

RFS | ASCEND

BUILDING THE BENCH FOR THE FUTURE

Run for Something (RFS) recruits and supports young, diverse progressives running for down-ballot races, building the bench of talented Democratic candidates for the future. In 2020, we launched the RFS Ascend program, aimed at providing high-impact donations to our top candidates in critical battleground states.

BACKGROUND

Since launching in 2017, RFS has become the preeminent organization supporting young, progressive candidates running for local and state legislative office. We've propelled hundreds of candidates to victory by providing 1:1 campaign support, elevating their profiles with the press, and connecting them to top-level resources provided by partner organizations.

In 2020, Ascend PAC -- an organization that has similarly focused on building the bench of Democratic candidates by providing direct financial support -- merged with RFS to help directly fund select RFS candidates in key target states, starting with Texas and Pennsylvania. Ascend PAC and RFS Ascend collectively have funded nearly 100 candidates, 60% of whom have won since 2017.

In 2021, after a successful first year, the RFS Ascend program will expand to support candidates in Texas, Pennsylvania and Virginia.

OUR APPROACH

The RFS Ascend program's approach reflects key elements of both Ascend and RFS's values and strategies:

The Long View. Our mission is to build the next generation of Democratic Party leaders. This work is less about 2021 and more about 2030 and 2040. We only support first and second-time candidates running for local races -- like school board, county commissioner, city council, district attorney, and state representative.

Compelling Campaigns. All of our candidates are impressive. We will contribute to candidates who are particularly compelling, hold a track record of driving change in their communities, engage directly with voters, and carry a lifelong commitment to service.

Impact. Our priority for investment will be high-leverage races. Candidates with budgets lower than \$250,000 will be prioritized over those with higher budget goals, so an RFS Ascend investor's donation will have a bigger impact. We'll also work with candidates in flippable races who are getting less attention.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Diversity, inclusivity, and creating a representative democracy are part of our core values -- and are vital to a functioning democracy. We will endorse and support candidates whose diversity in gender, race, and sexual orientation moves us closer to that goal.

OUR WORK IN 2021

In 2021 RFS Ascend aims to raise \$250,000 to benefit 20-25 standout candidates in Texas, Pennsylvania and Virginia.

In 2020, we focused on supporting state legislative candidates in Texas and Pennsylvania. This year, we're supporting candidates running for both state legislative and local office. We're also adding Virginia to our list of target states. Texas, Pennsylvania and Virginia are states that we know well and are critical in expanding and maintaining Democratic power moving forward.