

**running
start**

**Running Start 2030:
A Grassroots Path to
Women's Leadership**

Partnership Proposal 2026-2030



runningstart.org | development@runningstart.org

Support us in 2026

Invest in emerging talent across the country

\$100,000 - \$10,000

Running Start empowers young women from both sides of the aisle to become dynamic leaders in politics and catalysts for community transformation. We have ambitious plans to grow our programs across the US.

We hope you will join us to create a sustainable pipeline for young leaders across the country.

Be a key player in the development of budding changemakers

- Support our nationwide cohort of young leaders interning for Members of Congress.
- We will connect your team with top talent through our programs and events.

High Profile Visibility for your Executives

- Your executives will get high profile visibility and recognition via speaking and mentoring events.

Give visibility for your commitment to young leaders

- Thousands of emerging leaders, VIPs and elected/government officials interact with our community every year through various platforms.
- We will work together to build a custom plan to promote our partnership.

running
start

The Opportunity

Women hold only 28% of Congressional seats and only 24% of governorships. Women win elections at the same rate as men. The issue is that far fewer women run.

For two decades Running Start has trained 30,000+ young women from all 50 states. Our model works. The results speak for themselves. Our alumni are:

57x more likely to put their name on the ballot

94% more actively engaged in their communities than their peers

1 in 3 have already run for office

Running Start is building the pipeline American democracy needs: One million ambitious, competent young women who will transform US politics in their communities and in Congress.



"Being part of Running Start has been life changing and has enabled me to confront and push my mental barriers, including feeling like a black sheep for occupying spaces historically not meant for me in my home culture in Zimbabwe. I am inspired to own my place in the political arena."

Tatenda Dzvimbo

Associate, Housing Assistance Council
HBCU Women's Leadership Summit, Congressional Fellowship,
Next Step and Reykjavik Global Forum Alumna

running
start

The Problem and our Solution

The Leadership Confidence Gap

65% of young women care deeply about civic issues, but only 3% believe they can lead. Political confidence drops dramatically in high school—precisely when Running Start intervenes.

Our Solution: Early Intervention That Works

We meet young women ages 13-25 at that critical crossroads and prove they belong in leadership. Our programs center around participant experiences as opposed to stereotypical expectations of political paths. Our community reflects America's diversity: More than 50% of our alumni are from racial/ethnic minorities, more than a third are first generation college students, and almost a third identify as LGBTQIA+.

100+

Educational institutions
reached worldwide in 2025

50+

Trainings hosted across
the US each year

“Beyond professional growth, Running Start instilled in me a profound sense of responsibility—to use my voice, to uplift others, and to champion diverse leadership in public service and global affairs. It was here that I solidified my belief that leadership should be accessible, representative, and bold.”

Savannah Lane

Associate Director, Aspen Institute
Congressional Fellowship Alumna



running
start

The Expansion Plan

Scaling Proven Impact: State Communities Initiative

Demand is unprecedented. Young women nationwide are requesting Running Start programs in their communities. We're ready to scale with a bold vision: Running Start communities in all 50 states. Our goal is to meet young women where they are, by making programs more relevant, accessible, and impactful.

A Three-pronged Approach

- ✓ Deploy alumni to lead programs in their home states
- ✓ Partner with aligned community organizations
- ✓ Maintain national programming for network building

Our Vision

Running Start will be as ubiquitous as the Girl Scouts— young women join locally, growing leadership in their communities, then connect to our nationwide movement.



“Participating in Running Start programs has enabled me to create a support network of rising women leaders and gain insight from women who have established themselves in their fields. I have gained valuable fundraising skills and the courage to trust that my voice will be valued.”

Ruby Coleman

Consultant, Make All Votes Count DC
Congressional Fellowship, Elect Her, Reykjavik Global Forum, & Next Step Alumna

running
start

Your Investment, Measurable Impact

Scaling Impact

- Pilot : \$2 million over years 1 and 2
- Scaling: \$5 million over years 3 through 5

What this looks like

Running Start in local communities, from high schools, to colleges, to community groups, to partner organizations. This includes alumni-led programming contextually tailored to reach young women where they are. We will focus on four pilot states in 2026-27, and use results to build local engagement across the country while maintaining connections to our national network.

New York

North Carolina

Ohio

Washington DC

This work is already underway:

2025: Acquiring 1st Amendment 1st Vote in NY State to train 150+ high school girls a year

2025: Creating a leadership program with two HBCUs In Ohio

2026: Creating a NC state specific Fellowship program with local colleges

2026: Bringing our high school training to schools in our pilot states and beyond



Sustaining Excellence

We will continue to grow our national programs, while expanding into local communities.

- \$3 million annually
- Continue nationally recognized programs with proven results (Elect Her, Congressional Fellowships, Next Step, High School and HBCU Women's Leadership Summit)
- Maintain 94% alumni community engagement rate
- 75% of alumni come back for additional support throughout their career
- Support 10,000+ participants annually

Combined Impact

Every \$300 invested means one young woman who knows she can lead.



"As a Latina interested in politics, it was difficult to imagine myself in important rooms with decision making power. Running Start empowered me to view myself as a leader in politics. Learning from others while acknowledging my own power in these spaces allowed me to envision myself running for office one day."

Shania Hurtado

Policy Advisor, Harris County, TX
High School Program & Reykjavik Global Forum alumna

Why Now?

In 2026, Running Start will turn 20.

We've proven our model works.

Our alumni are 57 times more likely to run for office than their peers.

Now it's time to scale this impact nationwide.

With your partnership, we can build a generation of leaders who will reshape American democracy. As we expand into new communities, we will adapt and localize Running Start's programming for effective delivery. Investing in this enhanced operational model will help Running Start expand its reach, establish local networks, and make political leadership more accessible to young women nationwide.



"Running Start has the potential to heal the wounds of our nation. And to bring us together around what advances our collective futures. This organization gave me hope, and I'm proud to speak for them, with confidence."

Abrar Omeish

Former VA School Board Member
High School Program Alumna



Join Our Movement!

Every investment in Running Start is an investment in democracy itself.

You're not just supporting individual success, you're fueling a movement that will create a more inclusive, effective, and representative government.

Together, we can build a future where every young woman knows that no leadership position is off-limits, and where their voices shape the policies and progress of tomorrow.

runningstart.org
development@runningstart.org

**running
start**