Band One
($5000 to $25,000: this level of race is for school board level, county races or municipal races.)

WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
A tool is weakly recommended in this area vs. finding workarounds.	A tool is moderately recommended in this area vs. finding workarounds.	A tool is strongly recommended in this area and at this level, if funds allow for it.

MESSAGING/MEDIA TOOLS	DATA ANALYTICS/MODELLING TOOLS	FIELD TOOLS

MESSAGING/MEDIA TOOLS

For MESSAGE DEVELOPMENT: You will likely rely on google alerts and community outreach to gather messaging data and use Google to research your area and your opponents.

For CREATIVE ASSET AND TOOLS/STOCK FOOTAGE you are likely going to use a site like Canva to make organic social media content and ads to test. You can use stock footage from Shutterstock, Pexels, or Getty images that is royalty free for your images. Examine a tool like Flipgrid or Spark for easy assembly videos. You can use iStock and Pond5 if you need generic royalty-free stock footage for videos.

For PAID MEDIA TOOLS, you are unlikely to use TV at this level, but you will likely use tools to try some paid media. These tools will be FB and Google, likely FB to start. Online tutorials can walk you through the process, as well as the Digital Media section of the Techyourself Guide.

For SOCIAL MEDIA, you will want to have a FB page. Twtter and Instagram are optional at this level.

For OWNED MEDIA, you'll want to make a free website via Squarespace, Snapsite, Engage Progress, Wordpress or Wix.

Use an EMAIL MANAGEMENT TOOL like Mailchimp or Campaign Monitor (or NGP VAN) for lists and email sends, and make sure to collect email and cell phone on your web site home page to be able to contact interested potential voters en masse.

For CONTENT TESTING AND OPTIMIZATION, use Google Adwords and the monitoring tools within FB and Twitter.

For EARNED MEDIA at this level, a simple Google search should bring in the reporters you want to contact, and consider posting on local news sites as permitted like Nextdoor, etc.

DATA ANALYTICS/MODELLING TOOLS

For DATA SOURCES, you will likely use a data tool like or NGP VAN through your state party. NGP VAN is sometimes also called Votebuilder. You can also use Targetsmart or Catalist or Nationbuilder to get access to voter files, depending on your preference regarding cost, how the data is sorted when you receive it, and how up-to-date it is. The state party will grant you access to NGP VAN (Votebuilder) if you qualify.

Some candidates use lists from previous races or campaigns. Just beware that data can change a LOT between races and it's better if you can afford the cost of data from a tool. Good data is critical to winning or losing a race.

DATA AGGREGATION AND MAPPING TOOLS are often overkill at this level but are sometimes used in larger campaigns.

You will want a tool at this level to MANAGE VOTER AND VOLUNTEER CRMS, if you can afford it. At most levels NGP VAN (Votebuilder) is the CRM used, but Nationbuilder, Salsa, Groundbase, Crowdskout and Voter Gravity can offer alternaatives. Most campaigns will use NGP VAN to track their voter lists and voter contact and another tool to track their fundraising and supporters.

For VOTER MODELING AND TARGETING, because your universe is small, you can use excel to download past election turnout data, and you can also view scores and individual vote history in NGP VAN (Votebuilder) if you have access to that. Informal modeling around potential turnout by precinct or win number is most common at this level.

For FUNDRAISING ANALYTICS, chart functions in Excel or Google sheets should do the trick.

FIELD TOOLS

For MAPPING AND TURF-CUTTING, if you have a GIS-trainer volunteer you can consider a free tool like ESRI. But if not, consider even at this level a downballot tool for cutting routes like Victory Guide or Walklist or ecanvasser. You can get a standard package of map from Empower Engine as well.

For TRACKING DATA while mobile canvassing, if you are using NGP VAN (Votebulder) you can track data via MiniVAN. But tools like Victory Guide also allow for mobile uploading as you knock doors if you don't have NGP VAN access for some reason.

EVENT TOOLS like Meetup or Eventbrite are what you will likely use for campaign events if not charging for tickets. You can make a canva invite and link it to an ActBlue ticketing page. Either way, some data post event will have to be manually entered into your systems post event via NGP VAN (Votebuilder) or another route.

Most campaigns use NGP VAN features for dialing at this level and don't bring on an independent phonebanking tool. But independent PHONEBANKING PLATFORMS like 5Calls, Callhub or Hubdialer are tools sometimes added at higher levels. Similarly, dialer tools are only sometimes used at this level. DIALER TOOLS like Calltime.ai are sometimes onboarded before NGP VAN just to gather the donations to afford VAN.

TEXTING TOOLS are used at this level! Texting is as important as phone calls. Tools like Hustle or Getthru are wise investments at all levels.

RELATIONAL ORGANIZING TOOLS are also something to consider and test. Tools like Team and Votercircle are great experiments to try, and Outvote is a great test to run too. Social voting tools like Votewithme and Motivote also aid with GOTV.

