In 2012, New Hampshire elected the nation’s first-ever all-female delegation to the United States Congress, and also sent a female governor to the State House. This proud moment in New Hampshire’s history belies a different trend at the local level: although women make up 51 percent of New Hampshire’s population, they are underrepresented in municipal government.

As of November 2012, women held only 198 of New Hampshire’s 734 local elected offices (including mayors, as well as members of selectboards, city and town councils, and boards of aldermen). That’s just 21 percent.

The ratio is even lower for mayoral office. New Hampshire has 13 cities, and just two – Lebanon and Nashua – have female mayors.

Of New Hampshire’s 131 city councilors and aldermen, 37 are women. That’s 28 percent, slightly higher than the statewide rate for all local elected officials.
Women are more likely than men to perceive the electoral environment as biased against female candidates.

Women are less likely than men to think they are qualified to run for office.

Female potential candidates are less confident and more risk-averse than their male counterparts.

Women react more negatively than men to many aspects of modern campaigns.

Women are less likely than men to be urged to run for office.

Women are responsible for the majority of childcare and household tasks.

American University Women and Politics Institute (2012)