



Washington Housing Alliance
ACTION FUND

CANDIDATE NAME:

Legislative District/Position

2016 Candidate Questionnaire

The Washington Housing Alliance Action Fund supports candidates who champion public policy that prevents and ends homelessness and moves us toward a time when everyone in Washington has the opportunity to live in a safe, healthy, affordable home.

We will use responses to this questionnaire to determine endorsements, and potential contributions and volunteer turnout. Answers may be shared with members and other affiliated parties and may also be used to educate voters.

To request an endorsement, please complete and return this questionnaire by June 13. We may not be able to consider responses returned after that date. We will consider early endorsements when requested.

Please submit your response in Word or PDF format to Kristina Nielander at kristinan@housingactionfund.org.

Please take a moment to tell us a little more about your campaign:

Campaign Contact Information

Committee Name:

Campaign Phone:

Campaign Website:

Estimated Campaign Budget

Primary:

General:

Raised to Date:

Voter Contact

What efforts will you make to reach out to communities of color, renters, and low-income constituents?

Key Endorsements to date:

If we endorse your candidacy, we would like to provide a summary statement to our members in your district. Please provide a statement by answering the question below.

If elected, what will you do ensure that everyone in Washington has the opportunity to live in a safe, healthy, affordable home? *(Please limit your response to 150 words or less.)*

Expanding resources for affordable homes

1. The state invests in affordable housing through the Housing Trust Fund (HTF). The state's investment is highly leveraged by federal, local, and philanthropic sources. The majority of people living in homes supported by the Housing Trust Fund are extremely low-income (earning less than about \$20,000 per year for a family of three) and the HTF is a key part of the solution to homelessness. The HTF also helps low-income households build assets for the future by providing funds for first-time homebuyers. The HTF creates homes for veterans, people with disabilities, seniors, homeless youth, farmworkers, families, and more.

If elected, what will you do to ensure a significant allocation for the Housing Trust Fund in the capital budget?

2. Historically, Housing Trust Fund dollars have been awarded through a competitive process administered by the Department of Commerce. This process has effectively ensured geographic distribution and distribution among type of housing (e.g.; homeownership and rental) and priority populations (e.g.; farmworkers, seniors, homeless youth, etc.) The process has also ensured that projects receiving awards have local support and other fund sources lined up so they are likely to succeed.

Would you advocate for funding for the HTF that would be allocated competitively and not subject to pre-determined project lists?

Yes

No

Comments/How would you take leadership on this?

3. What other strategies for expanding funding for affordable homes would you take leadership on?

Document Recording Fees: Funds for Services that Prevent and End Homelessness

4. Document recording fees are the largest source of funding for services that prevent and end homelessness in every county in Washington State. The passage of ESSB5875 in 2014 delayed a significant portion of this funding from sunseting, but only until 2019.

Will you vote in favor of removing the sunset stipulation on these fees?

Yes

No

Comments/How would you take leadership on this?

5. ESSB5875 also included a requirement that 45% of the state's share of these funds be set aside for private rental payments, explicitly excluding nonprofits. While strategies to end homelessness include utilizing the private market, this policy limits local control and flexibility for communities to create innovative and responsive programs tailored to address local needs and realities. For example, many people exiting homelessness are unable to find housing on the private market even with rental assistance and it could make more sense for these funds to address those barriers in other ways. The requirement also creates a significant administrative burden on counties, nonprofits, and the state and requires staff time and resources for reporting.

Will you vote to remove the requirement that homelessness program funding be set aside solely for payments to private entities and corporations?

Yes

No

Comments/How would you take leadership on this?

Tenant Protections

6. Discrimination against tenants who use a subsidy (e.g.; state or federally funded rental vouchers) or unearned income (e.g.; SSI benefits) to pay their rent is often a proxy for illegal discrimination against low-income families, seniors, people with disabilities, and people of color. This is commonly referred to as "Source of Income Discrimination" (SOID). Additionally, it makes it very hard for low-income people to find housing, causing some to lose their long-awaited housing assistance if they are unable to secure a rental within federal time limits. Several jurisdictions in Washington and a number of other states prohibit discrimination based on source of income.

Will you vote in favor of legislation that prohibits Source of Income Discrimination?

Yes

No

Comments/How would you take leadership on this?

7. The Residential Landlord Tenant Act is a “self help” act, not enforced by any state agency. Lacking the intervention of a state agency, there is no oversight to ensure that landlords are following the law and there is no agency to assist tenants when they need to enforce their rights. By leaving the whole act as “self help”, tenants are left to educate themselves and then enforce their rights on their own.

Would you support legislation that puts the Residential Landlord Tenant Act under the jurisdiction of a state agency?

Yes

No

Comments/How would you take leadership on this?

Federal Section 1115 Medicaid Waiver

8. The Washington State Health Care Authority is negotiating a Section 1115 Medicaid Waiver with the federal government. The waiver will draw down billions in federal investments to improve the health and health care delivery systems for people living on low incomes. A new supportive housing services Medicaid benefit will be created through this process and will help people at risk of chronic homelessness access and retain housing and health care.

Will you support the implementation of the Section 1115 Medicaid Waiver, including the new supportive housing services Medicaid benefit? If so, will you work to remove arbitrary spending caps on federal funds to implement the waiver in the state's budget?

Yes

No

Comments/How would you take leadership on this?

Revenue

9. Since the beginning of recession, more than \$10 billion has been cut from the state's General Fund significantly impacting safety-net programs. In order to restore cuts and prevent future cuts to important programs - including the Housing and Essential Needs, the Aged, Blind, and Disabled program, and TANF - Washington needs a more sustainable revenue system.

Will you vote in favor of legislation that seeks to create new revenue either through new taxes and fees, or by the closing of certain corporate tax exemptions? If so, which revenue options would you support?

Yes

No

Comments/How would you take leadership on this?