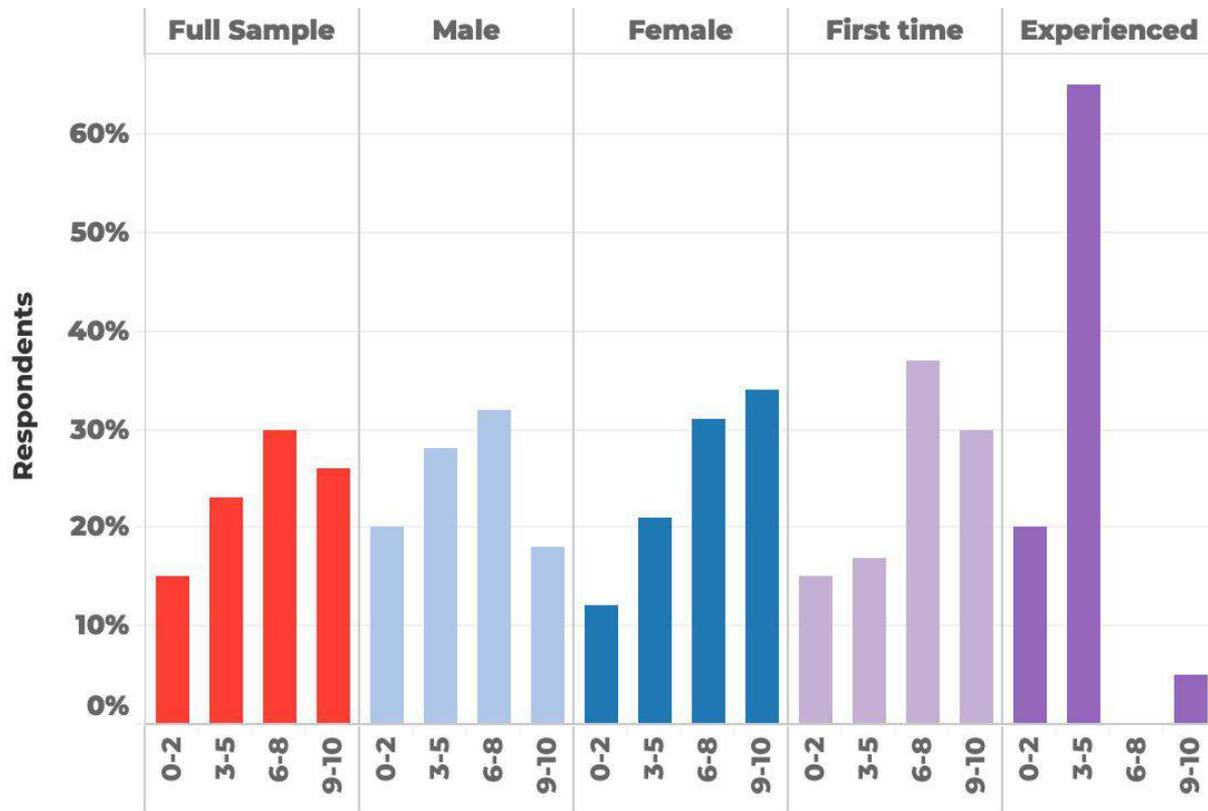
Slight positive skew overall, with higher ratings among female and first time candidates, and notably low among experiences.

Top Reasons Why:

1. Tangible help
2. Messaging, Pitch + Comms
3. Strategy

Top Reasons Why Not:

1. Didn't use
2. Too general; wants local



Rating Specific Resources: Mentorship

Average Score: 5.82

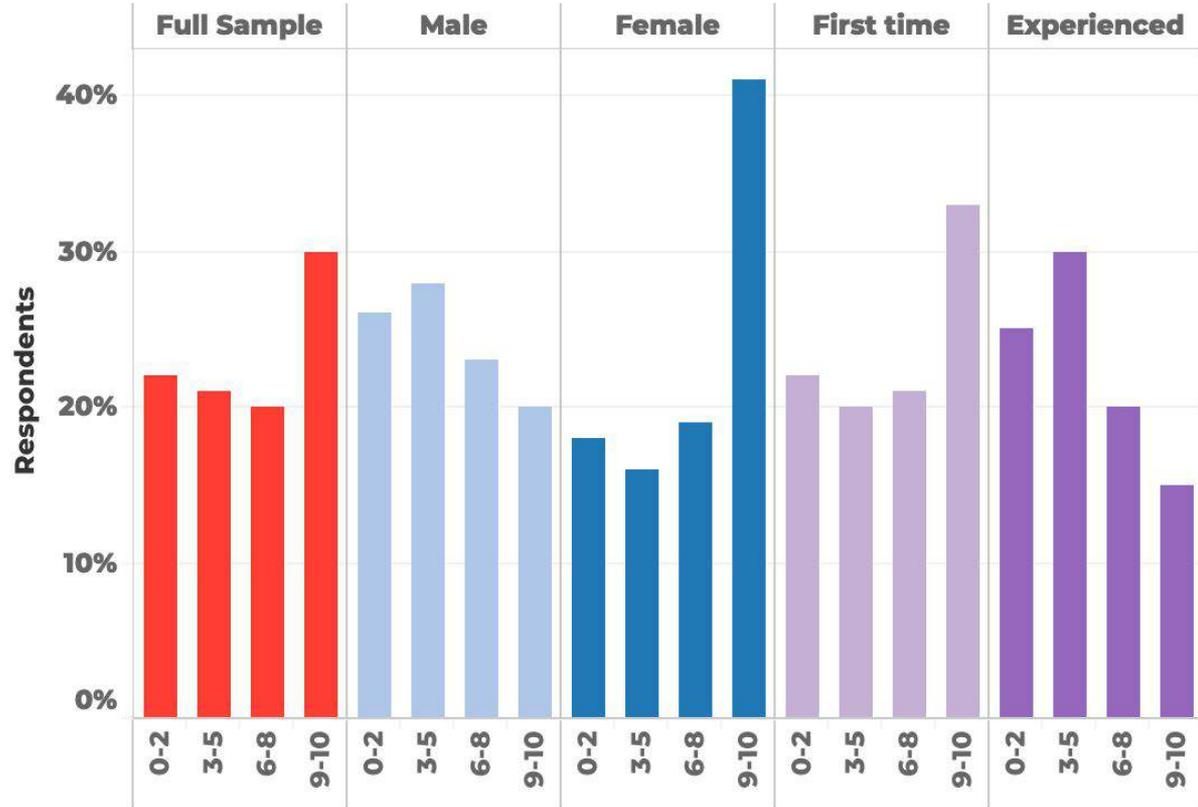
Very valuable to 41% of female candidates and 33% of first timers, while less valued by male and experienced candidates.

