ONLINE CANDIDATE QUICKSTART GUIDE

START YOUR ONLINE CAMPAIGN

Online Candidate®
Campaign websites and more.

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Compiled and published by:
Online Candidate® OnlineCandidate.com

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Starting Your Campaign Website

You have enough to do getting your campaign off the ground. Why let the creation and design of your political website become a headache?

We've streamlined our process down to a few simple steps:

Select your campaign website package and domain. Domain name registration is included with all packages. However, you can also use an existing domain name that you have already registered.
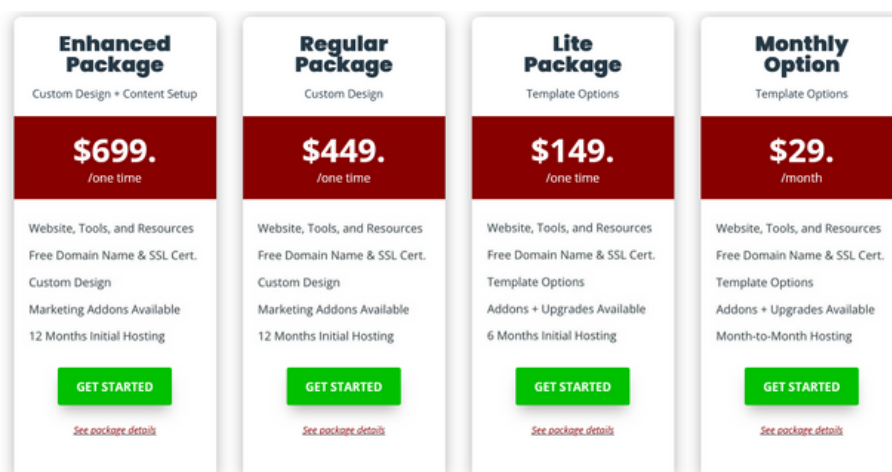
Create your website administration account. Once your order has been placed, you will receive an automated email with the subject GETTING STARTED. This email has the next steps including a link to create your website admin credentials. Once that is done, site settings can be configured and the website can be built out.

Additional setup requirements. For **Regular** and **Enhanced Website Packages** or sites with a *Custom Design* or *Initial Content Setup* add-ons, the GETTING STARTED email will also include a link to an online design questionnaire with information that is required for us to complete the work. to send your candidate. Custom designs take 2-4 business days from the time we get everything needed to complete the website.

Go live. Once you are ready to launch, you can generate your site and go live. Afterwards, you can update, edit and add additional content to your site whenever you want.

If you have questions or run into any issues, reach out for support. WE ARE HERE TO HELP!

The Order Process

Enhanced Package	Regular Package	Lite Package	Monthly Option
Custom Design + Content Setup	Custom Design	Template Options	Template Options
$699. /one time	**$449.** /one time	**$149.** /one time	**$29.** /month
Website, Tools, and Resources	Website, Tools, and Resources	Website, Tools, and Resources	Website, Tools, and Resources
Free Domain Name & SSL Cert.	Free Domain Name & SSL Cert.	Free Domain Name & SSL Cert.	Free Domain Name & SSL Cert.
Custom Design	Custom Design	Template Options	Template Options
Marketing Addons Available	Marketing Addons Available	Addons + Upgrades Available	Addons + Upgrades Available
12 Months Initial Hosting	12 Months Initial Hosting	6 Months Initial Hosting	Month-to-Month Hosting
GET STARTED	GET STARTED	GET STARTED	GET STARTED
See package details	*See package details*	*See package details*	*See package details*

Order your website package <u>directly through our website</u> for immediate setup. You may pay by debit or credit card. We also accept payment by check and e-check, but please <u>contact us first</u> to arrange payment through those methods.

Choose your domain name. We include a free .COM domain name registration with each website. We also carry political-themed domain extensions, such as .republican, .democrat and .voting.

Choose any Add-on Options: These <u>optional services</u> can be purchased when you order your website or at a later time. See the end of this guide for add-on details.

ID Protect can be added when you order. ID protection keeps your domain registration information private and unsearchable to spammers and potential scammers.

Checkout and pay. Once your order is completed, you will receive an automated email with the subject GETTING STARTED. This email has the next steps including a link to create your website admin credentials. *If you do not get this email, let us know.*

If you ordered add-on options, you will get additional emails for each. You may get quite a few, but begin with the GETTING STARTED email.

