



How Men Can Support Women Running for Municipal Office

A guide for men who want to help women run and win an election

Men are twice as likely as women to be encouraged to run for office. That gap is one reason women hold only 31% of municipal elected positions in Canada. Men can help change that.

These five suggestions come from women candidates and elected officials across Ontario, and from a conversation with Michael Kaufman, author of [The Male Ally Handbook](#), and Lakhdeep Singh Dhaliwal, [Mattering Mindset](#) Specialist at Four Simple Words.

1. Ask her to run

The gap: Only 13% of Canadians have ever been encouraged to run for office. Men receive that encouragement twice as often as women.

What you can do:

- Think of a woman in your life who would be a strong candidate. Tell her directly: "I think you could and should run for municipal office. I will help."
- If she says no, say you understand and ask again when the time is right. Research shows women often need to be asked multiple times before saying yes.
- Ask her what would make running feel possible. Listen to the answer and offer to help.

2. Take on more at home

The gap: Every week, women in Canada spend 4 more hours caring for adults and 8 more hours caring for children than men.

What you can do:

- Ask what you can take off her plate: childcare, meals, school logistics, errands, eldercare.
- Take on the invisible work: scheduling, coordinating, remembering events.
- Do not wait for her to ask. If she is thinking about running, start now.



3. Open your network

The gap: Women often find it harder to finance campaigns because they can have less access to donors and community leaders who can offer endorsements.

What you can do:

- Share your contacts and make personal introductions with clear asks of support for time and money
- Connect the campaign with people who will make a public endorsement
- Recommend her publicly. Tell people why you support her and ask them to do the same.

4. Support her campaign

The gap: Candidates rely on volunteers for practical support. Research shows that help on the campaign and at home will make a difference.

What you can do:

- Ask: "What do you need help with this week?" Then do it.
- Offer specific help for the campaign: build a website, knock on doors, manage social media, handle forms and paperwork.
- Offer specific help for her life outside the campaign: cover childcare, pick up groceries, drive kids to school, take over meal prep.

5. Help her feel safe

The gap: 56% of women aged 18 to 30 say they would never run for public office. Harassment is one of the biggest reasons.

What you can do:

- Offer to monitor social media so she can focus on voters.
- Challenge sexist or harassing comments when you see them in person and online
- Accompany her to campaign events

All men can support women candidates online by:

- sharing her posts, policy announcements, and event invites to amplify her voice and ideas
- boosting the candidate's original content, not reposting abusive content, and assertively calling it out



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- reporting harassment through platform tools and flagging screenshots to her campaign team
- calling out sexist comments with direct, low-drama language: "Stick to the issue." "That is sexist."
- moderating online comments, watching for coordinated abuse, or checking in after a high-profile post

Before You Ask

Inviting a woman to run for office is not a casual ask. If this is new territory for you, here are three things to keep in mind.

- **Your encouragement is a commitment, not a compliment.** Saying "you should run" is not the same as saying "good luck." When you ask her to run, you are saying: I see something in you. I believe you would be good at this. And I will be here to help. That is different from "hope you do it, see you later." Real support is "I hope you do it, I will be there."
- **She gets to define what help looks like.** You may have ideas about what she needs. She may need something else entirely. Ask specifically how you can help and listen. Follow her lead. The goal is not to run her campaign for her, it is to make running feel possible.
- **This is about her, not about getting it right.** You may not say it perfectly, and that is OK. What matters is that she hears you believe in her. The conversation does not need to be polished, just honest and focused on practical ways you can support her next steps.

We All Deserve Better

You know a woman who should run for office. Tell her why you think she would be good at this. Ask how you can support her decision or her campaign. Then follow her lead.

Looking for resources to support women running for office? Visit AMO's [WhenYouBelieve.ca](https://www.whenyoubelieve.ca) for tools and research. There is also an extensive network of campaign schools focused on women candidates across Ontario. Visit [MunicipalCampaignSchool.ca](https://www.municipalcampaignschool.ca) to find the one near you.