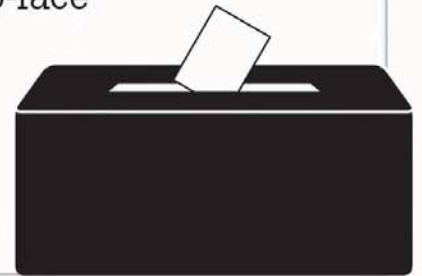


POLITICIAN



JOB DESCRIPTION

Politicians are public servants elected by voters to make decisions that shape society and affect their communities on all levels—local, state, and national. They aim to improve citizens' lives by pressing for changes in society and the laws that govern it. In this role, you will hold face-to-face sessions in your community, debate and vote on issues, and campaign for yourself and your political party.



SALARY

Political aide ★★☆☆☆
Politicians' salaries vary

INDUSTRY PROFILE

Entry into the field is competitive • Opportunities to work at a local, state, and/or national level • Career prospects and pay rates vary depending on the role

CAREER PATHS

Entry into—and advancement within—this career is largely down to self-motivation. Some politicians work in local government, while others represent their voters at the state or national levels. In politics, perhaps even more so than in other fields, career paths vary according to the type of politician you want to be.

NON-GRADUATE You can run for office as long as you meet certain basic qualifications, such as age and residency.

GRADUATE You can earn a degree in political science or public administration. Experience working for political campaigns or interning with an elected official's office is helpful.

LAWYER Though it is not a requirement, many politicians at the higher levels of government hold law degrees.



DIPLOMAT Represents the United States in foreign affairs. Job responsibilities vary from negotiating treaties to managing staff at an overseas embassy.



POLITICIAN As a politician, you work at every level of government, from town council membership all the way up to the presidency. Once elected, you can choose to focus on specific areas of policy. There are a vast amount of career options and specializations for you to choose from.

SKILLS GUIDE



Excellent public speaking skills for presenting political arguments and winning support for policies.



The ability to work as part of a team in order to reach a consensus on legislation and policies.



Interpersonal skills for relating to members of the public and understanding their concerns.



Good problem-solving skills for devising political solutions to economic and social problems.



Perseverance and integrity to press for political change and inspire others to adopt the party's cause.



MAYOR Leads a town or city council and presides over local government, taking responsibility for its major departments—including police, fire, housing, education, and transportation.



GOVERNOR Serves as a state's chief executive officer, ensuring all state laws are implemented properly by the state's executive branch. The responsibilities of a governor vary from state to state.



SENATOR Represents his or her state in the senate. This job is part of the legislative branch of government, and it includes writing and voting on bills. State senators serve six-year terms.



PRESIDENT Leads the US government. Serves as Commander in Chief of the federal armed forces, travels extensively to represent the US around the world, and has the power to sign a bill into law.

RELATED CAREERS

- ▶ **CHARITY FUNDRAISER** *see pp. 90–91*
- ▶ **LAWYER** *see pp. 110–111*
- ▶ **POLITICAL SCIENTIST** Uses expertise in areas such as law, politics, and history to research and advise on public policy. Political scientists must stay up to date with political ideas and trends.

In 2014, the United States was ranked 84th in the world for female political leadership.

AT A GLANCE



YOUR INTERESTS Politics • Political science • Debating • Current affairs • Law • Economics • Business studies • Sociology • History • Public relations



ENTRY QUALIFICATIONS Evidence of past political activity is vital. Many politicians hold advanced degrees in law, economics, or political science.



LIFESTYLE Long working hours are common. Debates and campaigning or networking events are often held during evenings. Privacy is difficult.



LOCATION Politicians typically work out of an office in their community, but national—and, sometimes, overseas—travel is required.



THE REALITIES Campaigning during elections can require frequent overnight stays away from home. Politicians' lives are often very public.