

WHERE AND HOW TO LEARN MORE ABOUT A CANDIDATE'S POSITION ON YOUR ISSUE

Before speaking with any political candidate about prenatal to three issues — whether they're a first-time candidate or a longtime elected incumbent — nonprofit organizations, coalitions, and individual advocates should research that candidate's position using resources such as voter score cards, campaign websites, news media, video clips, social media, or legislative databases.

Researching candidates' positions before engaging with them has several benefits:

- **Insight.** Research can shape your approach as an advocate, allowing you to get a sense of which issues a candidate prioritizes. Do they highlight prenatal-to-three issues? If not, are they supportive of issues that are policy-aligned with PN-3 issues?



TIP: Some issues are specifically overseen by federal lawmakers, others by state lawmakers, and others by local lawmakers. Make sure to differentiate who you speak to based on who has power over your issue.

- **Preparation.** Understanding candidates' positions on the issues offers insight into how the conversation will go and helps you develop and ask the candidate effective questions ([more on how to do that here](#)).
- **Credibility.** Entering conversations with as much information as possible demonstrates credibility on key issues and builds trust with the candidate.
- **Accountability.** Over time, advocates can track candidates' evolving positions and hold them accountable for their commitments.

Candidate research is valuable, so organizations should establish internal practices for maintaining research over time. If resources allow, a research file should be considered a “living document” that is updated as frequently as needed (e.g., as candidates make public statements, as advocates engage with candidates and gain new information, etc.), and potentially over many years. Organizations should decide who will “own” candidate research, how to distribute the workload sustainably, who will have access to research, which issues to track, the best file formats that work easily for the team, and how often to refresh research. For example, before attending a candidate meeting or town hall, conducting a quick round of research is recommended to ensure that the latest information is current.

For support with any of these activities, you can reach out for easy access to the [NCIT No-Cost Consultation](#).

The following resources may be helpful to learn about a candidate's position:

- **Voter guides.** Some organizations inform the public about candidates' positions by creating voter guides, report cards, or scorecards, some of which are federal and others are state or local. Consider searching the [Community Change Action Report Card](#), the [National Women's Law Center Action Fund Voter Guides](#), the [Child Care Aware Action Guide](#), [Vote Smart](#), [Zero to Three](#), the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#), or [MomsRising](#). With hundreds or thousands of seats up for election across the country each year, not all candidates will be listed in any one voter guide, so plan ahead to conduct more research as needed.
- **Candidates' websites.** Candidates' websites – their campaign website and, if they are an elected incumbent, their elected official website – are excellent places to find their top priority issues. Read the sites thoroughly to see if and how any prenatal to three issues are mentioned. Remember that your issues not being mentioned is also worthwhile information to collect.
- **Candidate social media accounts.** A candidate may have several social media accounts, including campaign accounts, personal accounts, and official accounts (if they are an elected incumbent) across multiple platforms such as Facebook, X (Twitter), Threads, TikTok, or Instagram; all should be searched. Use a social media platform's search functions to look for specific prenatal to three issues of interest within those pages. For more about advanced search tools on X (Twitter), [click here](#).
- **Legislative records.** Incumbent candidates' voting records can signal potential positions on prenatal to three issues. Visit the relevant government website (e.g., for the [U.S. House of Representatives](#), the [U.S. Senate](#), or your State Senate, etc.) for each incumbent candidate to look up their voting records and any legislation they have voted for and sponsored. Advocates can work with their organization's policy leads to conduct these searches or contact the government clerk's office or help desk for guidance.
- **Press coverage.** Search past news coverage about the candidate, as well as opinion editorials ("op-eds"), or letters to the editor ("LTEs") written about or signed by the candidate. Analyze the issues mentioned and the tone of each piece. Most news can be gathered through a Google search; use Google's "News" and "tools" tabs to narrow down news results over a certain period of time.
- **YouTube videos.** Candidates' speeches – especially "stump" or introductory speeches – often highlight their top priorities. In addition to speeches, search YouTube for candidates' ads, town halls, roundtables, or other events that may raise prenatal to three issues.
- **Meta (Facebook) Ad Library.** Facebook political ads are now available for public view. Consider searching the Ad Library for a candidate's name to see if any ads were placed about that candidate and, if so, which topics were highlighted. To view the library ([available here](#)), a person must first be logged into their Facebook account.

In some cases, finding a candidate's position on prenatal to three issues may be difficult. Regardless of how much information is found, use any available research to prepare effectively before engaging with candidates.