Top Reasons Why:

1. Generally helpful
2. Strategy
3. Emotional support

Top Reasons Why Not:

1. "Unavailable"
2. Didn't use
3. Time constraint



Rating Specific Resources: Policy Guidance

Average Score: 5.73

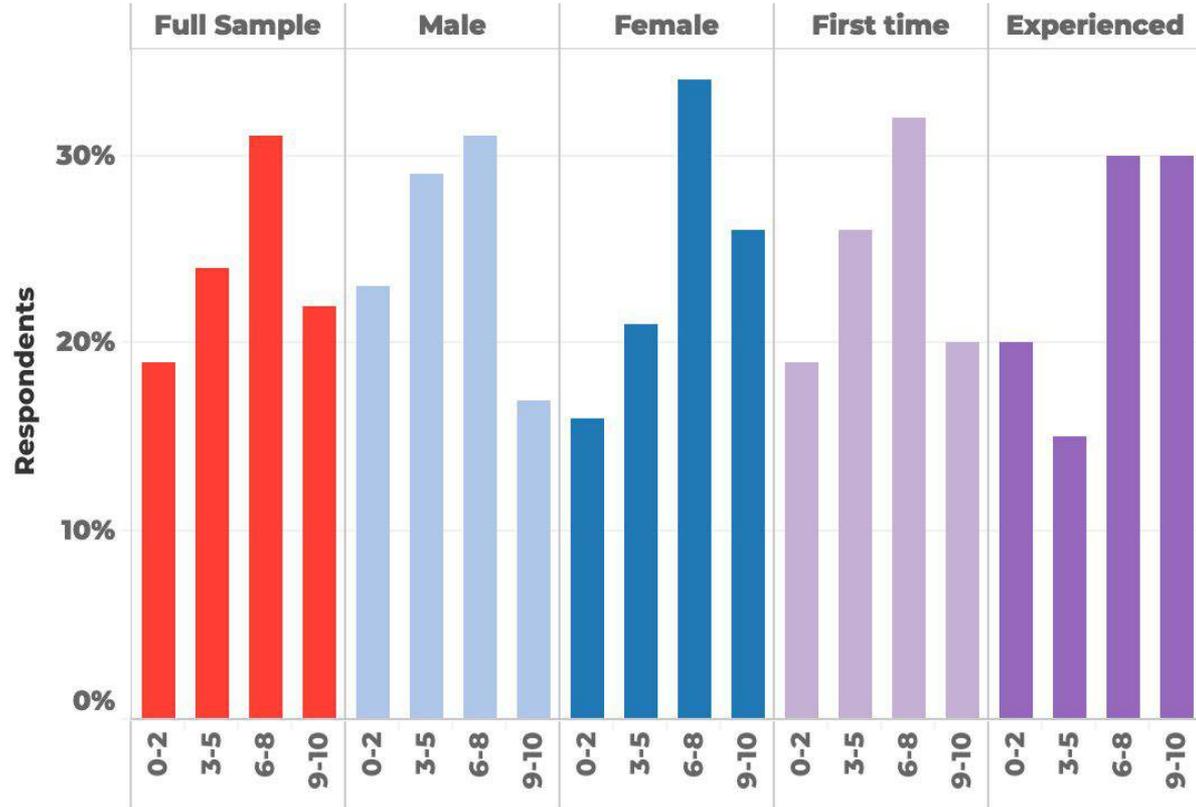
Most valued by experienced candidates, with women more likely than men to rate highly.

Top Reasons Why:

1. Generally helpful
2. Specific policy
3. Messaging

Top Reasons Why Not:

1. Didn't use
2. Not localized
3. "Not relevant"



Rating Specific Resources: Meetings w. Endorsing Org.

