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# Elevate

Campaign Training

for People with Disabilities

The National Council on Independent Living presents –

# Your Story, Your Campaign & Your Brand Online

Atima Omara

President & Chief Strategist, Omara Strategy Group, LLC

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## Presenter: Atima Omara

Atima Omara is a nationally recognized award-winning political strategist, leader, advocate, and speaker who has focused her almost 20 year career on engaging youth, women, and people of color at the intersection of politics and advocacy in the progressive movement. As President of Omara Strategy Group, LLC, Atima provides training, coaching, and strategic political services to political candidates and organizations that center women, people of color, and other underrepresented communities in issue advocacy and campaigns. Over a decade, she has worked as campaign manager, field director, and other roles on more than a dozen federal, state, & local political campaigns in many red and battleground states across the country. She has also successfully led organizing efforts for voter registration, ballot initiatives, and GOTV operations. In addition to serving as a trainer in 2019 for NCIL's Elevate Campaign training, she has trained hundreds of candidates and campaign staff for a number of organizations including: Emerge America, Higher Heights for America, Vote Run Lead, New American Leaders, and Running Start. She has a BA from the University of Virginia and an MPA from George Mason University.



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# Today You Will Learn

- The need to have an answer as to “why” you are running for office.
- The importance of your personal story to launching a meaningful campaign that resonates with your community
- How the foundation of your story shapes your campaign message
- How to do digital media tools help you brand you and your campaign
- The importance of having a digital presence as a candidate:  
Your website, Facebook, Twitter, etc.

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# What Is Story of Self

Who Are You? Why have you been called to what you have been called to?

Everyone has a story that got him her involved in a given cause. And that given cause or others like it is why many run for office.

- What's your story?
  - Growing up with a disability
  - An immigrant or from an immigrant family
  - Experience with racism/and or sexism
  - Economic struggles

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# What Office?

When you know your story of self, you can answer the key questions: Why run for office? Which office? Which district?

## **As a result of your story are you:**

Are you an advocate for education? Care about the quality of education in your district? Its funding priorities? Maybe even active in some school related committees—School Board

Do you care about real estate development in your neighborhood? How safe streets are? Transportation?—City/County Office

Are you worried about the environment? Health care? Worried about immigration reform?—State legislature or US House

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# What District?



Does Your Story Resonate With The District In Which You Live?

Answering questions on your story, the office, and why you are running will help you define the candidate you will be

It will be the foundation for:

- Stump Speech
- Platform
- Press Releases & Campaign Messaging
- Social media and website



# Good Examples of Narrative for Public Office

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“I believe in an America where the son of a mill worker could actually beat the son of a president for the White House. That's the America I will fight for” -- John Edwards, US Senator & 2004 Presidential VP nominee

Bio: grew up in a working class rural North Carolina family and used that as his narrative as to why he worked as a trial lawyer fighting against companies who took advantage of the less fortunate and built on his campaign



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# Good examples of Narrative continued

“The people closest to the pain should be closest to the power”

--Ayanna Pressley

Bio: grew up in a working class family with a mother who worked multiple jobs as a single partner. Father, a teacher also suffered from drug addiction was incarcerated. Pressley is also a survivor sexual violence and recently came out in 2020 as a member of the disabled community with a diagnosis of alopecia, an autoimmune disorder.



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# Good example: Tammy Duckworth for Senate

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b9V-df3UHq4>



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# Good Example: Alex Gray for Boston City Council At Large

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xdEtZSNMplg>



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# Bad Example: Ted Kennedy for President 1979

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TDh2iKzBh4E>



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# Building Your Brand

- Preparing a run for office means you will have to present yourself to the public on what you stand for through media and digital media
  - Letters to the Editor
  - Opinion editorials
  - Blog Posts
  - Radio/Podcasts/TV
  - Website
  - Facebook/Twitter/Instagram

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# Traditional Media

**Use your expertise to get your name out there on issues important to your area**

- Write letters to the editor in response to articles in local papers on issues relevant in your community
- Write and pitch an op-ed or two to your local paper on issues you care about and are important to the community
- Write a blog post on issues you care about for blogs frequented by those in the community

# Digital Media

- **Facebook (Public Profile):** Ideal for posting long-form posts on issues, FB livestream hosting Q&As; post when you attend community events, recognize important holidays, eventually campaign materials and events go up
- **Twitter:** Recommended for posting: tweet about thoughts, ideas, news articles, eventually campaign press releases, endorsements, blog posts and event alerts are all good alert material
- **Campaign Website:** MUST HAVE. Collection of everything that your campaign represents: policies, how to volunteer, attend events, where to donate, press statements

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# Digital Media, Continued

- **YouTube:** Campaign ads for TV and Facebook/Instagram can be shared here; educational videos: direct to cameras etc.; media interviews; recorded debates/forums etc.
- **Instagram:** Great to share campaign images, graphics, crosspost screenshots of tweets, Facebook posts, YouTube videos etc. Host Livestream conversations, and polls and Q&As



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# Campaign Website Example



[About](#) [Endorsements](#) [Volunteer](#) [Issues](#) [Store](#) [Contact](#)

# CORIBUSH

US CONGRESS | MO-01

[Donate](#)

## Join The Movement

Take future action with a single click.  
[Log in or Sign up for FastAction](#)  ?