Well look forward to working with you!

Domain Name Information

We include a *free* .COM domain name registration with each website. All domains are registered with the client as Registrant, so you have control over it.

If your domain name is already registered:

If you already registered your domain elsewhere, you need to point the domain to our server in either one of the two methods described below.

METHOD 1: A Record Change

If you already have email setup with the domain, then you'll need to change the A Record. This will keep the email as it is and points the web site to our server.

A Record change: Our server IP is: 66.155.43.18

METHOD 2: Nameserver Change:

If you do not have email currently setup, you can set it up on our server. (It is included with the package.) You can change the nameserver:
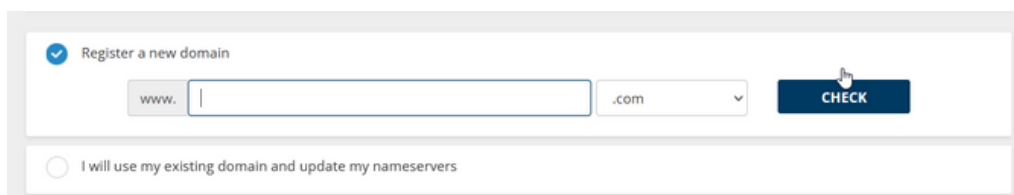Name Server 1: ns1.daleyhost.net
Name Server 2: ns2.daleyhost.net

We recommend that you make the change as soon as possible. You will not be able to create your admin user account until the change has been made and fully resolves

For more information, see *Name Server Instructions* on our Knowledge Base.

Domain Name Tips

- Keep your domain name short and to the point. *voteyourname.com* or *electyourname.com* are usually solid choices.

- Don't include a year in your domain name. It will become outdated if you want to use it for your next election.

- Be sure you have registered your domain name BEFORE any print material or campaign signs are ordered. It can be very embarrassing to advertise a website that does not exist!

- Have more than one domain? We can redirect multiple domain names to your main website. Let us know and we can set it up for you.

- Get your domain name BEFORE any print material or campaign signs are ordered. It can be very embarrassing to advertise a website that does not exist!

- Even though you have paid for a domain name, you don't actually own it.
- Instead,you are renting the name from the registrar company for as many years as you pay for it.

- If you stop paying your annual domain registration fee, anyone else can step in, register the name, and point it to another website. You can always keep your domain name want, even if you decide to stop your website hosting.

Articles:

- Should Your Campaign Register A Dot Com, Dot Org Or Both?
- 4 Things To Know About Your Campaign's Domain Name

Materials Needed to Start Your Site

After you order, you can get started on your website right away. If you need assistance, the website administration system has popups, a dropdown explanation for each page, and a ticket form. *If you need help, let us know!*

For Custom Designs:

For websites featuring a customized design, including logo and banner creation, the GETTING STARTED email will provide a link to an online design questionnaire. This form gathers details on color schemes, fonts, and logo preferences, etc. Screenshots of past client work are included for inspiration. The more information you provide, the better we can bring your vision to life. If you're unsure, basic info works too—we can still craft an excellent design for you!

Send all photos and design elements to *carol@onlinecandidate*. Within 2-4 business days of receiving everything needed, we'll send you a link to review. If the initial design isn't quite what you are looking for, guide us, and we'll make adjustments!

For Content Setup:

For Enhanced Website Packages or orders that include the Initial Site Content Setup add-on, the GETTING STARTED email will also include a Microsoft Word worksheet. This worksheet has various website settings and options for your website, including email accounts required, volunteer form options, donation services, social media links, etc. L*eave any fields unanswered if you're unsure how to answer them or if you wish to address them later.*

Site content setups are a *one-time task* using the materials you provide. After the website is approved and goes live, you can log into the website admin to make updates. Should you encounter issues or need assistance, feel free to reach out—we're here to help! Or if you decide you would rather not, we can handle updates for an extra fee through our *Website Maintenance* option.

Content Tip: Opt for writing your content in the third person instead of using the first person ('I'). This practice enhances your website's search engine rankings because search engines may struggle to identify 'I.' If you prefer first-person content, incorporate headers and subheaders with your name. This way, you maintain a personal touch while ensuring search engines can properly index your name in the content.

