



KNOCK
DOWN
THE
HOUSE

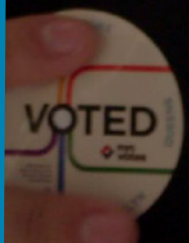
YOUTH
TOOLKIT





• • **“WHEN I WAS A LITTLE GIRL,**

my dad wanted to go on a road trip with his buddies. I wanted to go so badly and I begged and I begged and I begged, and he relented. And so, it was like four grown men and a five-year-old girl went on this road trip from New York. We stopped... we stopped here (in Washington D.C.) And it was a really beautiful day, and he leaned down next to me, and he pointed at the Washington Monument, and he pointed at the Reflecting Pool, and he pointed at everything, and he said, ‘You know, this all belongs to us.’ He said, ‘This is our government. It belongs to us. So all of this stuff is yours.’”



ALEXANDRIA OCASIO-CORTEZ





TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 4** Welcome and Overview
- 5** Letter from Director, Rachel Lears
- 6** Using This Toolkit
- 7** Getting Started
- 8** Screening the Film
- 10** Workshops - 101 and 201
- 12** 101 Workshops
 - Introduction to Political Organizing
 - What it Takes to Run for Office
 - Women Are Political Leaders
 - 101 Tools in Action
 - 101 Key Terms
- 27** 201 Workshops
 - Grassroots Organizing - Strategies and Tactics
 - Getting Money Out of Politics
 - Representation and Politics
 - Midterm Elections 2018 - A Case Study
 - 201 Tools in Action
- 47** Resources for Further Learning about the 2018 Elections

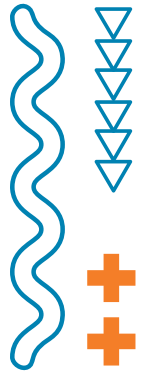


THANK YOU FOR SCREENING KNOCK DOWN THE HOUSE

Knock Down the House is an inspiring story chronicling the experiences of four working-class women who ran for Congress in 2018. They are everyday people who didn't see themselves, or their needs, represented in our government.

In 2018, they did something about it.

They took risks and with deep conviction, grassroots organizing, and hard work made their voices heard around the country. We hope their work and passion inspires and empowers you to create your own blueprint and get involved in political organizing and civic engagement.



A NETFLIX ORIGINAL DOCUMENTARY

KNOCK DOWN THE HOUSE

MAY 1 | NETFLIX





LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR, RACHEL LEARS

I've been making films about politics since the days of Occupy Wall Street. After having a baby in 2016, I thought I might take a break from political filmmaking—but the day after the election, I knew I had no choice. I wanted to tell a big story in this new political reality about people working across cultural and geographical divides to change American politics in big ways. That same day I contacted the progressive organizations Brand New Congress and Justice Democrats to propose a documentary project about their plan to forge a new path to Congress for “extraordinary ordinary” working people. That project has become *Knock Down the House*.


For over a decade I've investigated the way power and social change work. Too often, communities operate separately in silos and their struggles end up pitted against one another in media narratives. We won't have systemic change until we overcome this. At this critical and volatile moment, *Knock Down the House* presents a story of people working tirelessly to unite the struggles of all Americans.

This film is about power—how it works in political machines and throughout our democracy, and how to build it both inside yourself and in the world. It's also about turning pain and adversity into a drive toward positive action: all four of the women featured in the film draw upon personal experiences of loss, hardship, and even trauma to find the courage and strength to mount and run their campaigns. Through these themes, the film explores what it takes and what it looks like to make the politically impossible possible.



USING THIS TOOLKIT





The *Knock Down the House* Youth Toolkit is a tool to energize and inspire all youth interested in grassroots political organizing. It includes practical information to organize post-screening discussions and events including resources to facilitate workshops on key topics from the documentary such as:

- > [Grassroots political organizing](#)
- > [Women as political leaders](#)
- > [Representation in politics](#)
- > [Running for office in the United States](#)
- > [Money in political campaigns](#)

There is also a Home and Community Screening Guide that includes more background information and discussion prompts available at KnockDowntheHouse.com.

GETTING STARTED

To get the most out of screening *Knock Down the House* with your group, consider these questions in your planning:

Space and Time

- Where are we watching the film?
- Who is in the group?
- How long do we have to watch and engage with the film?

Goals

- Who is our audience?
- Why are we watching *Knock Down the House*?
- What do we want as the outcome of the film and engagement activities?

WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO AFTER WATCHING THE DOCUMENTARY?

- Option One:** Screening *Knock Down the House* with a facilitated discussion after the film.
- Option Two:** Screening *Knock Down the House* with an interactive workshop. Each workshop can be used independently or sequentially over time, and with just a bit of preparation can be facilitated by youth leaders.

101 Workshops are for youth audiences beginning their interest and work in civic engagement and political organizing.

201 Workshops are for youth with some experience in political organizing seeking opportunities to deepen their understanding and expand their skills and knowledge.

OPTION ONE: SCREENING AND DISCUSSION OF KNOCK DOWN THE HOUSE



WHAT WE'LL DO

Groups will watch the full documentary, and afterwards discuss many of the topics raised in the story such as representation in the political process, grassroots organizing and the role of money in politics.

LENGTH

Film Screening, 90min, Post-Screening Discussion, 45 min.

MATERIALS

Equipment to screen the film which is available on [Netflix](#).

PRE-SCREENING

Questions to Discuss Before You Watch

- > What are the ways that a community can come together in order to make a positive change in society?
- > What are some examples of people, movements, or ideas that changed the way the government runs? How did that change happen?
- > How can elected officials help us bring about change in society?
- > Have you ever thought about running for political office? Why? What would you want to change in your community that would help it thrive?

WATCH

Knock Down the House



POST-SCREENING

Questions to Discuss After You Watch

- > What moments in the film stood out to you and why?
- > What did you learn in the film that was new or surprising?
- > Why do you think each of these women ran for political office? What did they want to change in their communities?
- > What made each of the candidates experts in the causes they were championing? How did this come across in their campaigns?"
- > What did you see in the film that made you skeptical or concerned about the current election process?
- > What did you see that made you feel hopeful for the future?

CLOSING

Noteworthy Quotes

Consider sharing one or more of these quotes and discuss any reactions as a way to bring your film screening event to a close.

"In the beginning, the fundamental question is, 'Why you? Why do you think, you can do this?' The reason why was because nobody else would. So literally anybody could, right? Because the alternative is no one."

— Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez

"Being a woman of color, our image is really scrutinized. You have to speak like this. You have to dress like this. I decided that, yeah, I don't care. Basically you deal with it. You know, people in my district, this is how we look. I'm going to serve and represent the people of my district."

— Cori Bush

"Every step of the way, we seem to be on track. And no one else believes in the path, so they think we're not on track. I say, you know, you don't have a shot, if you don't raise a hundred thousand dollars between now and next week, or you don't have a shot if you're not gonna put out targeted mailers, you know, to women between the ages of fifty-five and sixty-five before this day."

— Keenan Korth, Campaign Manager for Amy Vilela

"After twenty-sixteen, nothing is predictable. Nothing!"

— Joz Sida, Field Operations Director, Amy Vilela

A Discussion Guide and Classroom Lessons will be available at [KnockDownTheHouse.com](https://www.knockdownthehouse.com).