### Contact Information

First Name

Last Name

Postal Code

Email

Phone

Remember me so that I can use *FastAction* next time.

### Additional Information

If you live in the district, can Cori Bush count on your vote? (Optional)

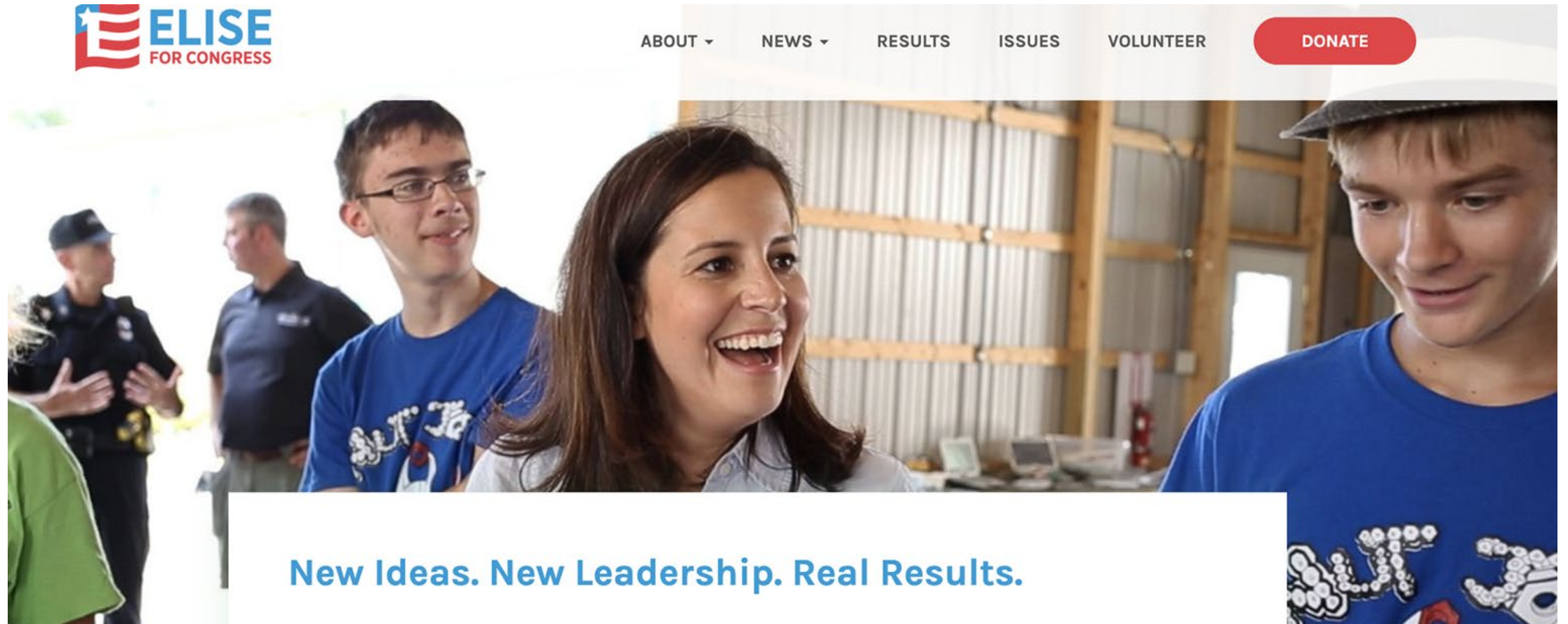
Yes, I will support Cori on November 3rd

I'm not sure yet

Don't live in district but will volunteer!

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# Website Example 2



**New Ideas. New Leadership. Real Results.**

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# Final Tips:

- Know your why for running for office
- Your story and what you care about should direct for what office you run
- Your story and eventual campaign message should resonate with a part of your community
- Running for office next year or in two years? Start building your online brand now
- Digital Must Haves: a website, Facebook, and Twitter account

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## Guest Speaker: Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley

Ayanna Pressley is an advocate, a policy-maker, an activist, and a survivor. On November 6, 2018, Ayanna was elected to represent Massachusetts' 7th Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives, making her the first woman of color to be elected to Congress from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Ayanna believes that the people closest to the pain should be closest to the power, and that a diversity of voices in the political process is essential to crafting more effective public policy.



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QUESTIONS?