



Advocate's Guide to Attending Candidate Forums

Participating in candidate forums is one way to elevate affordable homes and an end to homelessness as key issues during an election season. You can put your questions to the candidates, find out more about how they plan to tackle these urgent issues, and be an informed voter.

Before the candidate forum

- ✓ Find a candidate forum near you. The Housing Alliance has a calendar of statewide candidate forums at housingactionfund.org/civic-engagement-calendar.
- ✓ Print this PDF, or save it to your phone, for sample questions and quick facts on affordable housing and homelessness issues.
- ✓ Bring a pen and paper so you can write down how candidates respond to your questions.
- ✓ Invite a friend or fellow advocate to join you.

Questions for candidates

You won't be able to ask all these questions - typically you will need to choose one or two. (Tip: also try these questions in one-on-one meetings or if a candidate knocks on your door.)

<i>Housing Trust Fund</i>	
Policy Goal:	Invest \$200 Million in 2017/2019 biennium
Question for Candidates:	The state Housing Trust Fund invests in affordable homes for our neighbors in need including seniors, homeless youth, veterans, survivors of domestic violence and more. Will you support an investment of \$200 million out of the Capital Budget for the Housing Trust Fund during the next biennium?
<i>Prevent the loss of over 61% of state homelessness dollars</i>	
Policy Goal:	Eliminate the sunset of the document recording fees and increase the fees to bring in more funds to prevent and end homelessness.
Question for Candidates:	Homeless is a serious problem in our community and across the state. We should be investing more in services that prevent and end homelessness, but over 61% of the state's source of homelessness funds are set to expire in June 2019. We must address this issue in 2017 to prevent programs from reducing services in anticipation of the cuts. Will you vote yes on a bill to eliminate the sunsets and to increase the fees?
<i>Outlaw discrimination based on a renter's source of income</i>	
Policy Goal:	Pass legislation that makes it illegal to deny housing solely because a person is relying on housing assistance vouchers or income supports to help pay the rent.
Question for Candidates:	Everyone should be given an equal opportunity to compete for housing, yet state law allows landlords to deny applications of people solely because they rely on housing assistance vouchers or income supports to help pay the rent. If someone can make the monthly rental payments, they shouldn't be turned away just because they are relying on legal safety nets to keep a roof over their head. This discrimination especially impacts seniors, people with disabilities, single parent headed households, veterans and people of color who disproportionately rely on these safety nets. Will you vote yes on a bill to outlaw this discrimination?

<i>Ensure Washington state can fully leverage federal authorization to use Medicaid dollars to pay for Permanent Supportive Housing services</i>	
Policy Goal:	The Operating Budget should contain language that gives the Health Care Authority the ability to accept federal funds associated with the 1115 Global Medicaid Waiver without caps or limitations on the amount of funds, and without limitations on the activities necessary to carry forward the terms and conditions of the 1115 waiver.
Question for Candidates:	Washington state has the opportunity to end chronic homelessness by expanding Permanent Supportive Housing by using Medicaid dollars to pay for the medically necessary services that are delivered in that model of affordable housing. These services link disabled and vulnerable adults to care and daily supports that result in significant health improvements and significant cost savings overall. Will you support a state budget that fully authorizes the Health Care Authority to accept federal funds to carry out these activities?
<i>Preserve the Disability Lifeline Safety-Net: Housing & Essential Needs and Aged, Blind and Disabled cash assistance</i>	
Policy Goal:	Fully preserve funding at current levels for disability lifeline safety-net programs including Housing and Essential Needs and the Aged, Blind and Disabled cash assistance, Medical Care Services and SSI Facilitation Services.
Question for Candidates:	Disabled and extremely low-income people and young adults who have aged out of foster care shouldn't become homeless when their disability prevents them from working. They should be offered a safety net that provides rental support while they are recovering, such as Housing and Essential Needs (HEN), or cash assistance while they are applying for SSI benefits, such as Aged, Blind and Disabled (ABD). Will you work to ensure that the state budget fully protects these programs and vote no on a budget that does not?
<i>Increase state revenue and fix Washington's broken tax system</i>	
Policy Goal:	Pass legislation to increase revenue without furthering Washington's regressive tax structure that makes the lowest income households pay a higher percentage of their income than higher income earners.
Question for Candidates:	Washington has a regressive tax structure that overly relies on low income households, while not bringing in enough dollars to meet the needs of the state. We need a fair and robust tax system. Will you vote yes on legislation that increases revenue either through new taxes or fees, or by closing corporate tax loopholes?

After the forum

- ✓ Fill out this short survey to let us know how candidates responded to your questions: [surveymonkey.com/r/candidateforumreportback](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/candidateforumreportback)
- ✓ If candidates have questions on a particular issue, feel free to share one of the attached fact sheets or direct them to the Housing Alliance for more information: 206-442-9455.