OPTION TWO: WORKSHOPS



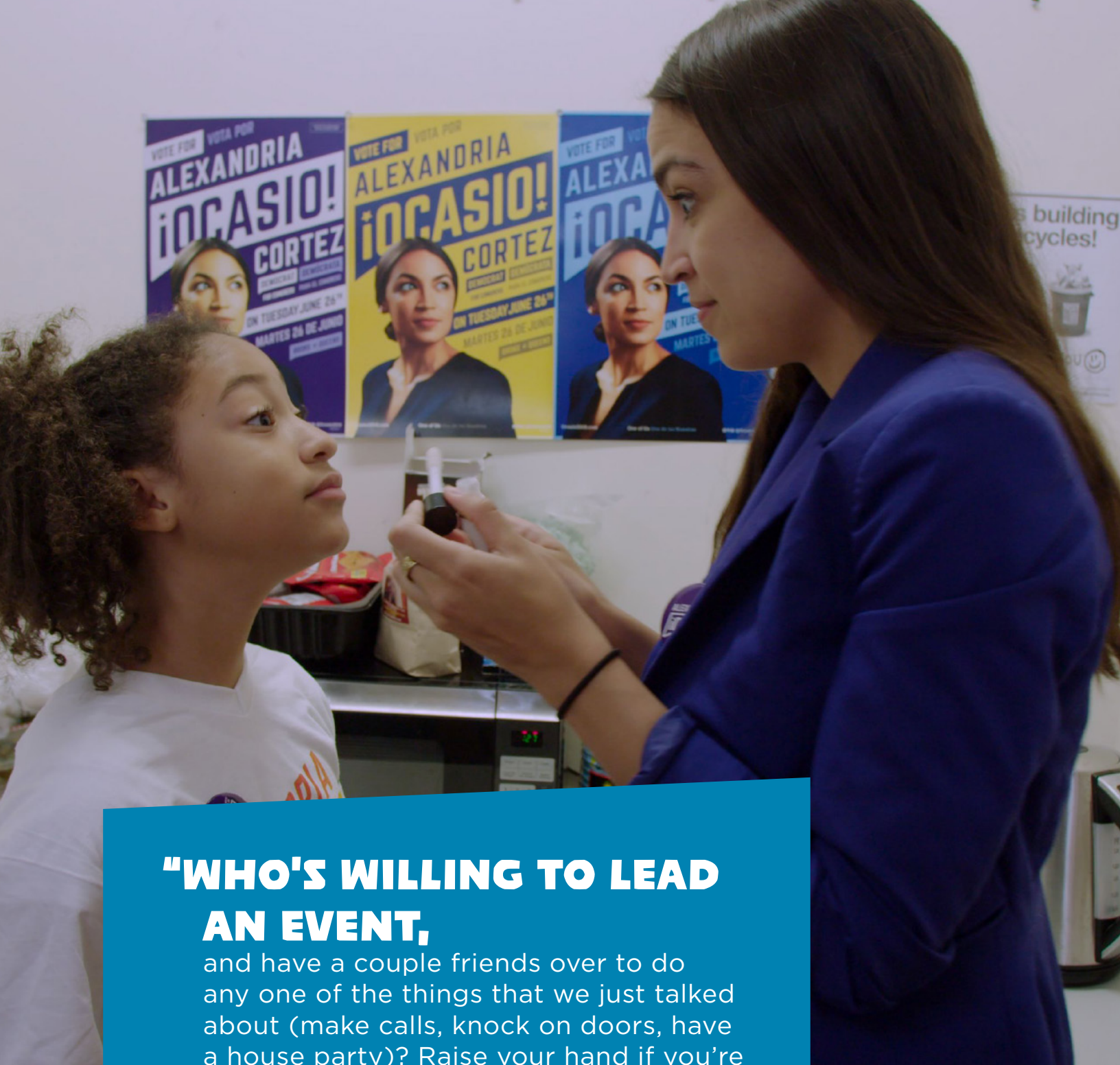
The following are a set of workshop agendas and resources to use in conjunction with screening the film. The workshops are geared for all youth interested in political organizing, in holding political office, and in increasing their knowledge and skills for effective civic engagement. They are organized as 101 (introductory workshops on political organizing) and 201 (workshops for youth already involved in political organizing). The workshop materials also reflect the priority of telling the stories of women and women of color running for political office that is at the heart of *Knock Down the House*.

THE 101 WORKSHOP TOPICS:

- > **Introduction to Political Organizing** offers an overview of campaign strategies and tactics used by the candidates in *Knock Down the House*.
- > **What it Takes to Run for Office** explores the different roles involved in a political campaign. Youth will roleplay a day-in-the-life of a hypothetical political campaign.
- > **Women Are Political Leaders** looks at the leadership qualities and skills of the candidates in *Knock Down the House* and invites youth to reflect on and connect to these qualities with their own leadership style.
- > **101 Tools in Action** offers ideas for getting involved after your workshop.
- > **101 Key Terms**

THE 201 WORKSHOP TOPICS:

- > **Grassroots Organizing: Strategies and Tactics** offers the opportunity to learn about and discuss strategies and decisions involved with political organizing.
- > **Getting Money Out of Politics** deepens understanding of the complex system of campaign finance and fundraising that currently exists.
- > **Representation and Politics** takes a critical look at who is currently serving in Congress and how it reflects the people they serve.
- > **Midterm Elections 2018 - A Case Study** shines a spotlight on the many accomplishments and challenges of the 2018 election and offers an opportunity to look towards future election seasons.



"WHO'S WILLING TO LEAD AN EVENT,

and have a couple friends over to do any one of the things that we just talked about (make calls, knock on doors, have a house party)? Raise your hand if you're willing to do it. All right. All right. All right. Now, if you just raised your hand, I want you to stand up. Got 'em. Applause. Give them a round of applause."

ALEXANDRIA OCASIO-CORTEZ

101: INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL ORGANIZING



"RIGHT NOW

our Congress is 81% men, it's mostly white men, it's mostly millionaires, it's mostly lawyers."

**CORBIN TRENT,
JUSTICE DEMOCRATS**

GOAL

This workshop introduces several strategies and tactics used by the candidates during their Congressional campaigns in *Knock Down the House*.

LENGTH

Total time, up to 2.5 hours. Film screening, 90 minutes. Workshop 30 - 60 minutes.

MATERIALS

Equipment to screen the film, access to the film on [Netflix](#), and copies of the handout for the group.



WORKSHOP: EXAMINE POLITICAL ORGANIZING STRATEGIES AND TACTICS

1 Step One:

Before watching *Knock Down the House*:

- > Brainstorm the definition of what is a Strategy and what is a Tactic. Use these definitions if needed to get started:
 - > **Strategy:** A plan of action designed to achieve a long-term or overall aim
 - > **Tactic:** Specific actions that are short-term steps toward a larger goal
- > Ask the group to brainstorm examples of organizing strategies and tactics in politics. Before starting the film, ask the group to pay particular attention to the political strategies and tactics used by the candidate throughout the documentary. Explain that after the film you will spend time in small groups debriefing how the candidates employed different strategies and tactics.

2

Step Two: Watch *Knock Down the House*

Introduce the film to your group using this sample script:

“*Knock Down the House* is an inspiring story chronicling the experiences of four working-class women who ran for Congress in 2018. They are everyday people who didn’t see themselves, or their needs, represented in our government and in 2018, they did something about it. We are going to watch the film as a group, take a break and then reconvene as a group for our workshop.”

3

Step Three:

After watching *Knock Down the House* take a short break and ask participants to organize themselves into small groups of no more than four people.

- > Distribute and read the directions on **Handout One**.
- > Have each small group spend about 20 minutes discussing the **Handout**.

Bring small groups together and read through each of the organizing strategies to complete the **Handout**.



Closing

Bring the workshop to a close by sharing out the scenes the groups identified as best illustrating the organizing strategy or tactic. If time permits, brainstorm other strategies and tactics that could be used in the political arena and ways to incorporate them into your organizing work.



EXAMPLES OF POLITICAL STRATEGIES AND TACTICS USED IN KNOCK DOWN THE HOUSE

Directions

Explore with students the difference between a tactic, (actions to achieve a goal) and strategy (the theory to accomplish the goal.) After each example, reach consensus about a scene when the tactic or strategy was effectively used. When it's relevant, ask participants to compare those scenes with their own personal experiences.



COMMUNITY ORGANIZING...is a democratic strategy of building power through involving a constituency, often the local community, in identifying shared problems and thinking through solutions to address and reach the desired solution.

- > Discuss an example of community organizing as a political strategy in the documentary.
- > What works about this strategy?
- > What are the challenges?
- > Would you use it in your own campaign? Why or why not?



