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Respondent

6 Anonymous

36:39

Time to complete

1. Your name *

Alex Cooley

2. Position you are running for *

City Council

3. Your zip code *

98122

4. Do you have direct experience with disability? *

 Yes No

5. If yes, please explain

For six years I've worked as a respite care provider for children with autism at a childcare facility.

6. How do you define inclusion? *

Making sure everybody has the same opportunities to participate in every aspect of life to the best of their abilities and desires.

7. **FAMILIES:** How would you expand access to child care for children with disabilities?

Context: Quality, reliable child care is good for kids and families. But parents of children with disabilities are three times more likely to experience job disruptions because of problems with child care.

Expansion of the existing Seattle K-12 program specifically for children with disabilities. Also, investing more into our community centers, specifically programs for children with disabilities.

8. **HOUSING** - How would you help individuals and families with disabilities find and stay housed?

CONTEXT: Most people in King County's annual homeless count are disabled, but neither Seattle nor King County have specific strategies to address their unique housing challenges.

- People with disabilities face high under- and unemployment, leaving them chronically housing unstable
- Parents who reduce hours to care for disabled loved ones face a lifetime of reduced income
- Many people with significant developmental disabilities live on Supplemental Security Income (SSI) of just \$914 a month – making them too poor to afford even extremely low-income housing.
- Federal housing vouchers help, but the waiting list can be years long and people still struggle to find appropriate and accessible housing

I see this as an issue for numerous families in the city, the solution is zoning and code reform, as well as making I-35 a success.

9. **SHELTER:** How would you ensure people with developmental disabilities have a safe place to sleep and stay?

CONTEXT: Homelessness services are often not accessible to people with disabilities.

- They can be too loud and chaotic for Autistic people; they may lack outlets for power chairs, or refrigeration for medication.
- Caregivers can be refused, especially if they are of a different gender; and trans and queer youth report discrimination.
- At the same time, people who live on the street can lose their belongings in sweeps and must contend with "hostile architecture" - that is, benches and alcoves designed to discourage sitting or sleeping.

This is the fundamental component of our values and policy regarding unhoused persons. Regardless of status, everyone should be supported in a way that is specific to them.

10. **SUPPORTIVE HOUSING:** How would you ensure people significantly impacted by their developmental disabilities are receiving case management and the support needed to escape homelessness?

CONTEXT: People with developmental disabilities often lack access supportive housing options, which show the best results in reducing chronic homelessness.

- Supportive housing for adults is available to clients of the state's Aging and Long-Term Services Administration, but NOT the state Developmental Disabilities Administration.
- Adult family homes may be available, but most cater to aging residents. They also don't accommodate families.
- While there are community residential services through DDA that help individuals live independently, slots are capped and statewide only about 4,500 people are served.

Treating people as individuals and connecting them with specific services that will help them escape homelessness.

11. **JUSTICE:** Would you support cross-training among professionals in the courtroom, police departments, victim assistance agencies and schools to prepare the justice community for situations involving people with intellectual and other developmental disabilities so they can receive equal justice?

CONTEXT: People with disabilities face fear, prejudice, and a lack of understanding when they become entangled in the criminal justice system.

- Research estimates 30 to 50 percent of people killed by law enforcement in the U.S. are disabled, and people with developmental disabilities are over-represented in juvenile facilities, jails and prisons.
- Nationally, youth of various disabilities make up 65 percent to 70 percent of people involved in the juvenile justice system.
- At the same time, people intellectual disabilities have a 4 to 10 times higher risk of becoming victims.

Yes

No

12. **JOBS:** What would you do to increase job prospects for people with developmental disabilities?

CONTEXT: Developmental disability isn't tracked in employment rates, but most people with developmental disabilities would qualify as having a cognitive, ambulatory, or independent living disability.

- Washington's employment rate for people with a cognitive disability is 31 percent;
- For an ambulatory disability it is 30 percent
- For an independent living disability it is just 21 percent.
- The employment rate for non-disabled people in Washington is 80 percent.

Investing in apprenticeship and training programs with our local unions and businesses.

13. **MOBILITY:** How will you ensure our streets, sidewalks and intersections are safe and accessible to everyone?

CONTEXT: People who use wheelchairs or ambulatory devices struggle to move around safely.

- Sidewalk construction and maintenance and funding for curb ramps and accessible pedestrian signals is limited.
- Bike shares take up sidewalk space
- Autos often block intersections.

Building a comprehensive program that looks at all mobility modalities together while putting pedestrians with disabilities first.

14. Do you have other ideas on ways to make our community more accessible and inclusive for people with disabilities?

Making sure that all community investments for persons with disabilities are housed and implemented directly with our community