Average Score: 5.73

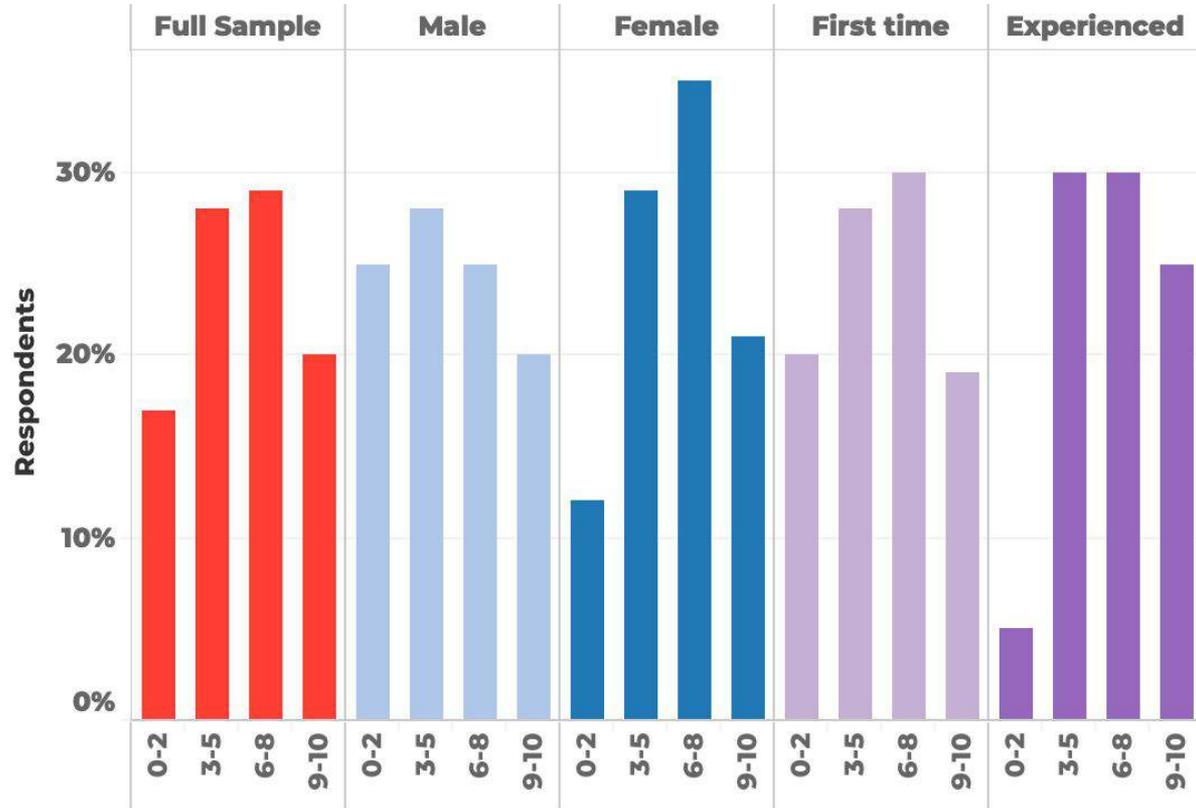
Most valued by experienced candidates, and women more likely to rank moderately useful.

Top Reasons Why:

1. "Tried + tested" advice
2. Strategy
3. "Emotional validation"

Top Reasons Why Not:

1. Didn't have any meetings
2. Just not helpful
3. Depends on organization



Rating Specific Resources: Trainings + Guides

Average Score: 5.68

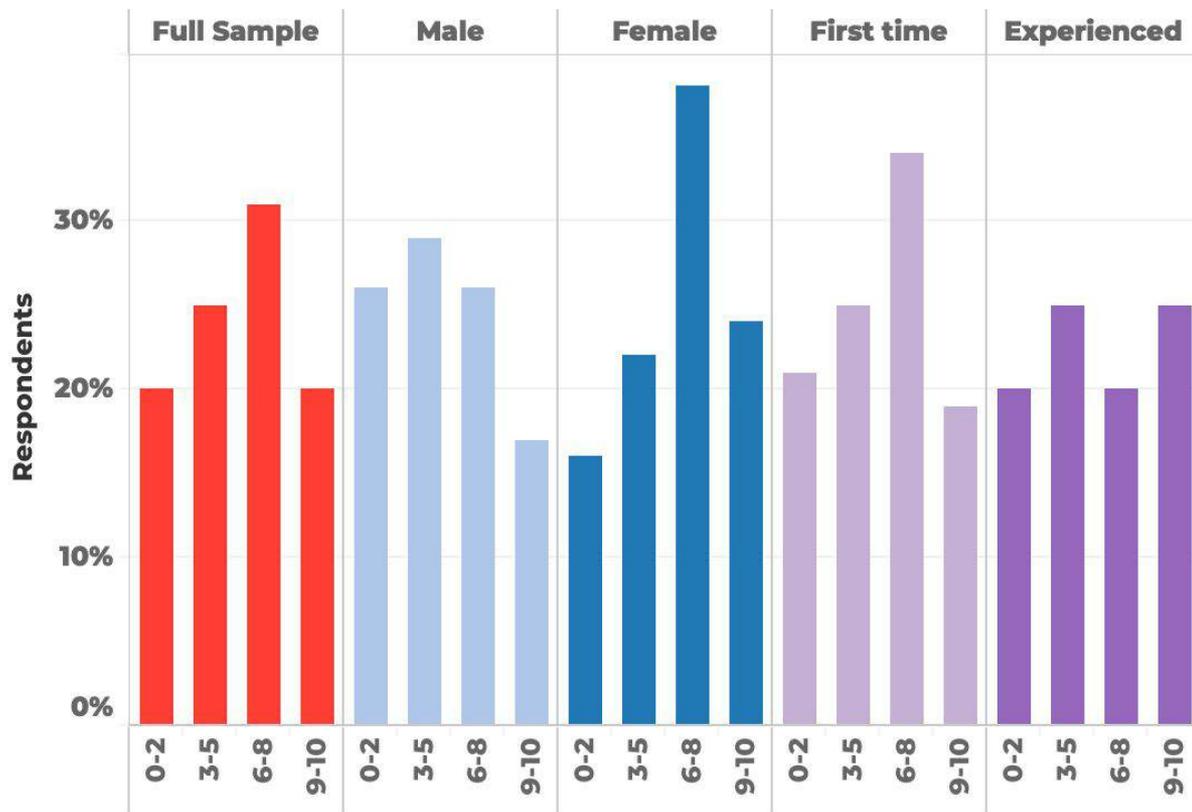
Female candidates much more likely to rank highly, and experienced are actually most likely to rank the highest.