Additional Articles:

- Preparing Content For Your Campaign Website
- Online Writing Tips For Local Campaigns
- Creating an Online Political Press Kit

OnlineCandidateResources.com is our clients-only site. It includes exclusive articles, tools and resource. It also includes sample web copy you can use for inspiration. You can access the site through your website dashboard.

Candidate Head Shot Tips

While professional candidate photographs undoubtedly yield the highest quality, using your phone for a headshot is acceptable. Make sure your phone's camera is of good quality, and utilize ample lighting. The impact of good lighting cannot be overstated.

Not optimal headshot. Shoulders are cut off.

- For a more flattering appearance, consider a three-quarter angle when taking photos. A straight-on shot might unintentionally give off a mugshot-like vibe, whereas a slight angle adds dimension and a more engaging look.
- Make sure BOTH shoulders can be seen. Don't crop them off!
- Avoid standing against a background that matches the color of your clothing or hair. If you're wearing dark colors or have dark hair, opt for a lighter background, and vice versa for those in light clothing or with light hair. This ensures better visibility and makes it easier to for background removal.
- A large, high resolution image is best. Large-sized images can be scaled down, but small, low-res images cannot be improved much.
- Dress accordingly to convey the desired image to voters. If aiming for a serious demeanor, opt for more formal attire. Conversely, if seeking a relaxed and approachable vibe, steer clear of overly formal clothing. Your outfit should align with the impression you want to create among voters.
- Smile!

Additional Material

For custom designs, send along additional existing graphics or images that you would like to have incorporated into your custom design.

Again, high-resolution images work best.

Better quality images lead to better designs.

Setting Up Your Campaign Website

Starting Out

The first thing you will want to do with your new site is to edit your **Site Settings**. This is the configuration section for your website.

Take your time and go through all the setting tabs. It's a big section, but virtually every major setting for the site is controlled from this central location.

- Learn more about your **Site Setup Options**.

Editing Your Content

Edit your website material in the Content Management section. Each page comes with an online editor that allows you to edit text, add images, embed video and more.

Going Live With Your Site

Once you have configured your site and have set up your initial pages, you can go live with your site through your site administration dashboard. Going live will replace the temporary default 'Under Construction' home page.

> **Note: Sometimes you may not see your edits in your live site.** This is often due to *browser caching* which is designed to help your site load quickly. Try reloading the page several times (shift and reload) or clear your browser cache.

My Site is Live. Now What?

Updating Your Website

You can update your website by logging into your website administration. If you need help, there is a built-in help system and instruction blocks on each page. If you have a problem, don't get frustrated, just submit a support ticket! If you need a little one-on-one to get the basics, we can arrange that, too.

If you would like us to keep your site up to date, our **Website Maintenance Service** offers the convenience of professional and timely content and design changes, while still allowing you control over your site.

Online Donation Systems

Online Candidate websites can integrate with any online fundraising service. A number of our clients use the nonpartisan services of *Anedot* and *Raise the Money* or the partisan services *ActBlue* and *Winred*. These platforms includes automatic bank transfers and additional online tools. _See our list of Recommended Fundraising Platforms._

Note: *We do NOT recommend using PayPal for political donations.* PayPal does not capture required donor information, and it is done through our built-in form. At some point, you will have to manually match donors to payments.

Integration options include embedding donation forms or adding widgets to your site pages. You can also link directly to outside donation pages from your website navigation by using the 'Alternate URL' field within the Page Editor.

> **Tip:** Have your **campaign bank account** set up before you register with any online fundraising service. This will save time and aggravation.

Webmaster Accounts

We highly recommend that you create a campaign **Google account**. This will allow you to create a campaign Gmail address and give you access to Webmaster Tools, Analytics and AdWords.

Our **Site Launch Add-on** is designed to help your campaign get that initial promotional boost to rank well in the search engines. With it, we set up your Google Analytics and Webmaster Tools. Details about this service can be found below.

Email Marketing Services

If you plan to do email marketing for your campaign, you need a dedicated email marketing service. They provide tools and functionality, along with better email delivery rates via their relationships with internet service providers.

Two services our clients often use include:

- **AWeber**
- **MailChimp**

See the *marketing tab* in your website administration for additional links and service recommendations.