GRASSROOTS ORGANIZING...grassroots organizing is a bottom-up approach to decision making, leadership, and organizing from within the community rather than a top-down or hierarchical structure. A grassroots movement is one that uses community organizing to further political and economic changes.

- > Discuss an example of grassroots organizing as a political organizing strategy.
- > What works about this strategy?
- > What are the challenges?
- > Would you use it in your own campaign? Why or why not?



SOCIAL MEDIA...is a central tool in any current political campaign. Social networking sites have also emerged as a source of news and information, and as a public platform for political debate, discussion, and of political discord.

- > Discuss an example of social media as a tactic in the documentary.
- > What works about this tactic?
- > What are the challenges?
- > Would you use it in your own campaign? Why or why not?



CANVASSING...for a political issue or candidates is explained as face-to-face conversations with individuals in the community to solicit support. Canvassing often entails going door-to-door, introducing yourself and/or an issue you are supporting, and actively listening to the needs and concerns of your community.

- > Discuss an example of canvassing as a tactic.
- > What works about this tactic?
- > What are the challenges?
- > Would you use it in your own campaign? Why or why not?



POLITICAL RALLY...is an organized gathering of supporters who come together in solidarity to support a candidate, or issue or to voice their opposition to a candidate or issue. A rally is customarily held in a public place in order to attract media attention and coverage.

- > Discuss an example of a political rally in *Knock Down the House*.
- > What works about this tactic?
- > What are the challenges?
- > Would you use it in your own campaign? Why or why not?

101: WHAT IT TAKES TO RUN FOR OFFICE



"I THINK REJECTING

corporate money is a pretty big signal... and I think it's stronger than the word 'progressive.'"

**SAIKAT CHAKRABARTI,
JUSTICE DEMOCRATS**

GOAL

Participants will explore what it takes to run for office through a role-play activity of running a hypothetical political campaign.

LENGTH

Total time, 2 -3 hours

Film Screening, 90 minutes. Workshop, minimum 90 - 120 minutes.

MATERIALS

Equipment to screen the film, access to the film on [Netflix](#), and copies of the handout for the group.



WORKSHOP: CAMPAIGN ROLE-PLAY

1 Step One: Watch *Knock Down the House*

Introduce the film to your group using this sample script:

“*Knock Down the House* is an inspiring story chronicling the experiences of four working-class women who ran for Congress in 2018. They are everyday people who didn’t see themselves, or their needs, represented in our government. In 2018, they did something about it. We are going to watch the film as a group, take a break and then reconvene as a group for our workshop.”

2 Step Two: Film Debrief

After watching *Knock Down the House* take a short break. Come back together as a large group and read this quote from Cori Bush:

“That’s why I’m running. Because it shouldn’t be about one person being a king, or being like, kiss my ring. It’s not about that. Because we don’t get help that way. It’s gotta be about us. It’s gotta be about us thinking about us, caring about us, speaking about us. Not being afraid.”

Spend a few minutes discussing these questions directly following the film screening.

- > After watching the documentary, what qualities of character or attributes does each candidate possess? Are there similarities? Differences?
- > What challenges did you see the candidates face?
- > Was there anything you saw about running for office that surprised you?

3 Step Three: Organize Role Play

1. Choose a person in the room to run for a hypothetical office.
2. Give **Handout One** to the candidate. They will then leave the group for a short period of time to complete their assignment.
3. Meanwhile, the rest of the group will receive **Handout One** once the candidate has left the room. They will organize themselves into the various campaign roles and familiarize themselves with their responsibilities.
4. After a few minutes, the candidate will return to the group and share their candidate profile and the current stage of the campaign for the role play. Based upon this presentation, the committees will get to work and prepare for the staff meeting that culminates the role play.
5. Acting as campaign consultants, each committee will map out one day of the candidate’s schedule including strategy, public appearances, fundraising efforts and other activities and select one representative to present at the “Morning Staff Meeting.”

4 Step Four: Morning Staff Meeting

Each committee will select a representative to share their plan update of the work they were tasked to complete.

5 Step Five: Debrief the activity

- > What was fun?
- > What was challenging?
- > What did they learn about the process of running a campaign?

Closing

Go to the “101 Tools in Action” to explore the many ways to get involved.



WHAT IT TAKES TO RUN FOR OFFICE

Directions

1. Print one copy of this handout for every workshop participant.
2. Discuss the roles and responsibilities and, as a group, identify who would like to hold the various positions in the role-play activity.
3. Once in groups, map out one day of the candidate's schedule based upon your committee.



THE CANDIDATE (ONE PERSON)

As the candidate, you have two immediate responsibilities:

- > Write a brief candidate profile identifying your constituency, stating your priority issues and how they are responsive to your community's needs.
- > Decide on the stage of your campaign, in other words is this the beginning, middle, or the final leg of the campaign and identify three main priority issues.

Once you share these ideas with your campaign, circulate amongst each committee during the workshop to support their needs and requests.



CAMPAIGN MANAGER (ONE PERSON)

Sets the tone, researches and manages all aspects of the campaign, including the candidate's position on issues, talking points and strategy. This person will interview the candidate, and design a series of talking points on one agreed upon issue for an upcoming event.



FIELD OPERATIONS (ONE DIRECTOR, 2-5 ASSISTANT DIRECTORS)

Maintains all day-to-day operations of the candidate including oversight of all other committees, organizing volunteers (and hiring), and coordinating all voter contact in the field. The Director and their staff are the inner circle of the candidate and their jobs include:

- > Decide on the candidate's schedule
- > Organizing events
- > Prioritizing where the candidate will speak and/or participate in a community activity
- > Coordinating volunteers to canvass, make phone calls, send text, and drop literature door to door



FUNDRAISING MANAGER (ONE DIRECTOR, ONE EVENT MANAGER, TWO OR MORE FUNDRAISING ASSISTANTS)

You will raise all the necessary funds to run the campaign including:

- > Organizing fundraisers
- > Soliciting donations
- > Paying staff
- > Taking care of overhead costs
- > Creating a list of items you'll need and budget for their cost (eg. travel, gas, posters etc...)

After interviewing the candidate about how they are planning to raise funds for their campaign (eg, taking Corporate PAC money or not), this committee will create a fundraising plan for the campaign.

It is important to keep in mind if you are on this committee that money itself does not guarantee a candidate will win. Richard Lau, Professor of Politics at Rutgers, explains the dynamic very clearly. "Money doesn't cause a candidate to win, but winning does attract money." The resources that become available with more money can often skew a campaign affording the candidate the opportunity to hire more staff, purchase more advertising, and receive more unpaid advertising for raising the most money. Because advertising is where candidates spend the majority of the funds they raise, with more advertising more visibility and name recognition follows.



COMMUNICATIONS AND SOCIAL MEDIA (ONE DIRECTOR, ENDLESS COMMUNICATIONS/SOCIAL MEDIA ASSISTANTS)

Communications committee works on attracting coverage and communicating with the press. This committee also crafts the campaign website, communicates on social media channels, and through direct mail and other outreach materials. Where possible, work with fundraising committee to buy and place social media, radio, and television ads. Your committee will come up with several ideas of campaign slogans and social media posts to send out announcing the candidate's position on an agreed upon issue.

101: WOMEN ARE POLITICAL LEADERS



"WE'RE RUNNING TO ORGANIZE.

We're running to redefine the political landscape in New York City. And here's the best part about all of this... we're not running to make a statement. We're not running to pressure the incumbent to the left. We're running to win."

ALEXANDRIA OCASIO-CORTEZ

GOAL

Participants will identify the leadership qualities and skills of the women candidates in *Knock Down the House* and connect them to their own personal leadership qualities.

LENGTH

Total: 2.5 hours, Film Screening, 90 minutes. Workshop, 60 minutes.

MATERIALS

Equipment to screen the film, access to the film on [Netflix](#), copies of the handout for the group, and art supplies on hand for the leadership self-portrait.