Top Reasons Why:

1. Good, tangible content
2. In-person
3. Not enough time

Top Reasons Why Not:

1. Too general
2. Not enough time
3. "Didn't use any of it"



Rating Specific Resources: Vendor + Tech Rec's

Average Score: 4.5

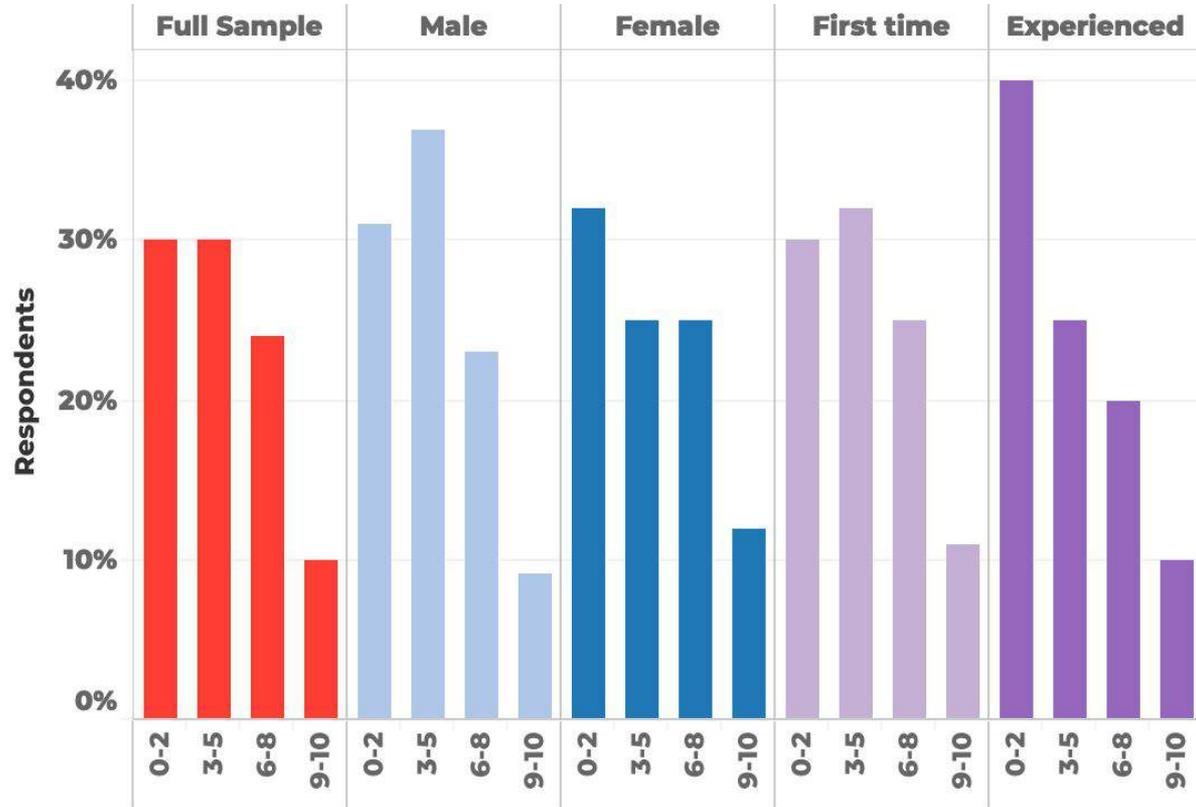
60% rate 5 or less, first timers more likely to rank somewhat useful and men slightly less favorable.

Top Reasons Why:

1. Trusted referral network
2. Specific digital tool
3. Affordable

Top Reasons Why Not:

1. Didn't use
2. Budget constraints





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**To follow up or discuss results, please
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APPENDIX

