



# Best Practices:

Promoting Gender  
Balanced Appointments

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**A thriving democracy is within our reach**, but we must ensure that women across the racial, ideological, and geographic spectrum have equal opportunities to enter political office so that our nation's rich diversity is reflected in our government.

## **RepresentWomen**

6930 Carroll Avenue, Suite 240

Takoma Park, MD 20912

<https://www.representwomen.org>

info@representwomen.org

**RepresentWomen** is a research-based advocacy group that promotes the use of systems strategies to advance women's representation and leadership in the U.S. and abroad.

To achieve our mission, RepresentWomen partners with allies across the country and political spectrum who help amplify our work by putting what we've researched into practice. By working in concert with our allies to address the barriers to office, we can ensure that more women **RUN, WIN, SERVE & LEAD**.

**Author:** Grace Beyer

**Editors:** Katie Usalis and Courtney Lamendola

**Designer:** Kaycie Goral

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**If you are interested** in learning more about our work or in seeking a partnership, please contact us at [info@representwomen.org](mailto:info@representwomen.org). Feel free to browse our Partnership Packages ([Partners](#) and [Allies](#)) to see if there is a partnership model that best suits your interests.

# Executive Summary

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**To inform** our own programming on advancing gender-balanced appointments and to establish a scalable, replicable, transformative model for advancing gender-balanced appointments, RepresentWomen gathered learnings from five similar initiatives around the country.

The following summary reviews these conversations:

 **Key ingredients for success**

 **Stumbling blocks**

 **What they wish they knew**

 **Common tactics**



# Key ingredients for success

## Good relationships with gatekeepers

- More likely to listen and take a serious look at the appointment candidates sent their way
- Listen to them and find out what they're looking for in candidates, so you know how to curate the right resumes.
- They'll alert you when an opening for an appointment is coming up
- Demonstrate your value in the relationship with these government decision-makers.
  - I.e., a value is that you can provide quality candidates for open positions

## Relationships with Press

- Don't only focus on the reporter with the diversity beat, reporters that focus on general government can be good to work with as well
- Have data ready to share with reporters



## Nonpartisanship

Being seen as nonpartisan is a key to reducing suspicion. Ways to do this include:

- Partnering with conservative organizations
- Using a message that appeals to people of all partisan backgrounds is also key.
- Recommending conservatives as well as liberals (if doing recommendations for appointments)
- Coming up with different slates of women to recommend for different candidates, based on their party
- Getting people of different parties to write op-eds or letters to decisions makers promoting your initiative

## Collaboration

- Embrace collaboration between other organizations, and be willing to share information.
  - I.e., share the resumes from your resume banks with other organizations
- Speaking with the authority of a coalition of several organizations helps improve how seriously the initiative is taken
- When meeting with government officials, don't bring in a lot of organizations – have one or two leader organizations coordinate with the decision makers



# Stumbling Blocks

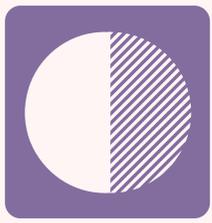
**Lack of collaboration between organizations doing similar things, which leads to competing, duplicative initiatives.**

**Pushback from elected officials on the need to appoint more women: the most common response is that they already appoint solely based on merit, so appointing based on gender would be discriminatory.**

**Difficult to get contact information, or even names, of key decision-makers (people in charge of selecting candidates for appointments).**

**Candidates often promise their appointments in spring of the election year, so they often can't change their minds if initiatives start too late.**

**Getting involved in state appointments is harder than local appointments, as it's more partisan. State governments are less willing to work with outside organizations because of suspicions of partisanship.**



# What they wish they knew

## ● Start Early

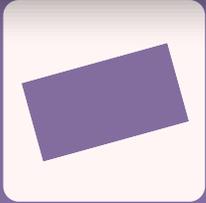
- Prepare your campaign in advance, don't just start once the election starts! Have the groundwork laid out and ready before you plan on starting.
- In particular, give plenty of time for relationship building.

## ● Start Small

- Select a smaller sample of counties and start by really working to build success and gain momentum, and then expand that to other states.

## ● Rapid Response

- When working with coalitions, it's easy to get stuck waiting to get approval from many different people to do something as simple as a press release. Establishing clear approval procedures with hard timelines beforehand can speed this up.