WORKSHOP

1 Step One: Watch *Knock Down the House*

Introduce the film to your group using this sample script:

“*Knock Down the House* is an inspiring story chronicling the experiences of four working-class women who ran for Congress in 2018. They are everyday people who didn’t see themselves, or their needs, represented in our government. In 2018, they did something about it. We are going to watch the film as a group, take a break and then reconvene as a group for our workshop.”

2 Step Two: Leadership Word Wall

After watching *Knock Down the House* take a short break before coming back together as a large group. Pass out the **Handout** and ask each workshop participant to respond to these questions listed on the front of the **Handout**.

- > Write down three qualities they want their leaders to practice.
- > Write down three qualities that describe the leadership qualities they observed of the candidates in *Knock Down the House*.
- > Write down three leadership qualities they see in themselves.

Create a word wall of leadership qualities by having the group share their answers and document and record them on a white board or easel paper.

3 Step Three: Women and Leadership

Next organize the group into pairs or small discussion groups and read aloud the quotes on the back of the **Handout** and answer these questions in small groups:

- > What words or phrases in these quotes evoke a strong reaction? Why?
- > What do the candidates share about the challenges of running for office as women? Did you notice any additional challenges for the candidates who are women of color?
- > What leadership qualities are reflected in these quotes?

4 Step Four: Create a Leadership Self-Portrait

Using the words on the leadership word wall, and their reflections from the small group discussion, have participants choose the leadership qualities they see in themselves and create a leadership self portrait. The portrait can be a visual piece of art, written words, or a combination of both.

Here are some questions students can consider to inspire their self-portrait:

- > When you are asked to be a leader in your family, school, or community, what qualities do you bring to the task?
- > When you think of yourself as a leader, what qualities come to mind?
- > What leadership qualities would you like to develop in yourself?



Closing

As we witness in *Knock Down the House*, candidate Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez won the primary and then went on to win the election. Today, she serves as the U.S. Representative for New York's 14th Congressional District. To bring this workshop to a close, share Congresswoman Ocasio-Cortez's reflection on leadership and ask the group to respond using these prompts:

- > What words or ideas stand out?
- > Which ideas did they connect to?
- > Do they agree or disagree?

"People think of leadership as this glamorous, powerful thing. To be a leader is to come first, to set the agenda. But what people don't realise is that leadership is also enormously difficult. Leadership is a responsibility. Leadership is not fun. Leadership is about doing things before anybody else does them. Leadership is about taking risks. Leadership is about taking decisions when you don't know 100% what the outcome is going to be."

ALEXANDRIA OCASIO-CORTEZ

EXTENDED LEARNING OPPORTUNITY: EXPLORE EMOTIONS AS A SOURCE OF POWER

In the past, women running for office have been encouraged not to show emotion, for fear that doing so might be seen as a source of weakness. But the candidates in the film do not shy away from emotion. In an article for *The Atlantic*, Amy Vilela says of her own tears at her loss, "*Darn it, I want more of our politicians to care that much...that it's not just about the money to them, and the power. That it's really about the people again.*"

Ask students to read the article, "*Knock Down the House and the Quiet Insurgency of Tears*" and write a reflection on their response to the notion of emotions as a source of power for women who run for office.

Go to the "Tools in Action" section in this resource and explore the important ways to get involved.

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/jun/29/alexandria-ocasio-cortez-met-greta-thunberg-hope-contagious-climate?fbclid=IwAR2cb95PepWPh2Zv7avHL5pT568oiGOKJq32fc8460LW6brFuJI2uiz4dGM>



**"YOU SHOULDN'T SHOW YOUR EMOTION
BECAUSE WOMEN ARE CONSIDERED FRAGILE,**

if you do, you need to more of a bitch. . . And when you go to the people in West Virginia and you tell them you're serving them, you need to tell them that your're their bitch." I said, "I'm not a dog. We work harder in these races. . . Just because we're women. We're not rich white dudes in suits."

PAULA JEAN SWEARENGIN

**"I'M A REGISTERED NURSE. I'M AN ORDAINED
PASTOR, AND I'M A MOTHER OF TWO TEENAGERS.**

I was not trying to become an activist. Didn't set out to do that. This is the district where Mike Brown was murdered. I only live six minutes from Ferguson. It was like a battle zone at home. I took to the streets to lend a hand as a nurse. What I was wanting to see was justice happen. It didn't happen so I just kept going back again and again. This district was able to affect the entire world. Just regular everyday people. People are now waking up to see that the problems that we have in our district, are problems that we ourselves can fix"

CORI BUSH

**"WOMEN LIKE ME AREN'T SUPPOSED TO RUN
FOR OFFICE. I WASN'T BORN INTO A RICH**

or powerful family. My dad died when I was a teenager. I've waitressed my way through hard times and dealt with disappointment. The dress I'm wearing is from a thrift shop. The ring on my hand is my mother's - a reminder of every floor she's mopped so that her daughter could have a chance. I have been told to wait my turn; that I'm not savvy enough, connected enough, experienced enough; that I say too much for a political candidate. I don't sugar-coat, spin, or filter. I try to keep things as real as possible, because I believe that's what people deserve and that honesty is a highest form of respect."

ALEXANDRIA OCASIO-CORTEZ

**"IT'S NOT ABOUT
ANY ONE OF US**

individually. It's about the whole movement."

AMY VILELA



101 TOOLS IN ACTION



CONNECT

- Search online for groups working on issues you care about and with your candidates. Talk to those groups about what they are doing and how you can partner or get involved.
- Conduct street outreach and speak to your community to learn about what issues they are most affected by and concerned about.
- Interview people in your family, school, faith community or other activities and explore what motivates and/or moves people to be politically engaged or politically dis-engaged and creatively explore ways for you to empower communities that feel disconnected.
- Talk to other people in your community, youth groups, faith communities, school groups or others who may share your interests.
- Use social media or other tools of communication to let your community of peers, family, and supportive adults know what you are doing.



PARTICIPATE

There are many other ways to participate in your community

- Volunteer your time in a local or federal election.
- Research an issue that is important to you and become more informed. Sign up to receive email blasts or newsletters from organizations who share your priorities.
- Speak with peers and organize a grass-roots effort in support of a candidate in your community.
- Use your social media network to raise issues and inform others.

101 KEY TERMS

Unless otherwise noted, definitions adapted from [usa.gov/voting-and-election-definitions](https://www.usa.gov/voting-and-election-definitions)

District: Geographic area represented by an elected official.

Down ballot: Refers to party candidates on a hierarchical structure where the President is the top of the ballot, followed by Congress members, then state officials, then municipal offices at the lowest level, or “down ballot.”

Establishment: In the political context, refers to the traditional party structures of national committees and their hierarchies.

Grassroots Campaign: Refers to the organizational nature of a campaign being led and/or contributed to by many individuals and not a “top-down” model where one leader, like an incumbent or party official, chooses or endorses a candidate and expects party members to support that person.

Incumbent: A person currently holding an elected office.

Non-Partisan: Idea, policy, or person not associated with a particular political party.

Organizer: A person who takes action to make social change.

Partisan: Idea, policy, or person associated with a political party.

Party Committees: The official organizations that establish the platform and hierarchies of each of the national parties. Committees offer endorsements and financial support to candidates.