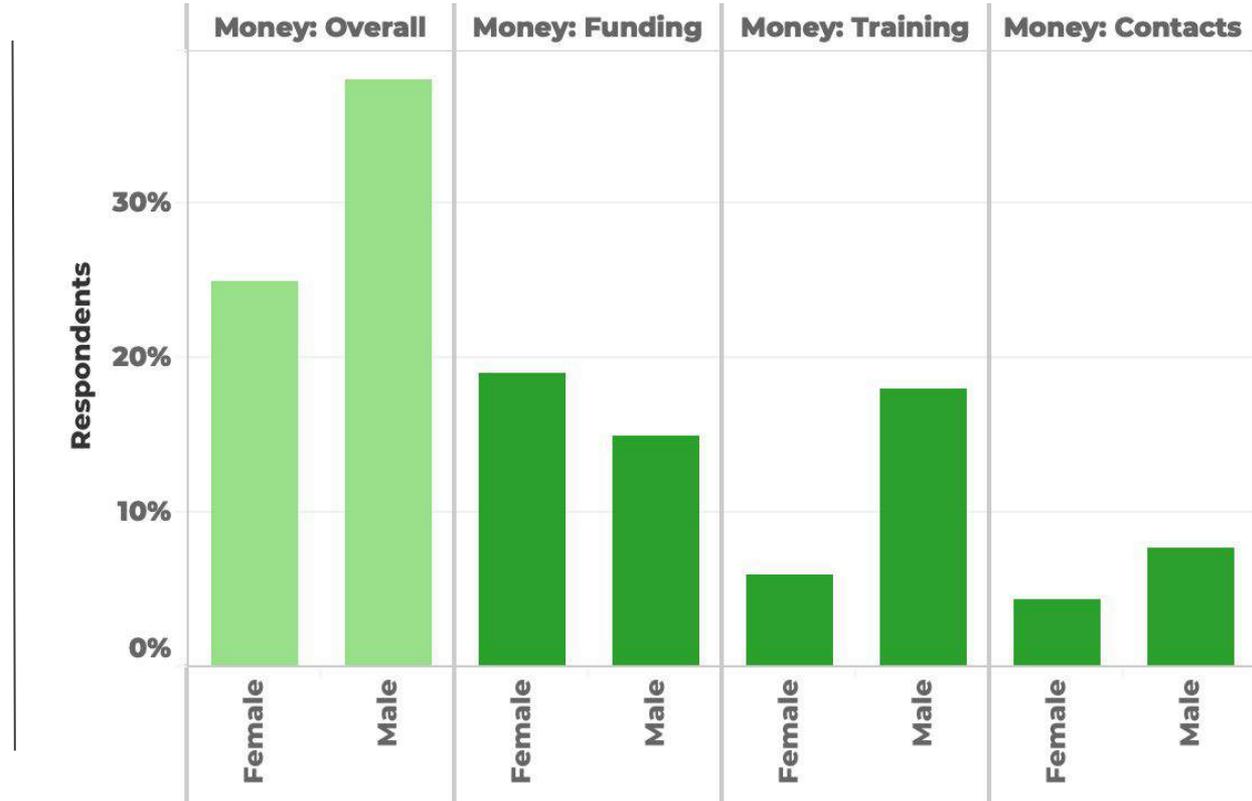


Appendix A:

