



CAMPAIGN HANDBOOK

Persistence is the
foundation of success.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	02
Local Government	06
Pre-Campaign	10
Team & Providers	14
Setting Up	20
Signs	26
Messaging	34
Field Strategy	38
Fundraising	46
Outreach	50
Timeline	54
Election Day & After	58

INTRODUCTION

WELCOME



Ben Kolendo
Founder / President

My name is Ben Kolendo, and I am dedicated to advocating for ethical leadership, student representation, and community-driven policies in Alaska. I wrote this handbook because I've been in your shoes.


I first became engaged in public service as the Student Representative for the Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District, serving from 2019 to 2024. In this role, I worked alongside school board members, district officials, and community leaders to shape education policy, advocate for students, and ensure youth voices were heard in decision-making processes.

In 2024, I ran for the Mat-Su School Board (District 1) with the goal of restoring student representation, increasing transparency, and prioritizing community needs. While I did not win the election, the experience reinforced my commitment to ethical governance, grassroots organizing, and helping others navigate the complexities of running for office.

I founded the Kolendo Collective to channel my passion for advocacy into meaningful action. Part of that is helping candidates run for office and fight for policies that protect youth rights and amplify their voices. Through my own experience, I understand the challenges candidates face—from organizing volunteers to raising funds and communicating a compelling message.

This handbook is for candidates who want to step into leadership roles and make a real difference. Its goal is to help you run your campaign confidently and effectively. It is designed to walk you through each part of a campaign step-by-step, from setting up your paperwork and talking to voters, to raising money and figuring out what to say at voters' doors.



The top of the page features a photograph of the Alaska State Capitol building, showing its classical architecture with columns and the inscription "ALASKA STATE CAPITOL" above the entrance. A large, light blue diagonal watermark with the word "DRAFT" and a large "N" is overlaid across the page.

INTRODUCTION

KOLENDO COLLECTIVE

The Kolendo Collective is committed to advocating for the rights and well-being of youth across Alaska. We empower young people through political action, defending and fighting for their rights to free speech, expression, and association. By working alongside communities, lawmakers, and government officials, we aim to amplify youth voices and protect their ability to speak and be heard statewide.

We also recognize the power of local government in shaping the future of youth across Alaska. That's why we offer resources to candidates committed to promoting youth voices and advocating for policies that protect and uplift young people. Whether through school board, city council, or borough assembly elections, we provide tools and resources to leaders who stand up for youth representation, education, and community-driven policymaking.

INTRODUCTION

HANDBOOK PURPOSE

This handbook serves as a step-by-step guide for anyone considering a run for local office in Alaska. Whether you're aiming for a position on the school board, city council, or borough assembly, this resource will help you:

- ✓ Understand Alaska's election process and legal requirements
- ✓ Develop a compelling campaign strategy and message
- ✓ Fundraise effectively while adhering to state laws
- ✓ Engage with voters and maximize turnout on election day

Additionally, this handbook includes a Team & Providers resources section, offering suggestions and recommendations for campaign managers, sign designers, treasurers, legal advisors, and other service providers who specialize in Alaskan elections.



Running for office is a profound way to serve your community. With the right strategy, preparation, and determination, you can make a meaningful impact.

Let's get started!

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UNDERSTANDING LOCAL GOVERNMENT



UNDERSTANDING

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

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