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Respondent

5 Anonymous

24:48

Time to complete

1. Your name *

Andrew Lewis

2. Position you are running for *

Seattle City Council District 7

3. Your zip code *

98119

4. Do you have direct experience with disability? *

 Yes No

5. If yes, please explain

6. How do you define inclusion? *

In the context of my job, scrutinizing government policies to make sure there is equitable access to services and programming and barriers are broken down that prevent groups from accessing those programs and services who might otherwise be marginalized.

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.

When we renew the Families and Education Levy we need to build in incentives backed by real money to make sure publicly subsidized childcare is truly inclusive for all children in Seattle. We can also make City contributions for childcare contingent on providers bidding to prove an inclusive program and policy for all children to access their services.

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

CONTEXT: Most people 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

We need more permanent support housing (PSH) in King County. Housing co-sited with voluntary onsite services. Obviously, not everybody experiencing homelessness with a disability needs supportive services after moving inside, but many do. That is why I passed legislation cutting the cost of building new PSH by 15% and supported unprecedented investments to scaled PSH by 2,023 units over the past four years, a colossal increase. But we know demand is MUCH higher and we need to do MUCH more. I am very excited to see the impact of our continued investment.

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.

Our goal has to continue to be the above referenced work to scale and expand PSH. But, we do have some shelter options that have emerged as best practices for inclusion and access. Tiny house villages are great temporary shelter options to provide equitable access. All of our tiny house villages have received improvements to become mobility compliant, and the neighborhood-like layout of the villages allows for greater accommodation of household type. For example, tiny house villages have families with children, single adults, couples, and policies allowing people to bring pets. There is no substitute for permanent brick and mortar housing. But, tiny houses are the best interim solution for the flexibility that maximizes the needs and autonomy of everyone in our community while we build toward something better.

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.

Under JumpStart, Seattle's tax on big employers, we have invested hundreds of millions in building and stabilizing the workforce to provide onsite care and services in permanent supportive housing. At the peak of the pandemic, Downtown Emergency Service Center (DESC) posted well over 250 vacancies at a time when we needed those services most. Those vacancies weren't due to any deficiency in the dedication or commitment to change of our provider community, but due to the scant funding traditionally available for this work. JumpStart is changing that. Our service workers need to be treated and compensated the same as police and firefighters. Like other critical front-line public health and safety workers they are a critical part of our service response structure. We need to continue to elevate and compensate this work.

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.

First, partnership with organizations like UpLift Northwest and the Urban League can help connect people from a variety of backgrounds with a diverse array of job opportunities. Hundreds of people with disabilities have been able to access work through the case management of these organizations. Second, we need to find ways to plug-in collaborative employers with agencies advocating for job access for people with disabilities. A small business owner in my district recently hired a person with an ambulatory disability as a cashier through the normal hiring channel. A lot of small business owners I know would be more than willing to offer employment opportunities to people with disabilities, but don't know what agencies to partner with to advertise the opportunity to applicants. Perhaps Seattle's Office of Economic Development can collaborate on creating some kind of portal to facilitate letting community know about those opportunities.

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.

I am a strong support of block the box laws to make sure traffic cannot obstruct intersections and crosswalks, and that people who do are held accountable. I am also a strong supporter of expanding right-of-way that is exclusively for bikes and pedestrians, like greenways. I proudly created the first ever dedicated funding for Vision Zero improvements to create dedicated protected infrastructure for people walking and rolling through our community.

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

I will always make myself accessible to work in partnership with community to advance access to services, equitable treatment, and public infrastructure that is responsive and respectful to all in our community. Please consider me a resource, even if we won't always agree. I am here to listen and work in partnership to build a more equitable society for all of my neighbors with a disability.