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Respondent

9 Anonymous

02:58

Time to complete

1. Your name *

Ry Armstrong

2. Position you are running for *

Seattle City Council, District 3

3. Your zip code *

98122

4. Do you have direct experience with disability? *

 Yes No

5. If yes, please explain

6. How do you define inclusion? *

Inclusion goes beyond mere tolerance or acceptance. It requires actively embracing and celebrating diversity in all its forms, including race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, disability, and more. It means recognizing and appreciating the unique perspectives, experiences, and contributions that each individual brings to the table. At its core, inclusion is about creating environments, policies, and systems that promote equity, fairness, and justice. It involves breaking down barriers and addressing systemic inequalities that prevent certain groups from fully participating and accessing opportunities. It also means actively dismantling biases, prejudices, and discrimination that marginalize individuals and perpetuate social exclusion.

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.

Child care expenses can be a significant burden for families, particularly those with children with disabilities who may require specialized care. We will advocate for increased financial support, such as subsidies or grants, to make child care more affordable and accessible for families with children with disabilities. Additionally, it is crucial to invest in training programs that equip child care providers with the knowledge and skills to support children with disabilities effectively. We will work to establish partnerships with educational institutions and organizations that specialize in disability education to develop training programs tailored to the unique needs of child care professionals. This training will focus on inclusive teaching strategies, behavior management techniques, and disability awareness.

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 would advocate for the expansion of affordable housing options specifically designed to meet the needs of individuals and families with disabilities. This includes supporting the development of accessible housing units, both in new construction and through retrofitting existing housing stock. We would also work to increase funding and resources for affordable housing programs targeted towards individuals with disabilities. Also, we recognize that housing stability for individuals with disabilities often requires additional support services. We would work to expand access to support services such as case management, counseling, and healthcare that can help individuals and families with disabilities maintain their housing stability. Collaborating with community organizations and healthcare providers can ensure a comprehensive approach to addressing the specific needs of this population.

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.

A pivotal step would be establishing Seattle as a "right-to-shelter" city, ensuring that houseless individuals, including those with developmental disabilities, receive support and access to resources tailored to their specific circumstances. Then, foster collaboration with service providers and disability organizations to ensure that people with developmental disabilities have access to appropriate housing options. By working together, we can coordinate efforts to identify available housing, provide necessary supports, and facilitate the transition into suitable living arrangements. This collaboration can also help establish referral networks and information sharing to enhance access to safe housing options. And, we would help foster community support networks that provide social connections, advocacy, and assistance for individuals with developmental disabilities. By promoting community inclusion and fostering relationships with neighbors, local organizations, and community leaders, we can create a supportive network that helps ensure the safety and well-being of individuals with developmental disabilities.

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.

We'd like to establish a coordinated and integrated case management system specifically designed to address the needs of individuals with developmental disabilities who are experiencing homelessness. This system would involve collaboration among various stakeholders, including case managers, social workers, healthcare providers, and disability service organizations. By aligning efforts and sharing information, we can ensure a holistic and person-centered approach to case management.

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.

Establish partnerships with employers to facilitate job placement opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities. Work closely with local businesses to create inclusive hiring practices and provide resources to help them understand the benefits of hiring individuals with developmental disabilities. Implement supported employment programs that offer ongoing support, job coaching, and accommodations to ensure the success and retention of employees with developmental disabilities. Additionally, we would advocate for workplace accessibility and reasonable accommodations for individuals with developmental disabilities. This includes ensuring physical accessibility, providing assistive technologies or modifications, and fostering inclusive work environments. Educate employers about disability rights and the benefits of creating inclusive workplaces to encourage the hiring and retention of individuals with developmental disabilities.

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.

The first thing that needs to be done is ensure regular maintenance of sidewalks and streets to address any hazards or obstacles that may pose a risk to pedestrians, particularly individuals with disabilities. This includes promptly repairing damaged sidewalks, removing snow and ice during winter months, and addressing any other issues that impede accessibility or pose safety concerns. Then, we would need to advocate for the implementation and maintenance of infrastructure that prioritizes accessibility. This includes ensuring that sidewalks, curb cuts, and pedestrian crossings are properly designed and maintained to accommodate individuals with disabilities, such as those using wheelchairs, walkers, or mobility aids. We would work closely with city departments and transportation agencies to conduct regular assessments and address any barriers or deficiencies in accessibility.

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