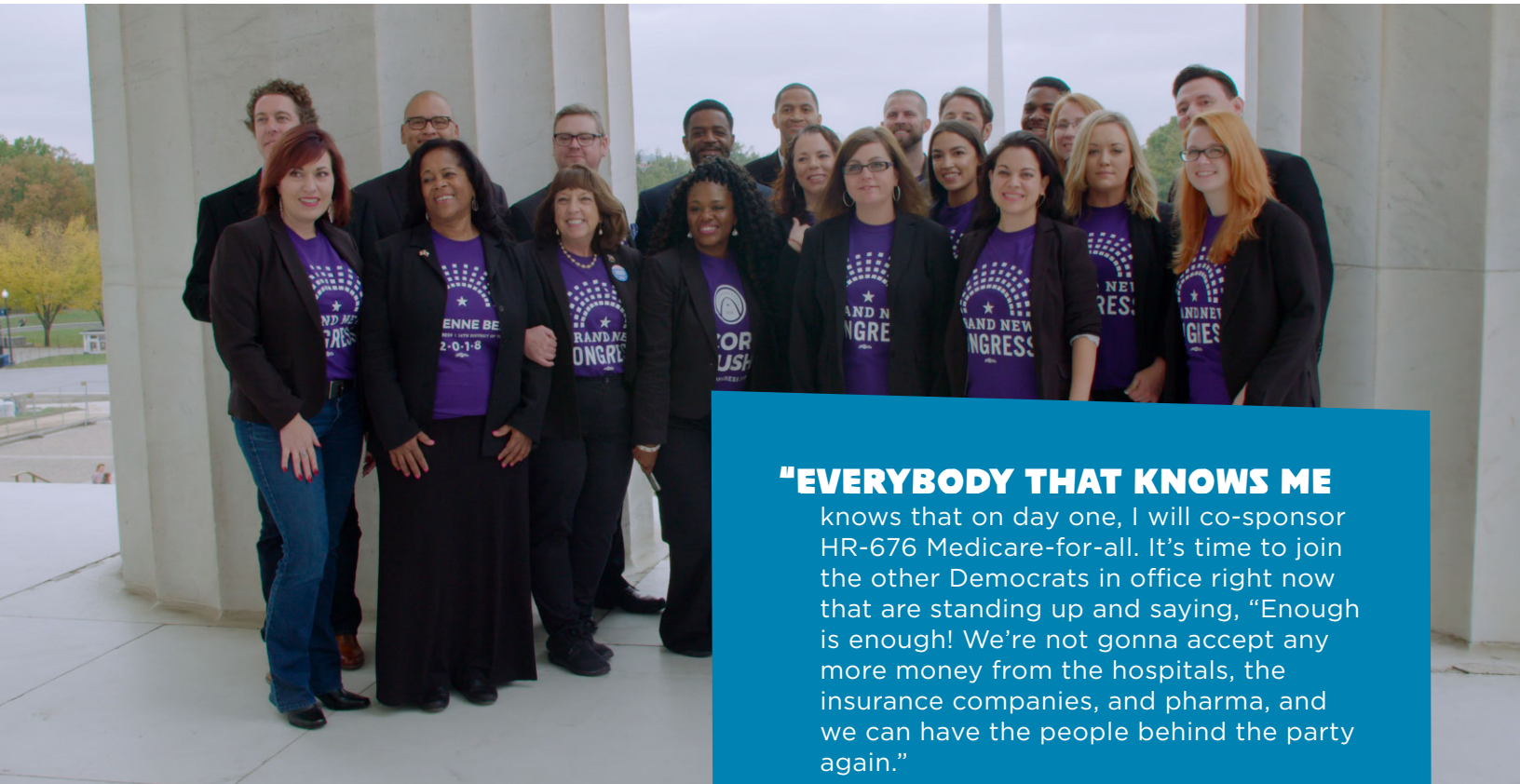
Political Action Committee²: A group organized to support a particular candidate, policy, or political cause. There are several kinds of PACs that the Federal Election Committee regulates, and that are allowed to contribute specific amounts of money and offer campaign support in different ways:

- **Connected PACs:** PACs that represent unions, corporations, health organizations or other membership groups where members can contribute unlimited money to the PAC, which in turn can contribute money and/or other kinds of campaign support. PACs can give \$5000 annually to any campaign, \$15,000 to a party committee, and \$5000 to other PACs. Corporate PACs are a kind of connected PAC where shareholders and/or employees of the corporation, industry association or business entity contribute to the PAC. Corporate PACs can contribute a maximum of \$5,000 annually to any one campaign.
- **Non-Connected PACs:** Groups that convene to support a specific cause, policy or candidate, to which anyone can contribute, which in turn contribute donations to campaigns.
- **Leadership PACs:** Candidates or current office holders convene Leadership PACs to support other candidates. Contributions are unlimited as long as they do not use the funds to support a candidate that is not endorsed by the parties.
- **Super PACs:** Groups who can raise unlimited funds that do not go directly to candidates, but rather to purchase advertisements, mailers or other kinds of indirect support for candidates.

Primary Election: An election held to determine which candidate will represent a party in the general election.

² PAC descriptions adapted from [Center for Responsive Politics](https://www.centerforresponsivepolitics.org/)

201: GRASSROOTS ORGANIZING - STRATEGIES AND TACTICS



"EVERYBODY THAT KNOWS ME

knows that on day one, I will co-sponsor HR-676 Medicare-for-all. It's time to join the other Democrats in office right now that are standing up and saying, "Enough is enough! We're not gonna accept any more money from the hospitals, the insurance companies, and pharma, and we can have the people behind the party again."

AMY VILELA

GOALS

- > Explore the role of an organizer and explanations of organizing
- > Discuss a case study of a grassroots organizing campaign from *Knock Down the House*
- > Identify strategies and tactics for grassroots organizing
- > Formulate a personal organizing philosophy

LENGTH

2.5 hours, Film Screening, 90 minutes. Workshop, 60 minutes.

MATERIALS

Equipment to screen the film, access to the film on [Netflix](#), and copies of the handout for the group.



WORKSHOP

1 Step One: Defining Grassroots Political Organizing

- > As an icebreaker for this workshop, have participants pair up and answer the question, “What is grassroots organizing?”

2 Step Two: Distribute Handout - Statements on Organizers and Organizing

Have pairs, or in small groups, read through the ideas and discuss:

- > Which statement most closely reflects their own definition?
- > Which statement frames grassroots organizing in a new way?

3 Step Three: Watch *Knock Down the House*

Introduce the film to your group using this sample script:

“*Knock Down the House* is an inspiring story chronicling the experiences of four working-class women who ran for Congress in 2018. They are everyday people who didn’t see themselves, or their needs, represented in our government and in 2018, they did something about it. We are going to watch the film as a group, take a break and then reconvene as a group for our workshop.”

4 Step Four: Analyzing Strategy

After watching the film, take a short break. Transition back by reading this statement aloud from Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez:

“He can’t get challenged by any down ballot incumbent. Anyone who wants to keep their job in New York City would never dream of challenging Joe Crowley. It has to come from outside of Queens. It has to come from someone who’s new on the political scene that they don’t foresee coming, that they can’t offer a job, or, or pressure in another way. And, it has to be someone that represents her community in more ways than one. Basically, an insurgent outside grassroots candidate that’s a woman of color from the Bronx.”

Discuss

- > What political organizing work or strategy is Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez advocating for in this passage?
- > In your own words, explain her perspective of the role (and power) of political organizing.
- > Are there examples of organizers in your community that you can share and celebrate?



5 Step Five: Personal Organizing Philosophy

After exploring the scope of what political organizing can include, each participant will now be asked to develop their own personal organizing strategy statement. These can include examples from the film, new ideas that they have learned during the workshop, or previous background knowledge.

Statements may reflect ideas about:

- > Why they believe in organizing as a strategy
- > What they see as their personal strengths as organizers
- > How they see themselves as organizers
- > Aspirational goals they'd like to achieve through organizing
- > Ideals and goals they gained from the organizing they saw in the film

🕒 Closing

To bring a close to the workshop, invite the group to share any aspect of their personal organizing philosophy in pairs, small groups, or as a large group.

Go to “201 Tools in Action” in this toolkit to explore the numerous opportunities to get involved.



201: GRASSROOTS ORGANIZING AND STRATEGIES³

STATEMENTS ON ORGANIZERS AND ORGANIZING

Directions

In pairs or small groups, have participants read through the ideas and discuss:

- > Which statement most closely reflects their own definitions of organizers and organizing?
- > Which statement frames grassroots organizing in a new way?

ON ORGANIZERS

Organizers build organizations that engage in campaigns. Campaigns win things and are one of the things that build and expand organizations.

Organizers want to change the relations of power, often within organizations, and not simply win this or that issue or support this or that candidate.

Organizers are activists who work to move other people to take action and help them develop skills, political analysis, and confidence within the context of organizations.