# Common tactics

**Creating resume banks of qualified people for appointments and providing the best to decision makers**

**Publicly pressuring candidates and elected officials using:**

- Press releases, op-eds, news articles, press conferences
- Social media, and creating social media toolkits for allies to use
- Public letters to decision makers

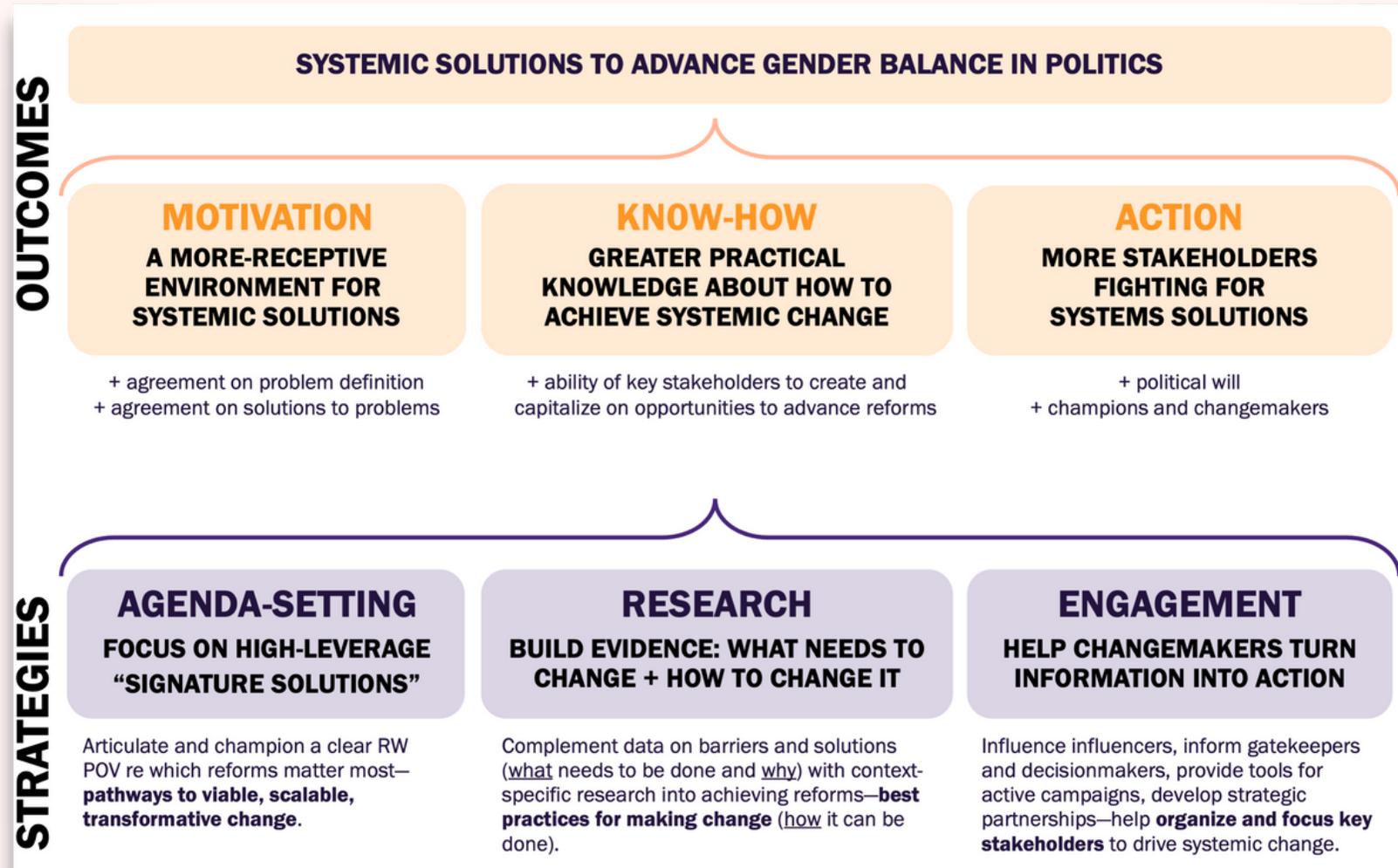
**Training and providing education to people who may want to be appointed**

**Privately pressuring by:**

- Notifying candidates about future actions (ex. "We're doing an upcoming press conference about candidates who have signed the pledge, we'd love to include you in it.")
- Providing decision makers with shortlists of qualified women for appointments

# Why this research?

**In 2021**, RepresentWomen underwent a strategic planning process where we identified three Signature Solutions that are our focus for 2022: gender balanced PAC funding targets, ranked choice voting, and gender balanced appointments. Each Signature Solution program engages three reinforcing levers of change: agenda setting, knowledge building, and strategic engagement.



**This report is part of our knowledge building work and serves to:**

- **Inform** our own decision making regarding the design and implementation of our gender balanced cabinet appointments work this year, and
- **Contribute** to our vision of establishing viable, scalable, and transformative models of increasing women’s representation in elected and appointed positions, at every level of government.



*Parity for Women in Politics*

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