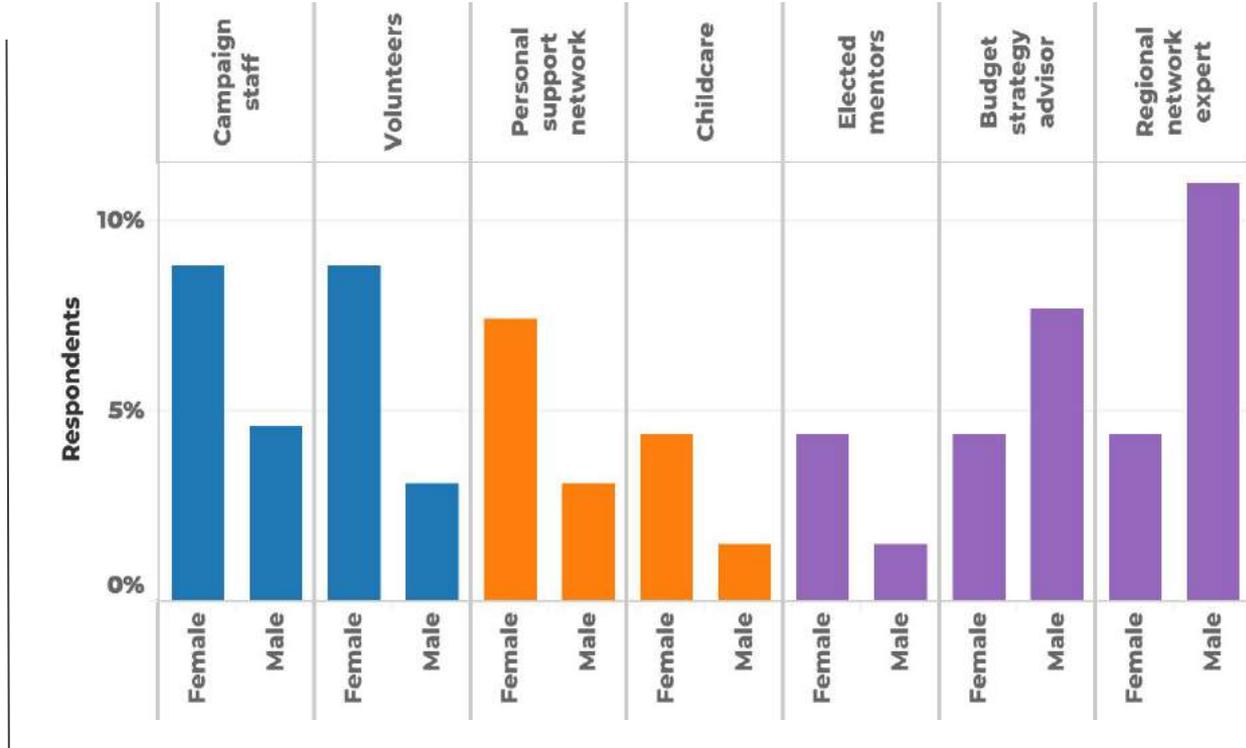
Additional analysis



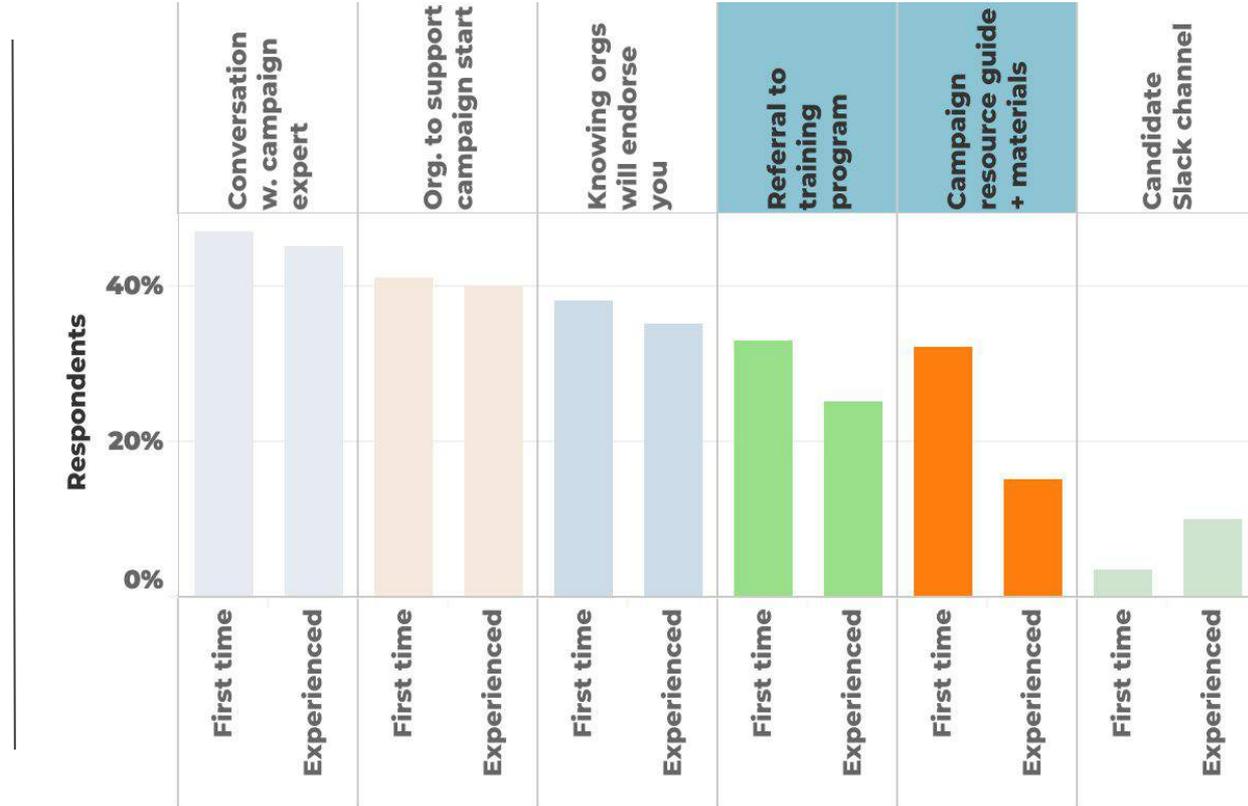
Decision to Run: missing resource



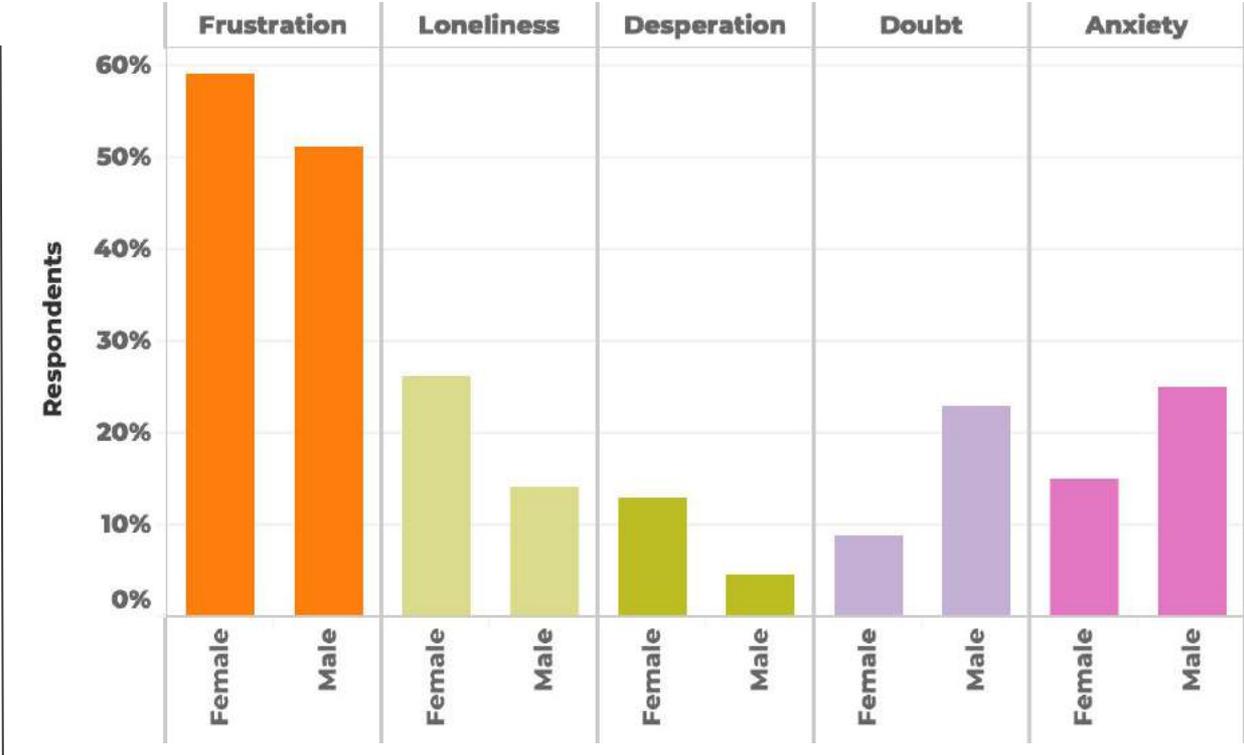
Greatest challenge: missing resource



Decision Moment: Most useful resource

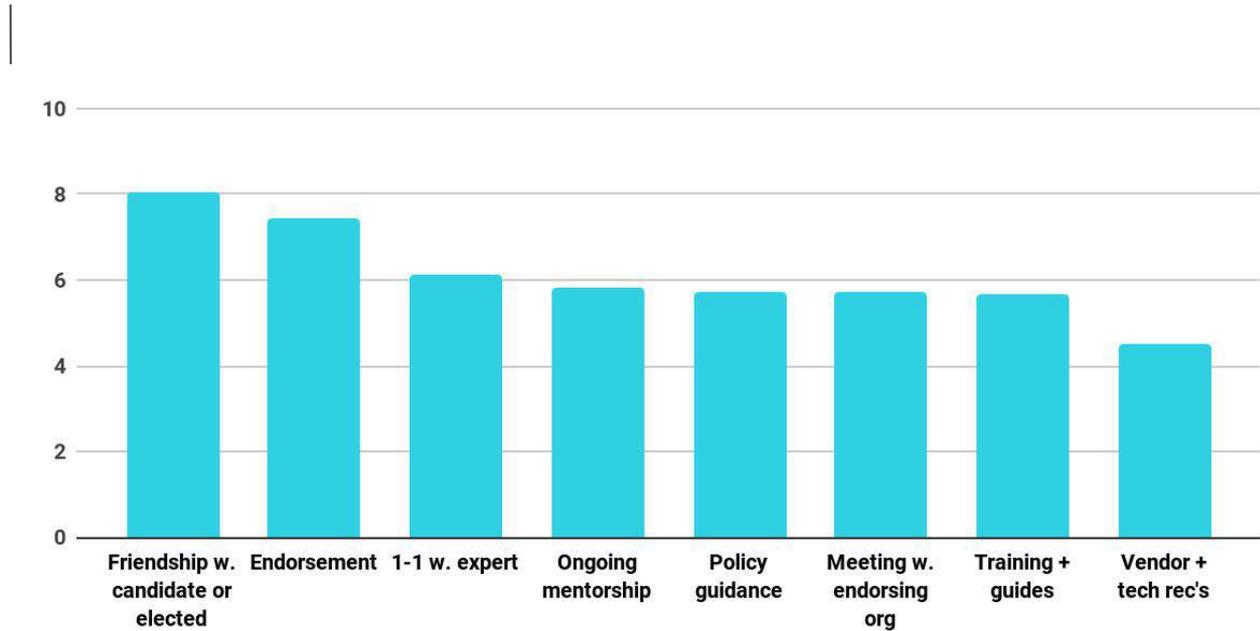


Greatest Challenge: Emotion



Specific Resources: Close Ranked

S.



Appendix B:

Definitions



Appendix B

Priority ID Definitions

— 1/11 —



ID	DEFINITION
"Realized I'm best option"	Ran because they were the best option among folks who might
1-1 w. expert	References direct support from an expert
2016 was a catalyst	References 2016 as catalyst
Advancing policy	References a specific policy or piece of legislation
Affirmation + validation	References feel legitimate, affirmed, validated as a candidate
Age discrimination	Receiving discrimination because of age
Always knew I would	They always knew they would run
Be a new option	Wants to be a new/alternative option
Better personal network	Having a better personal network
Blindsided by sneaky tactics	Was surprised by tactics of candidates or party in primary or general
Bottom of ballot advice	References resources or advice for down-ballot candidate
Budget strategy advisor	References support on campaign strategy or campaign budget creation
Building Dem infrastructure	References building party or democratic structure
Campaign budget	References campaign budget

Appendix B

Priority ID Definitions

— 2/11 —



Campaign manager	References campaign manager specifically
Campaign resource guide + materials	Receiving campaign resource guides or materials
Campaign staff	References any and all campaign staff