(Add your own) Organizers...

ON ORGANIZING

Organizing work can be led by people most impacted by the issues they have in their communities.

Organizing is a process that creates long-term campaigns that mobilize a certain constituency to press for specific demands and use a defined strategy and escalating tactics to achieve their goal.

Organizing work is building a mass movement which takes constant discussion of goals, strategy and tactics.

(Add your own) Organizers...

³ These statements are culled together from a number of sources including: <https://comm-org.wisc.edu/papers97/beckwith.htm>, <https://www.brightest.io/community-organizing>, <http://www.cura.umn.edu/publications/catalog/reporter-35-1-1https://www.counterpunch.org/2010/02/05/what-do-grassroots-organizers-actually-do-when-they-organize/>

201: GETTING MONEY OUT OF POLITICS



"IT IS TIME TO JOIN THE OTHER

Democrats in office right now that are standing up and saying, "Enough is enough! We're not gonna accept any more money from the hospitals, the insurance companies and pharma, and we can have the people behind the party again."

AMY VILELA

GOAL

In *Knock Down the House* each of the candidates rejected corporate PAC, or political action committee money for their campaign. Why? Why do they matter? In this workshop participants will gain a clear understanding of funding a political campaign, including accepting or rejecting corporate PAC money.

LENGTH

Total Time 2-3 hours, Film Screening: 90 min, Workshop: 60 - 90 min

MATERIALS

Equipment to screen the film, access to the film on [Netflix](#), copies of the handout for the group, and access to the internet, paper and pens.



WORKSHOP: EXAMINING THE ROLE OF MONEY IN CAMPAIGNS

1 Step One: Watch *Knock Down the House*

Introduce the film to your group using this sample script:

“*Knock Down the House* is an inspiring story chronicling the experiences of four working-class women who ran for Congress in 2018. They are everyday people who didn’t see themselves, or their needs, represented in our government and in 2018, they did something about it. We are going to watch the film as a group, take a break and then reconvene as a group for our workshop.”

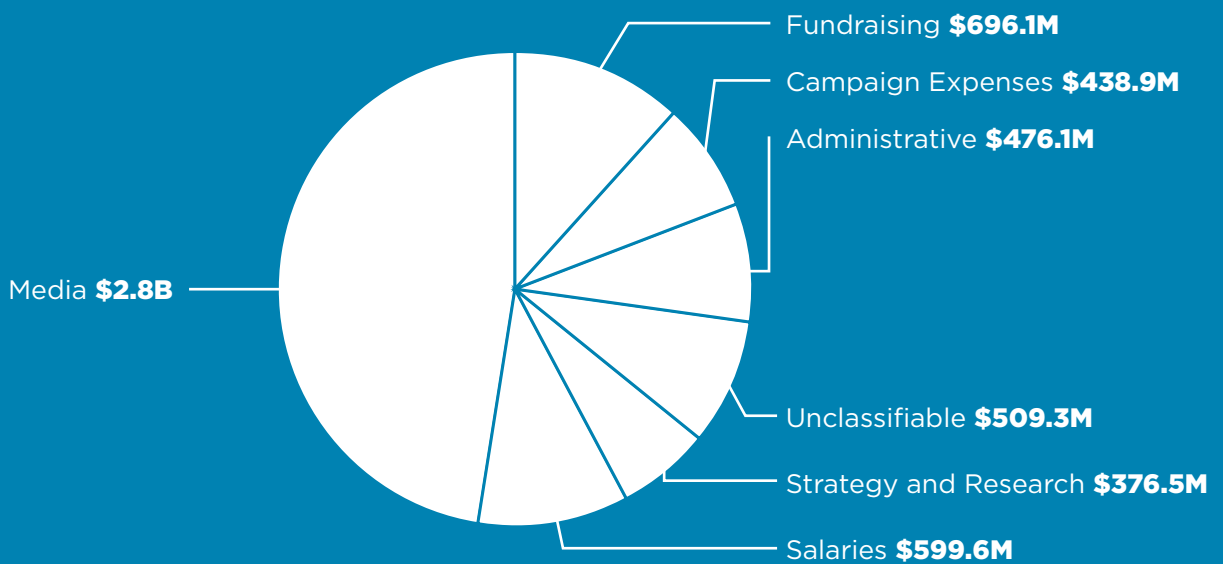
2 Step Two: Lay of the Land

Take a short break after watching the documentary. Depending upon the background knowledge of the group, understanding the role of money in political campaigns can be confusing and some aspects may appear less transparent than others. You may want to begin by asking a few of these questions to transition into the workshop session.

- > How expensive is it to run for office?
- > Why does it cost so much?
- > What are the different sources for raising money?
- > What are the ways that money can influence a political campaign or candidate?

Share this graph to illustrate and/or verify these questions further:

EXPENDITURES 2018 CYCLE⁴



⁴ <https://www.opensecrets.org/expends/index.php>



3 Step Three: Clarifying Terminology

Even if the group is well versed in campaign finance terminology and structure, it may be helpful to do a refresh. Here are several helpful resources to access:

- > Watch this [Campaign Finance Video](#) produced by Khan Academy. You may also want to print out the transcript for the group to follow along.⁵
- > Read “[The Top 10 Things Every Voter Should Know About Money-In-Politics](#)” from [OpenSecrets.org](#).⁶

4 Step Four: Research a Current Political Candidate

Participants will choose a candidate from the film, from their area, or from a current campaign and use the Center for Responsive Politics’ website [OpenSecrets.org](#) to track and assess donations to the candidate of their choice.

- > Using the information on that website, participants will gather information and answer the questions outlined on the Handout before discussing their findings as a large group.
- > In small groups have participants share what they discovered about their candidate and discuss their findings.



Closing

Bring the workshop to a close by collecting observations and questions.

⁵ <https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/us-government-and-civics/us-gov-political-participation/us-gov-campaign-finance/v/campaign-finance>

⁶ <https://www.opensecrets.org/resources/dollarocracy/>



201: GETTING MONEY OUT OF POLITICS

Directions:

Go to: [OpenSecrets.org](https://www.opensecrets.org)

- > To research current Congressional Candidates/Representatives go to [to www.opensecrets.org/races](https://www.opensecrets.org/races)
- > To research past Presidential campaigns go to www.opensecrets.org/pres16
- > To get an Overview of the 2020 election cycle reporting go to opensecrets.org/overview/index.php?cycle=2020&display=T&type=A

- 1 Where do their donations come from?
- 2 How was the funding used?
- 3 What can you learn about the candidate from your review?

201: REPRESENTATION AND POLITICS



"EVERYBODY IN THIS ROOM

knows five to 10 people. And then those five to 10 people know another five to 10 people. Frankly, big money is very lonely, and we've got people on our side."

ALEXANDRIA OCASIO-CORTEZ

GOAL

- > To understand the current demographics of Congress
- > To prioritize the political, social, and economic issues that factor into their personal voting decisions
- > To critically examine the importance of the personal identity of the candidate in shaping their voting decisions

LENGTH

Total Time 2-3 hours, Film Screening: 90 min, Workshop: 60 - 90 min

MATERIALS

Equipment to screen the film, access to the film on [Netflix](#), and copies of the handout for the group.



WORKSHOP

1 Step One: Congress in 2019

Either distribute copies or project **Handout One** and discuss the infographic using these prompts:

- > What is new or surprising information?
- > What story do these infographics tell about the mid-term election of 2018?

2 Step Two: Watch *Knock Down the House*

Introduce the film to your group using this sample script:

“Knock Down the House is an inspiring story chronicling the experiences of four working-class women who ran for Congress in 2018. They are everyday people who didn’t see themselves, or their needs, represented in our government and in 2018, they did something about it. We are going to watch the film as a group, take a break and then reconvene as a group for our workshop.” -Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez

3 Step Three: Debrief Film

Read these film quotes from Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Cori Bush to transition to the next part of the workshop.

