



THE STATE OF WOMEN

# 2023 Multiplier Report and Roadmap

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## WE'RE ALREADY TOO LATE

Most of the women who are on the ballot in 2024 were inspired to run for office years ago. A brief look back over the last decade highlights the success of hundreds of thousands of women who otherwise would not have been inspired to explore running for office, let alone put their name on any ballot, had it not been for She Should Run.

In 2016, we adeptly rode the wave of the presidential election fervor, shaking every tree across the nation for the most talented women in our midst who said they were ready to run. The flood gates seemed to open with thousands of women stepping up to explore their own political leadership through She Should Run.

In 2018, we cheered and cried and clapped for the Year of the Woman, and the U.S. saw a 64% jump in the number of women running for Congress. Women from all walks of life continued to rely on She Should Run's starting-line programming. We expanded our staff and our impact.

In 2020, faced collectively with a global existential threat, we pivoted to virtual programming and served more women than ever before with our curriculum.

Now, we contend with the crushing reality that the tide for women's political leadership has receded. Where have all the women gone? The overwhelming swell that fueled previous efforts has slowed, and inequality is even more entrenched. Women are exhausted. With their recent announcement that we are not on track to achieve its gender equity goals by 2030, even the United Nations is sounding the alarm.

## WHO WILL INSPIRE WOMEN TO RUN IN 2028?

Women still hold less than 30% of all elected offices across the federal, state, and local level, and the numbers are even lower when looking at women from underrepresented communities. Black women comprise less than 6% of officeholders in Congress, statewide elective executive offices, and state legislatures; only 7.9% of all women state legislators identify as Latina; and, roughly 0.23 percent of U.S.

elected officials identify as LGBTQ. Women are still less likely than men to have thought about running for office or to express interest in running for office in the future. Women are less likely to have opted into leadership roles from a young age. In fact, few of us – less than 2% – grow up with the dream to run for office one day.

Women bear the brunt of, and lack representation on, the issues that most dramatically impact our lives, including climate change, gun violence, lack of access to reproductive health, a struggling economy, and the perilous effects of ongoing racism. Polarization and political dysfunction is higher than ever before.

Plainly put: women's leadership is in a state of emergency. She Should Run refuses to remain idle in the face of these staggering statistics and we are ready to meet the moment.

## MULTIPLYING EFFORTS FOR THE WOMEN LEFT BEHIND

When She Should Run began our quest to help women find their starting place in politics, we knew the road to change would be long. After over a decade in the field and collective research from like-minded organizations, it's clear we need to think even bigger and bolder about how to engage women from all walks of life in civic leadership and ultimately, a role in government. The making of a candidate starts so much earlier than where the majority of funding and focus in the field currently lies.

We cannot collapse the journey of a woman who is dipping her toe into civics. She needs motivation, inspiration, and encouragement repeatedly, sometimes over the course of several years, before she ultimately decides to run.

Our *Multiplier Roadmap* outlines the essential next steps we must all take together now if we are to see more women raising their hands to run in the 2028 election and beyond. Our insights aim to give rise to the most significant intervention ever seen to change the face of government NOW – not two hundred years from now. There will be *no more waiting*.

So let's ditch traditional recruitment models and gatekeeper rhetoric that think only wealthy people, political insiders and those who have been plotting a run since first grade have what it takes to lead. Join us to meet women where they really are, in communities and workplaces across our nation.

# Four Steps to Get More Women to Consider Elected Office



## EILEEN'S JOURNEY

When Eileen, a Latina community volunteer and teaching assistant, experiences a student shooting a gun in her classroom, she is initially paralyzed by the trauma.



## LAURA'S JOURNEY

Laura, a wife, mother, and small business owner, is encouraged to run for office by a close friend who had years of experience in the Kansas State House.



## ANANYA'S JOURNEY

Ananya, a first-generation South Asian American immigrant and a recently nationalized U.S. citizen, first hears about She Should Run as a student leader at Yale.

## 1. MAKE IT OBVIOUS AND COMMONPLACE

We will emphatically and persistently deliver our message to women with vast leadership experience or potential who are otherwise overlooked in traditional political recruitment.

