

Key Dates

- **Sept. 2023 – January 11, 2024:** MHA member CEOs engage in one-on-one outreach to support candidate identification
- **Sept. 2023 – December 31, 2024:** MHA member CEOs and high-level staff engaged in one-on-one outreach and group outreach to candidates to provide candidate education, and work with MHAPAC on campaign support plan
- **January 11, 2024:** Candidate Filing opens
- **March 11, 2024:** Candidate Filing closes
- **June 4, 2024:** Primary election *nearly 85% of legislative races will be decided in the primaries
- **Nov 5, 2024:** General election

Guidance

Nonprofit organizations that have a 501(c)(3) charitable/educational tax-designation from the IRS are prohibited from engaging in partisan political activity, including recruiting candidates.

However, individuals acting on their own behalf, on their own time, and with their own resources are always free to get involved in politics, including identifying and recruiting someone to run for public office and helping in the campaign. This is true even if you work for a nonprofit or other organization whose political activity is regulated. Employees and leaders of these organizations are allowed to freely support political campaigns using vacation time or after work. However, leaders and staff need to be careful not to use the resources of the nonprofit to support a candidate or campaign.

Action Items

- Review your organization's Candidate Report provided by MHA.**
- Identify the top three individuals in your network that would make an excellent legislator.**
 - **Ask around.** Reach out to other leaders in your community – business owners, school board members, chambers of commerce, bankers, mayors, city council people, etc. – and see if they have thoughts on individuals that would make an excellent leader. Start with your own board.
 - **Look inside your organization.** Who are your strong, tested leaders? Who are the ones who are always helping organize actions, rallies, and other events?
 - **Team up with other organizational leaders.** Brainstorm and assess names with leaders from aligned partner organizations in your community.
- Meet with prospects.** Invite them to coffee or lunch. The best potential candidates probably have never considered running for elected office. They will likely say “no” to a meeting with you if you lead with that request. You may wish to begin by saying that you are trying to find good candidates to run for office and would like to get their thoughts about names. *(Continued, next page)*

- **A good transition from a general discussion about names to the candidate themselves might be:** “Your name keeps coming up as someone who would be a good candidate. Have you ever thought about running yourself?” Most people will demur, but this is a good opener to the topic.
- **Keep in mind your bottom-line issues.** What are the most important issues for your organization? Preserving access to healthcare, ensuring the financial viability of your organization, and reducing costly and unnecessary regulatory burden are likely priorities. Medicaid expansion, fully funding the state healthcare budget, and designing a reimbursement model for EMS may be among the policies you want to see supported. You should keep this list front-and-center during the identification process because it makes no sense to identify someone to run for office that disagrees with you on these critical issues.
- **Connect potential candidates with legislative leaders.** MHA staff will assist you with connecting them to people who can share details about the work of a legislator, the campaign process, resources, what to expect and what support is available. These legislators or former legislators will be the ones to make the ask of the identified individual to recruit them as a candidate.
- **Stay in touch with prospects.** If the potential candidate should not or could not run right now, consider what you can do to help groom this person—can anything be done to expand his/her network, build his/her exposure, and help him/her develop new skills?

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