Can't afford good campaign	Financial restraints that affected the campaign
Candidate Slack channel	Reference to the RFS/Candidate Slack channel
Celebrating w. supporters	References sharing incremental or ultimate victory with staff, volunteers or family
Childcare	References childcare or lack thereof
Communications help	Help or support with communications
Consultant	References consultants
Conversation with campaign expert	Had a conversation with a campaign expert
Conversations w. voters	References having conversations with individual voters or constituents
Crushing opponent	References being better than and beating an opponent, incremental or ultimate
Data help	Help or support with campaign data
DCCC	References the DCCC

Appendix B

Priority ID Definitions

— 3/11 —



Digital help	Help or support with digital strategy or engagement
Do my part	Wants to do their part
Elected mentors	References a mentor or supportive expert whose an elected official
Election night	References election night, win or lose
Emerge	References Emerge
Emily's List	References Emily's List
Endorsement	References receiving or not receiving an endorsement
Engaging across parties	References inspiring, reaching or engaging across party lines
Establishment vs progressives	References tension between new progressives and the Democratic establishment
Experience staff + vols	Having a team of experienced staff and volunteers
Experienced mentor	References an experienced mentor
Failed to get endorsement	Not receiving an endorsement
Few others running	Ran because there weren't many others running
Fight against bad	References fighting against something bad
Fight Trump	Ran because they want to fight Trump