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RESEARCH TOOLS

POLLING TOOLS are likely too expensive to use independently at this level, but you can lean on local orgs and your state party to run polls for you and see how you are tracking. Watch media—do Google alerts on your name.

SOCIAL LISTENING AND SENTIMENT TOOLS are also a bit unnecessary at this level, but monitoring is always critical; monitor your social network feeds to see where you stand and monitor sentiment on competitors and issues. Tracking data while canvassing is often critical if you can afford it.

OPPOSITION RESEARCH AND MEDIA MONITORING are usually not expensive at this level...you will not need a firm. Keep your ear to the ground and read media to learn about your competition, sit down with your team to write down anything you can remember that might be an issue. Google yourself and review social media profiles before a race, and make sure to get Google alerts set up on your name and those of your competitors to monitor

Similarly, any POLICY RESEARCH AND LEGISLATIVE TRACKING at this level will come in via the local grapevine, and tools like Popvox and Trackbill can help you track bills.

FUNDRAISING TOOLS

You're going to need to use a DONATION PORTAL/ PROCESSING TOOL that can either be found within NGP VAN (Votebuilder,) or integrated into VAN via ActBlue, Democracy Engine, SnapSite or, the Groundwork, all of which have simple donation forms that can be linked to from your website for donations. Democracy Engine's main focus on cyber safety and allowing multiple donations at once, while the ActBlue platform is mobile-optimized, has one-click donations, saves user information for future donations, allows for A/B testing and form branding. NGP VAN, Snapsite and The GroundWork and NationBuilder are multi-use platforms integrating donation processing, which ActBlue and Democracy Engine hook into VAN.

FUNDRAISING PROCESS AND DONOR CRM TOOLS aid you in establishing a healthy fundraising process, but at this level, it makes the most sense to use Excel and Google Sheets to track pledges and build relationships. Some dialer tools cross the line into fundraising as well. If you want to "move up" a level here, consider using Calltime.ai which can aid you in managing your donor prospecting, outreach and follow up efficiently. NGP VAN (Votebuilder) also has a tracking and outreach feature for donors.

REGULATORY COMPLIANCE AND REPORTING TOOLS are critical at all levels, and if you don't buy your data through a third-party source compliance can get harder. Tools like NGP VAN (Votebuilder,) Catalist and Nationbuilder can make the compliance process much easier for your team by way of easy compilation and downloading of reports.

CYBERSECURITY TOOLS

For safe TEAM COMMUNICATION TOOLS, choose Wickr over Slack if you feel the need to tightly encrypt all messages flowing back and forth. (This is as per user preference on this level.)

Consider IM ENCRYPTION TOOLS like Signal for encrypting your own IM messages and also recommend to your team to do the same, if you are

In higher levels, SERVER STACK AND APP MONITORING TOOLS come into play, but at this level, keep an eye mainly on your web site and on your donation portal to make sure they stay live for critical events.

CDN, DNS AND DDOS PREVENTION TOOLS might also come in at higher levels, but at this level, they are never going to hit or affect your personal servers as you likely won't have any. At this level an attack would likely affect web site hosts transaction processors that are third party. In this case, all you can do is hunker down and hope that they resolve it, or switch processors/site hosting services.

TEAM ORGANIZATION/ COMMUNICATION TOOLS

One of the most common TOOL SUITES in use among campaigns is Gsuite, for sharing documents among campaign members fast. Dropbox is another option for fast sharing of files.

You will also likely have some campaign members or donors that need to meet via VIRTUAL MEETING TOOLS. Google Hangouts work very well for meetings up to 8 people, but past that, a tool like Zoom, Anymeeting or Appear.in might be a better bet as they can host more callers on the line without the call dropping.

Your team will communicate at this level in person a lot, but if you have any members that are not onsite, consider a TEAM COMMUNICATIONS TOOL like Slack or Wickr to allow your team to organize virtually. As mentioned in the cybersecurity tools section, Wickr boasts more encryption features than Slack, if that is a priority.

WEAK if team is all local.

Trello is a PROJECT MANAGEMENT TOOL that uses "Cards" and "Boards" To digitize project management and to-do's across teams that are not in the same area.

WEAK if team is all local.

Divvy is a TEAM BUDGETING TOOL that allows your team to budget as a team. Users can allocate funds to "subscription" cards for predictable expenses and "burner" cards for ad hoc purposes. By categorizing your expenditures in real time, campaigns always have access to spending analytics.

For PERSONNEL HIRING AND TRAINING, you will likely cultivate local volunteers and interns for your campaign.

DOCUMENT SIGNING SERVICES like Docusign can make it a lot easier for bulk signing of documents within a team, and shortcut gathering, for example, NDAs among your campaign staff and volunteers.