“I’m running to represent the Bronx. I’m a third generation Bronxite. I’m a Latina, I’m a Boricua, I’m a descendant of Taino Indians. I am a descendant of African slaves. I am proud to be an American! But we have to rise to that promise.” -Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez

“Being a woman of color, our image is really scrutinized. You have to speak like this. You have to dress like this. I decided that, yeah, I don’t care. Basically you deal with it. You know, people in my district, this is how we look. I’m going to serve and represent the people of my district.” -Cori Bush

Invite participants to share reactions on either quote and how the candidates frame the responsibility of representing their community.

4 Step Four : Small Groups

Split into small groups and complete the following tasks:

- 1 Choose one group member to serve as a facilitator and one to serve as the recorder.
- 2 Politics, by definition is concerned with guiding and influencing governmental policy, with winning political office, and/or holding control over a government. But this is just one definition. As a group, come to a consensus on a description of our nation’s political system including how you would define politics.⁷
- 3 With this definition in mind, brainstorm a short list of the political, social, and economic issues they weigh when deciding who to vote for in local or federal elections.
- 4 Agree upon three priority issues to use for this exercise.
- 5 Discuss and record to share out:
 - > Is a candidate’s identity an important factor in relation to representing your priority issues? Why or why not?
 - > What do you think are the unique challenges of running for office as a person from a currently underrepresented group, such as a woman, person of color, LGBTQ, or working class candidate?
 - > Is a candidate’s personal story an important consideration in your voting decisions?
 - > What information is important to know from a candidate in order to ensure that they could represent their constituent’s best interests?

⁷ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/politics>



5 **Step Five: Issue Roundtable**

Reconvene as a large group and share a synopsis of your small group discussion and the issues that surfaced during your discussion.

Closing

Create a list of questions that remain on your mind in regards to representation in politics. Reflect on the gains made and all the work you believe still needs to be accomplished to level the political playing field in regards to race, gender, gender identity, religion, economic status, age and other factors that would better reflect our communities and nation.

Go to “201 Tools in Action” in this Toolkit to explore the numerous opportunities to get involved.



201: REPRESENTATION IN POLITICS

WHO KNOCKED IN 2018?⁸



The candidates we meet in *Knock Down the House* hope to change the U.S. Congress so that it looks more like the nation it serves. They are all women. They all come from working-class families. Two of them are women of color. In these ways, they are representative of many ways in which the 2018 election broke ground and broke records:¹

529

women ran for Congress. 255 in the general election. The previous record during 1992's "Year of the Woman" was 117.²

Voter turnout was higher than in any midterm (non-presidential) election since

1966

More women, people of color, and LGBTQ people were elected to Congress than ever in the history of the nation.

The youngest woman was elected to Congress, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, at age

29

AND THERE WERE SEVERAL FIRSTS:



The first **NATIVE AMERICAN** women elected to Congress



The first **MUSLIM** women elected to Congress.



The first openly **BISEXUAL** woman elected to Congress.

This interactive graphic shows how the 2018 elections increased the diversity of the House of Representatives in terms of race, age, gender and sexual orientation.

1. Grace Panetta, S. G. (2018, November 07). 12 records the 2018 midterm elections smashed. Retrieved from <https://www.businessinsider.com/2018-midterm-election-records-early-voting-women-lgbt-candidates-2018-11>

2. Kamarck, E. (2018, November 08). 2018: Another 'Year of the Woman'. Retrieved from <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/fixgov/2018/11/07/2018-another-year-of-the-woman/>

8 <https://knockdownthehouse.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/2019-08-07-kdth-discussion-guide.pdf>

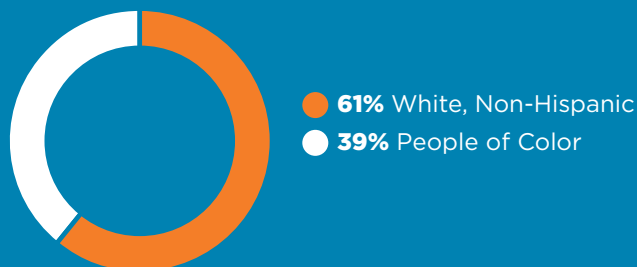
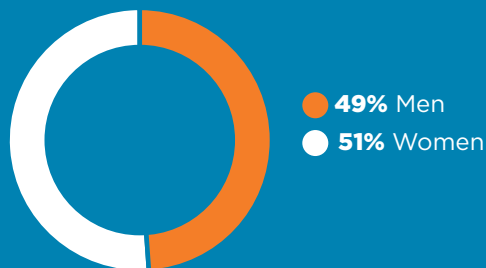


DEMOGRAPHICS⁹

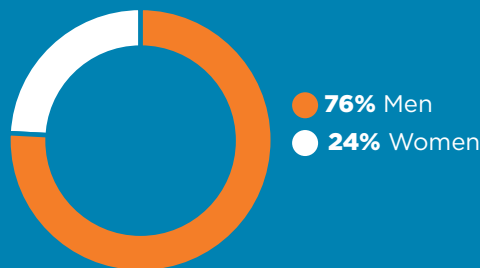
In the United States, candidates are elected by the people in the belief that each will represent the best interests of their constituents. It stands to reason, then, that the makeup of the legislative bodies would reflect the voting population. But that is not the case.



GENERAL POPULATION



2019 CONGRESS



These disparities — though still pronounced — have changed over time. The 116th Congress sworn into office in 2019 includes more diversity in terms of race and class than any Congress in history. It was also more diverse in terms of sexual orientation, gender identity, nation of origin, and religion.

³ U.S. and World Population Clock. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/popclock/>
⁴ A Rising Tide? (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://wholeads.us/2018-report/>

⁹ <https://knockdownthehouse.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/2019-08-07-kdth-discussion-guide.pdf>

201: MIDTERM ELECTIONS 2018: A CASE STUDY



"IT'S TIME FOR ORDINARY PEOPLE
to do extraordinary things. Let's raise some
hell, and take our lives back."

PAULA JEAN SWEARENGIN

GOAL

To analyze and discuss the significance of the 2018 midterm elections

LENGTH

Total Time 2-3 hours, Film Screening: 90 min, Workshop: 45-60 min

MATERIALS

Equipment to screen the film, access to the film on [Netflix](#), and copies of the handout for the group.



WORKSHOP

1 Step One: Historic Changes

Begin the workshop by asking people to share what, if anything, they recall about the 2018 Congressional midterm elections.

Depending upon what the group remembers, here are some results to share:¹⁰

- > One-third of all eligible people aged 18-24 voted in the 2018 midterm elections. It's the highest turnout ever recorded for this age group in a midterm election.¹¹
- > In 2019, 102 women hold seats in the House — the largest number in U.S. history.
- > More women, people of color and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and/or queer (LGBTQ) candidates ran for and were elected Congress than ever in history.

And several candidates who were elected made history:

- > Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, at age 29, was the youngest congresswoman ever elected
- > Sharice Davids and Deb Haaland were the first Native American congresswoman elected
- > Rashida Tlaib and Ilhan Omar were the first Muslim congresswoman elected
- > Krysten Sinema was the first openly bisexual congresswoman elected
- > Ayana Pressley was the first black congresswoman elected from Massachusetts
- > Jahana Hayes was the first black congresswoman elected from Connecticut
- > Marsha Blackburn is the first woman elected to the Senate from Tennessee

2 Step Two: Watch *Knock Down the House*

Transition to watching *Knock Down the House*. You may use this sample script as a way of introduction:

“*Knock Down the House* is an inspiring story chronicling the experiences of four working-class women who ran for Congress in 2018. One of the historic firsts, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, is featured in the documentary. They are everyday people who didn't see themselves, or their needs, represented in our government and in 2018, they did something about it. We are going to watch the film as a group, take a short break and then reconvene for our workshop.”

3 Step Three: Post-Screening Discussion

After the documentary concludes, invite the group to share their reactions and discuss any questions that surfaced.

