**1. What goal will your website be designed to achieve?**

The application will provide a basic UI for users to find, research and track candidates for political office in their area in the US. For a given election, users will be able to sort through basic data points about the election and that election's candidates, specifically related to campaign finance contributions.

**2. What kind of users will visit your site? In other words, what is the demographic of**

**your users?**

The demographic is civically engaged individuals who want a convenient way to find and track public data about local elections that isn’t otherwise available in an easily digestible format.

**3. What data do you plan on using? You may have not picked your actual API yet,**

**which is fine, just outline what kind of data you would like it to contain.**

The API I’d like to mainly rely on is the [OpenFEC API](https://api.open.fec.gov/developers/#/committee), a RESTful (and free) API provided directly by the FEC. Their API provides a huge amount of data about campaign finance, the majority of which can be linked back to a specific candidate. The minimum amount of data I’d like to summarize in the application would be:

* Basic data about the election in question, such as the office, the district of the office, and the date of the election

Then, for any given election, for the given candidates, I would display:

* Current position the candidate is running for, and their status (incumbent, challenger, etc)
* Previous positions the candidate has run for, maybe in the last few years
* Any committees (groups that spend and raise money in an election) the candidate is connected with
* Some aggregated data about the largest contributors to any committees the candidate is connected with

To simplify aggregation of info in the FEC dataset, I may also use or otherwise reference [ProPublica’s Campaign Finance API](https://projects.propublica.org/api-docs/campaign-finance/), which also pulls from the FEC’s data.

Lastly, depending on how much of a challenge linking a user to nearby candidates/elections based on their address poses, I could potentially use the [Google Civic Information API](https://developers.google.com/civic-information/docs/v2) to find nearby elections, before sending that data over to one of the FEC APIs listed above.

**4. In brief, outline your approach to creating your project (knowing that you may not**

**know everything in advance and that these details might change later). Answer**

**questions like the ones below, but feel free to add more information:**

**a. What does your database schema look like?**

* user
* user\_candidates (join table to track what candidates a user is ‘following’)
* candidates
* candidate\_elections (join table to track what elections a candidate is or has previously participated in)
* elections
* user\_elections (join table to track what elections a user is ‘following’)

**b. What kinds of issues might you run into with your API?**

The main issue I anticipate is determining what endpoints to use when, to find the clearest representation of the data I want, and being able to programmatically parse the data wit

**c. Is there any sensitive information you need to secure?**

Users should be able to create an account to track elections or candidates they’re following. I’ll use [Flask-Login](https://flask-login.readthedocs.io/en/latest/) to assist with authorization and authentication.

**d. What functionality will your app include?**

The most basic functionality I want to allow for is searching for elections based on location (I’ll start with just zip code in the US, then I can try implementing a search based on specific address), being able to see all notable candidates for a given election, seeing some basic and historical data about a selected candidate, and being able to ‘follow’ elections.

In order to follow specific elections, a user will be required to register for an account, so the app will require basic authentication and authorization.

Below under section f, I have listed out some additional potential functionality I’m bucketing under ‘stretch goals’.

**e. What will the user flow look like?**

The typical flow would be

1. User searches for elections or candidates based on a location they enter
2. User is presented results and can sort through them and add some basic filtere
3. If user wants to follow a specific election, they are prompted to register for an account
4. If user chooses to register for an account, after signing up successfully they will be redirected a new user profile page showing the election they chose to follow

**f. What features make your site more than CRUD? Do you have any stretch**

**goals?**

My primary stretch goal would be implementing a cron-like system to track key events related to a particular election. On a very basic level, this might look like sending out an email to a user a few days before an election they’re following is scheduled.

If that proves to be too difficult, other mini-features I can think of are

* Permitting users to make more advanced searches; rather than just looking up elections based on a general geographic area, they could enter their address, or just do a ‘global’ search based on a candidate name.
* Saving user search history to the database, and creating logic to show recommendations of other elections or candidates they may be interested in
* Letting users download data displayed on the application to a CSV file on their local device.