*The women on the ballot in 2024 were inspired to run years ago. We must help the leaders of tomorrow identify themselves right now, or we stand to lose even more ground and our government will remain by and for men. We must unapologetically pursue women outside the echo chamber.*

- 24 million American women are primed to be motivated to run for office on the basis of their current civic and community engagement.
- A majority of women—across demographics and ideologies—are motivated by issues that disproportionately affect them.
- 70%+ of women considering running for office discuss current issues on social media.



### EILEEN'S JOURNEY

Eileen's friend encourages her to connect with us.



### LAURA'S JOURNEY

Laura finds She Should Run on Instagram and connects with our non-partisan approach to be bridge-builders.



### ANANYA'S JOURNEY

Ananya brings She Should Run's message and curriculum to her campus and encourages others to partake.

## 2. MAKE IT EASY AND APPROACHABLE

We will dismantle perceptions around what it takes to become an elected official by offering honest resources and simple steps that allow a woman to dip her toe in the water.

*Women are tired and are being told they need to have specific experience and credentials in order to consider running for office. Without accessible, simple steps to get involved, most won't bother, or even see the point.*

- Nearly two-thirds of Americans (65%) say they always or often feel exhausted when thinking about politics.
- Women are three times as likely as men to rate themselves as “not at all qualified” to run for office.
- According to years of collective research and She Should Run surveys, when it comes to running for office, it takes women, on average, at least 4 years to move from a place of curiosity to a formal commitment to run.



### EILEEN'S JOURNEY

Eileen registers for She Should Run's gun violence prevention webinar.



### LAURA'S JOURNEY

Laura registers for She Should Run's webinar about navigating social media as a woman in leadership.



### ANANYA'S JOURNEY

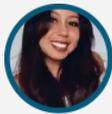
Ananya enjoys learning and laughing from the content shared on She Should Run's social media and blog.

### 3. MAKE IT RELATABLE AND COMPELLING

We will provide a wide range of resources that adapt to the interests and needs of women, focusing on their leadership development rather than candidate training.

*We need to remain present for women, always looking for new ways to reach tomorrow's leaders. Because most women considering a run for office today won't end up on the ballot for years to come.*

- Women's and girls' organizations receive less than 2% of overall charitable giving, a majority of which is being funneled to women receiving candidate training rather than first-steps inspiration and leadership development.
- In a polarized political environment, developing nonpartisan leadership competencies, such as becoming self-aware, achieving results, engaging others, and leading change, can bring people together and renew public trust.
- Voter turnout among Gen Z women has been steadily increasing. In 2023, there are 73 Gen Z state legislators serving in their state capitals—compared to 27 in 2022, a 170% increase in just one year.



#### EILEEN'S JOURNEY

Eileen becomes a founding member of her county's leadership council advocating for change in her community.



#### LAURA'S JOURNEY

Laura envisions her potential impact when she reads She Should Run content featuring the personal stories of women in elected office.



#### ANANYA'S JOURNEY

Ananya accesses She Should Run resources to develop her confidence and ambitions to complement her real-world leadership experiences.

### 4. MAKE IT INSPIRING AND INFECTIOUS

We will mobilize passionate leaders to multiply the number of women considering elected office through honest, open connections.

*Most people need to "see it to believe it" and women considering elected office is no different.*

- The majority of accessible political resources for women offer campaign-specific content, rather than the unscripted side of running for office, like information about which office to run for, how to navigate the toxic side of social media, or how to manage competing responsibilities.
- Women are more likely to run if they receive support and encouragement from trusted sources in their lives, whether that be family members, friends, members of their community, former teachers/professions, faith leaders, elected officials, and in-person or online.
- When asked, 99% of women who have run are willing to give time to inspire future leaders. Women in the She Should Run community want off-the-record access to women who have run to ask questions about their individual challenges and concerns.



**EILEEN'S JOURNEY**

Eileen develops her leadership, and inspires women like herself to explore public leadership.



**LAURA'S JOURNEY**

Laura runs for State Representative and wins! Moved by the She Should Run Community, she plans to mentor other women in her region considering a run.



**ANANYA'S JOURNEY**

For the first time, Ananya envisions a run in her future and encourages women, especially women of color, to consider it as well.

## SOURCE LIST

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