

*Running for Public Office*  
Curriculum Overview



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## Running For Public Office

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*Running for Public Office* is an experiential learning program developed by the Coro Center for Civic Leadership. Standing for election to a public office is an important form of civic engagement and one of the highest forms of public service. The vision of *Running for Public Office* is to strengthen citizen participation in public elections and increase the diversity and level of preparation of candidates running for office in southwestern Pennsylvania.

Our goal is to recruit, select, engage and prepare highly motivated individuals to lead successful electoral campaigns in Allegheny County. The course is open to prospective candidates and campaign staff people who are now contemplating running for office in Allegheny County.

Coro does not seek to advance any particular ideology, political party or policy agenda. We strive to assemble a class of 20 participants that represents the diversity in the Pittsburgh region in terms of race, gender, religion, political affiliation, neighborhood location and economic status.

*Running for Public Office* includes 42 hours of seminar, conducted in twelve consecutive Thursday sessions from 5:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.: January 22, 29; February 5, 12, 19, 26; March 5, 12, 19, 26; April 2, 9

## The Coro Leadership Model

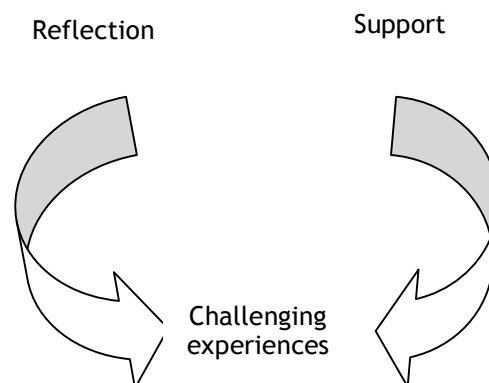
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Coro's mission is to advance ethical and effective leaders who share a commitment to civic engagement. Our vision is to build a leadership pipeline for Pittsburgh's business, government, and nonprofit sectors. Coro conducts a wide range of experiential leadership opportunities that enable participants to deepen their self awareness and learning through interaction and feedback with others.

Coro opportunities culminate in a leadership project - the mock election in *Running for Public Office* - that showcases how shared commitments can lead to measurable improvements in the Pittsburgh region. Coro learning opportunities are organized around six core leadership practices:

### Experiential Learning

Coro immerses participants in role plays, simulations, group projects and other interactive learning activities. The purpose is to challenge participants to reflect on their own assumptions and behavior and to adapt to improve performance in a group setting. Coro introduces feedback tools to help participants reflect upon these challenges and gain insight into group dynamics and their own behavioral style. We create a safe learning environment to support participants in exploring beyond their comfort zone. The core experience in *Running for Public*



*Office* is an actual but unofficial election (“mock election”) in which program participants will create and implement campaigns for a particular public office.

### Building Relationships

Interviews, learning circles and other forms of dialogue help build trust and create mutual learning among people with different experiences and perspectives. *Running for Public Office* participants will learn to use multiple formats to build relationships among themselves, to make connections with key leaders in different sectors, and to gain insight into community issues and problems.

### Diversity

Through thoughtful inquiry into the ethical importance and organizational value of diversity, *Running for Public Office* participants come to identify diverse individuals whom they need to engage in order to advance a successful political campaign. Participants deepen their understanding of diverse leadership styles and gain insight into how to work with different kinds of people to build a more successful campaign.

### Whole System Thinking

*Running for Public Office* participants will learn to frame powerful questions enabling them to explore topics that are essential to any successful electoral campaign: How can we identify relevant characteristics of different political demographics? How do generational shifts within the electorate affect campaign strategies? How can our campaign communicate across different generations? How can we best utilize technology to target our messages to different groups? Inquiry will be informed by diverse experiences of group members and leaders in different sectors, which deepens understanding of interconnections among individuals, groups and institutions. The result is a whole system approach that allows a campaign team to see a wider array of resources available for understanding key issues and creating a campaign platform.

### Teamwork for Results

The mock election is an occasion for participants to learn and apply tools to help align different team members along similar long- and short-term goals. *Running for Public office* participants enhance their skills and learn solutions for developing shared outcomes, assessing team strengths and weaknesses, clarifying group commitments and monitoring progress in toward a successful electoral campaign.

### Nurturing Leadership in Others

As the program unfolds, participants will gradually take more ownership of learning sessions and structure them to meet individual and group goals. This transition coincides with the development of the mock campaign. Participants will spend time helping each other to identify personal and group strengths in order to sustain commitment toward group goals

## Getting prepared for *Running for Public Office*

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## Participating in the Mock Election

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DATE	SESSION	LOCATION
SESSION ONE Jan 22, 2009	UNIT 1: Exploring new possibilities in politics and public policy UNIT 2: Thinking about personal leadership and group process <b>THEME: Exploring common ground in education</b>	Coro Center for Civic Leadership 33 Terminal Way, Suite 429A Pittsburgh (South Side) Pennsylvania, 15219
SESSION TWO Jan 29, 2009	UNIT 3: Understanding your leadership style UNIT 4: Structuring group feedback to enhance performance UNIT 5: Managing complex group processes	Coro Center for Civic Leadership
SESSION THREE Feb 5, 2009	UNIT 6: Framing powerful questions for creative inquiry UNIT 7: Improving communication to build effective teams <b>THEME: Policy-making in public education</b>	Pittsburgh Public Schools Administration Building, 341 S. Bellefield Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15213 (Oakland)
SESSION FOUR Feb 12, 2009	UNIT 8: Developing a group project- overview UNIT 9: Exploring consensus within the group <b>THEME: Engaging communities to enhance student achievement</b>	A+ Schools, 425 Sixth Ave, Suite 1850, Pittsburgh, PA 15219 (Downtown)
SESSION FIVE Feb 19, 2009	UNIT 10: Designing group processes UNIT 11: Strengthening a good idea through feedback <b>THEME: Thinking about unions and teachers in public education</b>	Coro Center for Civic Leadership
SESSION SIX Feb 26, 2009	UNIT 12: Group project - Creating a shared vision UNIT 13: Group project - Assessing current reality UNIT 14: Making commitmen	Urban Youth Action
SESSION SEVEN March 5, 2009	UNIT 15: Group project: Forming teams and deciding key actions UNIT 16: Coor <b>THEME: Understanding educational excellence from the perspective of next generation school principles</b>	Peabody High School 515 N Highland Avenue Pittsburgh, PA 15206 (East Liberty)
SESSION EIGHT March 12, 2009	UNIT 17: Learning Circle <b>THEME: OPEN</b>	OPEN
SESSION NINE March 19, 2009	UNIT 18: Using feedback to improve group presentations <b>THEME: Magnet schools and arts education</b>	The Pittsburgh Project (Downtown)
SESSION TEN March 26, 2009	UNIT 19: Project plan presentation <b>TEME: Program debrief and post survey</b>	TBD
SESSION ELEVEN April 02, 2009		
SESSION TWELVE, APRIL 9, 2009		

Note: Sessions are held on Thursday evenings, from 5:30 - 9:00pm. Refreshments will be provided.

# Sessions-At-A-Glance