

# THE ASCEND FUND

## WOMEN ARE 51% OF THE POPULATION, YET THEY MAKE UP LESS THAN 30% OF ELECTED LEADERS IN THE UNITED STATES

When women run for office, they have the same chance of winning as men. And when women win, they influence meaningful changes that contribute to the overall growth of our society and to the health of our democracy. But the current pathway for women to elected office is often unclear, riddled with barriers and diversions, or worse, inaccessible.

Though record numbers of women ran for and won elected office in 2018, **the progress we have made is not enough**. Momentum has been stalled largely due to a historical lack of commitment and funding to support women running for office.

## WE MUST ACCELERATE THE PACE OF CHANGE TOWARD GENDER EQUALITY IN U.S. POLITICS

To ensure 2018 trends continue and to make a lasting impact, we need to harness this energy and empower a wide-range of women to run – **and win**.

The Ascend Fund pools philanthropic capital and supports nonpartisan, nonprofit organizations that prepare women to run for office and break down the barriers that prevent women from running and getting elected.

Increased investment will help these nonprofit organizations more effectively:

- **Bridge the gap** between trainees and candidates;
- **Establish a clear and accessible pathway** to elected office; and
- Ultimately **change our political system** so elected officials reflect the population they represent.

## WE CAN BALANCE THE BALLOT

The Ascend Fund takes a unique, nonpartisan approach to get more women from all walks of life elected to office so that we can achieve gender equality in U.S. politics. Our strategy involves investment in the following initiatives:

- **Start with the States** – Critical policy decisions are made in state legislatures, yet in 45 states, women hold less than 40% of the seats. Ascend works with organizations aiming to balance the gender make-up of state legislatures in an initial 13 states.
- **Challenge Conventions** – To change the face of U.S. politics we need to throw out preconceived notions of what political leadership looks like. Ascend supports organizations exploring new ways to recruit women from a wide variety of backgrounds and new strategies that enhance women's ability to reach elected office.

As The Ascend Fund grows, we will evaluate new opportunities and expand our initiatives.

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## ABOUT PANORAMA GLOBAL

The Ascend Fund is powered by Panorama Global, a 501(c)(3) action tank working to solve problems by influencing people and policy. For more information visit [panoramaglobal.org](http://panoramaglobal.org).

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