4 Step Four: Closing

To conclude the workshop, have the group pair up and distribute the **Handout**. Have each pair read the quotes and discuss these final questions:

- > What are some of the distinguishing characteristics that each candidate shares?
- > Can you identify any shared values or shared priorities amongst the candidates?
- > A Midterm election is often seen as a referendum on the current sitting president's party. After watching *Knock Down the House*, what overall observations can you make about the 2018 midterm election?

¹⁰ <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/11/09/us/women-elected-midterm-elections.html>

¹¹ <https://civicyouth.org/youth-voting-rose-in-2018-despite-concerns-over-the-state-of-american-democracy/>



201: MIDTERM ELECTIONS 2018: A CASE STUDY



CORI BUSH

MISSOURI 1ST CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

“I was not trying to become an activist. Didn’t set out to do that. This is the district where Mike Brown was murdered. I only live six minutes from Ferguson. I’m a registered nurse. I’m an ordained pastor, and I’m the mother of two teenagers. It was like a battle zone at home. I took to the streets to lend a hand as a nurse. What I was wanting to see was justice happen. It didn’t happen so, I just kept going back again and again. This district was able to affect the entire world. Just regular everyday people.”



ALEXANDRIA OCASIO-CORTEZ

NEW YORK 14TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

“My dad had passed away. Working in a non-profit just wasn’t enough for our family, because we were about to lose our home. You’re trying to make a three hundred dollar student loan bill here, and your foreclosure installment here... You just do your best to survive. That’s been the reality for millions of people in this country. That feel like they’re just hanging by a thread. And they feel like no one’s fighting for them, and everyone’s just in it for themselves.”



PAULA-JEAN SWEARENGIN
U.S. SENATE CANDIDATE FROM WEST VIRGINIA

“This was my house, where I raised my kids. My neighbor’s daughter ended up with a rare form of bone cancer. There’s a person in that house that has cancer. And our leadership’s not hearing us. They’re in bed with the industries. ... We don’t have to do this. If another country come in here, blew up our mountains and poisoned our water, we’d go to war. But industry can.

My name is Paula Jean. I am a coal miner’s daughter, running for the U.S. Senate, and I am mad as hell.”



AMY VILELA
NEVADA 4TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

“It’s not just our family. It’s thirty thousand families a year. Thirty thousand of us... a year... that are losing loved ones because they don’t have [health] insurance. No one in this great country should be dying because they don’t understand the intricate system of insurance. And why is it difficult? Because of algorithms, because of risk assessment, because the CFOs that work in that field are sitting there figuring out ways to make optimum profit for their shareholders. This is a commodity. My daughter’s life wasn’t.”

201 TOOLS IN ACTION

“We meet a machine with a movement.”

ALEXANDRIA OCASIO-CORTEZ



SHARE THE FILM

Here are some ideas for bringing people together to watch the film and share why it sparks your interest:

- > **Host a house party** and invite friends
- > **Invite your parents or other adult allies** to watch the film with you
- > **Work with your school** to screen the film in classrooms
- > **If you are a member of a faith community** explore hosting a screening
- > **Use social media** to tell your network about the film and what it means to you and tag @knockdownmovie or use #knockdownthehouse

*Register to host a screening, access the Screening Toolkit, Discussion Guide and upcoming classroom lessons at KnockDownTheHouse.com. The film is available for screenings worldwide on Netflix.



KNOW

If there is an election coming up in your area, there are lots of ways to learn about the candidates and how they represent the issues most important to you.

- > **Know Your Representatives:** Visit CommonCause.org to find out who currently represents you in local, state and federal office.
- > **Attend Campaign Events:** As a constituent at any age you can attend an event to ask your questions and tell your story to candidates.
 - > Find local events from organizing groups and political parties on social media.
 - > Sign up to receive email updates from your candidate’s campaign office.
 - > Go to Town Hall Project, type in your zip code and find out what’s going on in your community.
- > **Research Your Candidates:** use online tools to explore the issues at stake and the candidates in your area:
 - > projects.propublica.org/represent
 - > www.vote411.org
 - > www.ballotready.org



ORGANIZE

Work with your connections to get the word out about your cause or candidate.

- Host a screening of the film and invite your candidate or others to participate with you.
- Attend house parties, rallies or events related to your cause or candidate. Make yourself visible with t-shirts, signs or other symbols.
- Speak out about why you are doing your work. Your personal passion and energy are the most effective tools you have!



PARTICIPATE

Be Involved/Vote/and Help Get Out the Vote

“Voting is the foundation stone for political action.”

**DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.,
SELMA, ALABAMA, 1965**

Voting is the cornerstone of democracy. Even if you aren't yet old enough to vote, or other circumstances prohibit you from voting, your voice is critically important in getting others to vote and be civically engaged.

- > Young people have the power to influence whether and how their parents and other family members vote.
- > Lack of knowledge about where and how to vote, and lack of knowledge about what to vote on are the biggest barriers to voting, and your organizing energy is critically important to help address both.
- > The best way to get young people to vote is through personal contact. Volunteering to register people to vote and reaching out to registered voters to teach them when and where to vote will make the biggest difference in voter turnout.¹³

Many non-partisan organizations are working to get out the vote:

- > [RocktheVote.org](https://www.rockthevote.org/)
- > [Headcount.org](https://www.headcount.org/)
- > [League of Women Voters](https://www.leagueofwomen.org/)

To learn about how and where to register to vote, explore your state's laws at [Fair Elections Center](#).¹²

¹² <https://www.fairelectionscenter.org/>

¹³ <https://civicyouth.org/quick-facts/youth-voting/#1>



VOLUNTEER FOR A CAMPAIGN

Volunteering for a campaign is a great way to learn about elections from the inside out. Also, volunteering for a campaign will help you get to know your candidate and understand how they will approach the issues most important to you.



RUN FOR OFFICE

“For every ten rejections you get one acceptance.
And that’s how you win everything.”

ALEXANDRIA OCASIO-CORTEZ

There are elected offices that are open to young people, and it is never too early to start learning how to run. Many specialized and partisan organizations are set up to encourage youth, women or other underrepresented groups to run for office.

Here are a few examples:

[She Should Run](#) is a non-partisan organization offering support and guidance to inspire women to run for office.

[Higher Heights for AmericaPAC](#) is one part of the multi-faceted Higher Heights for America organization dedicated to “galvanizing the collective political power of our members to help elect more Black women to public office at all levels.” Other arms of the organization advocate specifically for progressive policies.

[Latinas Represent](#) is a program of the National Hispanic Leadership Agenda offers resources and support to Latinas who are seeking to run for office.

[Victory Institute](#) provides capacity building and support for LGBTQ people to run for office.

[CandidateBootCamp.com](#) and [RunforOffice.com](#) are two general organizations that offer free resources for finding available offices and creating a campaign.

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER LEARNING ABOUT THE 2018 ELECTIONS

Who Voted:

<https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/11/08/the-2018-midterm-vote-divisions-by-race-gender-education/>

https://www.apmresearchlab.org/stories/2018/06/26/representing-us#h2.midterms_2018:_how_close_was_the_u.s._house_race?

Changes in the Democratic Party:

<https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2019/02/04/the-insurgents-behind-alexandria-ocasio-cortez-224542>

Representation in Congress:

<https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/02/15/the-changing-face-of-congress/>

<https://wholeads.us/>

Money in Politics:

<https://indivisible.org/resource/how-states-can-fight-money-politics>

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez launched the [Courage to Change PAC](#) to support candidates ideologically aligned with her.

Politics of Elections:

<https://www.aascu.org/programs/adp/votingresources/politicalparties.pdf>

Get Involved:

[Guide to Informed Voting](#)

Background of Brand New Congress and Justice Democrats:

<https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2019/02/04/the-insurgents-behind-alexandria-ocasio-cortez-224542>

A NY Times Profile of the Whiteheads, Political Organizers who Supported AOC:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/04/nyregion/04race.html>



KNOCK DOWN THE HOUSE

WWW.KNOCKDOWNTHEHOUSE.COM



The Knock Down the House Toolkit was a collaborative effort between Blueshift Education and Peace is Loud. We also want to extend a special thank you to Andrea Colon for her input.