Appendix B

Priority ID Definitions

— 4/11 —



Finance expert help	Help or support from a finance expert
For my kids	References running for the benefit of their children
Friendship w. other candidate	References a friendship with another candidate
Fundraising challenges	Running into fundraising challenges
Fundraising support	References advice, support, or help with fundraising
Fundraising team	References a team to help with fundraising
Gender discrimination	Receiving discrimination because of gender
Given "final push"	A final push in life convinced them to run
Hard primary	A difficult primary
Hardest at start	The beginning was the most difficult
Having local impact	References having an impact in the community
Help finding staff	References needing support to find staff
Home life tension	Tension between home and life
Imposter syndrome	Feeling insecure or imposter syndrome
In-person training	References trainings in person

Appendix B

Priority ID Definitions

— 5/11 —



Inspiring disengaged voters	References inspiring marginalized voters to be engaged
Inspiring future candidates	References inspiring a next generation of candidates
Inspiring young + new voters	References inspiring young or new voters to be engaged
Know how hard it'd be	References having expectations set for how hard it would be
Knowing orgs will endorse you	Endorsements from organizations
Knowing resources	References not know what resources were available
Lack confidence	Feeling a lack of confidence
LEE	References LEE
Legal + compliance help	Help or support with reporting, law suits, fundraising compliance or other
Legal support	References expert support of legal needs
Little community support	Receiving little support from the community
Little establishment support	Receiving little support from establishments
Local impact	Wants to make an impact in the community
Local PAC	References a local PAC

Appendix B

Priority ID Definitions

— 6/11 —



Local party	References Local democratic parties or committees or infrastructure
Local political experience	Having local political experience
Local politics	Getting caught up in local politics
Lonely + little support	Feeling lonely and receiving little support
Mail help	Help or support with mail program
Make a difference	Wants to make a difference
Media attention	References receiving media attention
Media help	Help or support with media
Media training	References media training
Mental + physical health	Mental and physical health
Message resonating	References their message really resonating with people
Messaging help	Help or support with messaging
Messaging support	References support crafting messaging or messaging strategy
Model to kids	References positive role model for their kids

Appendix B

Priority ID Definitions

— 7/11 —



Money: contacts	References needing funding contacts or network
Money: funding	References needing funding
Money: training	References needing fundraising training or tools
More party support	Receiving more party support
More support earlier	Having more support early on my campaign
National party	References National Democratic party infrastructure
NDTC	NDTC
Negative attacks	Receiving negative attacks during my campaign
Negative press	Receiving negative press
No CM	Not having a campaign manager
No regrets	Did not want to have any regrets
Nothing	Nothing
Ongoing expert advisor	References on ongoing or on call relationship with an expert
Ongoing mentorship	References a relationship or support with a mentor
Online trainings and how-to's	References trainings or resources available online

Appendix B

Priority ID Definitions

— 8/11 —



Org. to support campaign start	An organization helped support the beginning of the campaign
Organizing volunteers	References recruiting and mobilizing volunteers
Other "candidate Slack"	References Run For Something's candidate slack channel
Other "Ross at RFS"	References Ross at Run for Something by name
Other "RSF parent FB Group"	References the Run For Something's parent Facebook Group
Other "someone to listen"	References having an empathetic listener
Other expert advisors	Help or support from expert advisors
Other: "Family + friends"	References friends and family support network
Party support	References the support of the Democratic party or committees
Peer cohort	References having support from a peer cohort
Peer network	References a A peer network
Personal financial assistance	References help with personal finances
Personal support network	References support from friends, family, peers
Policy guidance	References support on drafting or talking about specific policy

Appendix B

Priority ID Definitions

— 9/11 —



Positive role model	Wants to be a positive role model
Proud of difference made	References the pride from positive impact
Racism	Receiving attacks because of race
Referral to training program	Receiving referrals to training programs
Regional network expert	References local or regional network of experts
Relief or turning point	References feeling a turning point when it got easier
Reporting expert	References an expert to support campaign reporting needs
Represent diversity	References representing racial, gender or LGBTQ diversity
Representing diversity	References representing racial, gender, LGBTQ or other diversity
Resonating w/ voters	Resonating with voters
RFS	References Run for Something in any capacity
RFS: Guides + resources	References an RFS guide or resource
RFS: Mentorship calls	References an RFS mentorship call
RFS: Slack channel	References the RFS Slack channel

Appendix B

Priority ID Definitions

— 10/11 —



Senate caucus	References Congressional, senate caucus
Sheer amount of work	The amount of work involved
Slow drip; no moment	There was no moment
Speech praise	Positive positive reaction to a speech
Staff	References a team of staff
Staff + vol training	References training for staff and volunteers
Staff w.o experience	Working with staff with no experience
Strategy support	Help or support with strategy
Stronger party	Having a stronger party presence in their state/area
Support of local leader	References positive support from a respected leader in the community
Support of partner organization	References organizations that support Democratic candidates
Support of strangers	References support from previously unknown people
Support: Family	Support from family helped them decide to run
Support: Friends	Support from friends helped them decide to run
Support: Party	Support from a party helped them decide to run

Appendix B

Priority ID Definitions

— 11/11 —



Support: Training	Training pushed them over the edge to run
Telling your story	References telling knowing and sharing their campaign story
Terrible incumbent	Current person holding office was bad
The right time	Ran because it was the right time
VAN	References VAN
Vendor or tech recommendations	References referral to a vendor or specific tech solution
VERY first steps help	References guidance on how to make the very first steps
Victory Institute	References Victory Institute
Volunteers	References a volunteer base
Volunteers	References campaign volunteers
Winning!	References winning their race
Women's March	References the women's March
Working + campaigning	Balancing working while campaigning
Working w. team	References working with staff, volunteers and community on team



Avalanche

**To follow up or discuss results, please
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