> **Note:** You can set up email accounts and email forwarders through the *client portal*. However, sending bulk email through our servers is *prohibited*.

Getting Your Website Found

Once you have a campaign website, the important thing is getting it to appear in the search engines. So, how can you get your site to show up and drive more traffic to your website? The work begins on two levels.

On Site Optimization

On site optimization is just a fancy way of saying, 'make your site about your race'. In other words, include enough text throughout your website about your candidate and the campaign.

Proper optimization includes using the candidate's full name and state/region/municipality in the text:

Off Site Optimization

Site optimization is one side of web promotion. The flip side is effective link building and advertising. Good links back to your website help it rise in relevance for searches related to your campaign.

Link sources include:
- Your social media accounts (important!)
- Online press releases
- Newspaper websites – through articles and online voter guides
- Other local candidates
- Political party websites
- Other groups campaigning for similar causes

Try to get links from outside sources. Search engines will find your site through those links. Once the site is found, it should become indexed quickly.

Additional Resources

- 5 Critical Pieces of Text Needed in a Campaign Website
- Website Content Examples [OnlineCandidateResources.com]

After Your Campaign

Should You Let Your Online Presence Go?

Win or lose, consider the long-term benefits of keeping your website active until the next campaign vs. shutting the site down completely.

You may want to shut down certain pages or sections of the site but continue to post relevant news and event updates. In other words, keep the interest alive until the next campaign.

Feel free to <u>contact us</u> to discuss your options.

Online Candidate Services

To help you get your online campaign up and running as quickly and easily as possible, we offer a number of add-on service options. ***These options can be ordered with your website package or at a later time.***

Website Content Setup

Included with the Enhanced and Regular Website Package or available as an upgrade.

Save time getting your site built out. We'll arrange your site text and images for a pleasing design. We incorporate best practices to your material for search engine optimization (SEO). After that, it's all in your control.

Custom Design Option

Available as an upgrade for the **Lite Package** and **Monthly Option**. We'll create a website header with your campaign colors, logo, background, and candidate head shot. We also modify your site colors, font, background and more for a unique design. We also create a **campaign logo** – plus we'll give you a high-res version to use in your print materials for FREE. Under the sample client website designs.

Social Media Graphics

We design a Facebook cover image and X/Twitter account background.

Site Launch Option

This service is designed to help your site get an initial promotional boost to rank well in the search engines.

- **Analytics and Webmaster Account Setup:** We will install Google Analytics so you can monitor your site traffic and see where your visitors are coming from.
- **Website review:** Your site can't rank well if it isn't optimized. We'll check your site for basic SEO to make sure the site setup and copy is search engine friendly.
- **Site launch press release:** We'll draft a press release for your use.

Site Launch Option + Social Media Setup

Includes the services of the **Site Launch Option** and **Social Media Graphics** above, *plus* setup of your campaign Facebook page and X/Twitter account.

Email Marketing Setup and Integration

Save time and get your email campaign started the right way. We'll set up and integration either a *Mailchimp* or *Aweber* account for your campaign.

Political Template Design

We create custom *Canva templates* that feature your campaign logo, image, and color scheme. The templates are fully customizable so you can easily add your own copy and have professional-quality downloadable material suitable for printing.

Political Promo Video Design

Get a high-resolution campaign introduction video to kick off your YouTube channel, post to Facebook and embed in your campaign website. It's a quick and affordable way to start another online promotional channel. Learn More About Video Design.

IP Targeting (Separate Campaign Service)

Reach voters online, where they live. It's digital direct marketing. By matching a physical address to a specific IP address, IP Targeting is a secret weapon for political campaigns. Visit: onlinecandidate.com/ads

Download Store

Online Candidate carries a variety of products in our Digital Download Store that are designed to help local campaigns.

Downloadable Products:
- Political Campaign E-Books
- Canva Print Templates
- Combo Savings

Learn more about our **Site Addons** and **Marketing Services**.

Ready to Start Your Online Campaign?

Online Candidate provides the website and resources to start your digital campaign.

With simple pricing, there are
NO long-term contracts or hidden costs.

OnlineCandidateResources.com features graphic templates, content-generating tools, and resources. It is our membership website that is free for website clients. Non-clients can also join.

Looking for more? We also offer political marketing services to promote yourself online on offline.

Visit OnlineCandidate.com