



1595 NW Gilman Blvd, Issaquah, WA 98027

509.666.1457

kfukai@washingtontechnology.org



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Seattle City Councilmember Candidate Questionnaire

Thank you for taking the time to complete the candidate endorsement questionnaire for the Washington Technology Industry Association (WTIA). Your responses will help us inform and engage the 200,000+ tech sector employees who live and work in the City of Seattle. This, in turn, will help you engage them more effectively as an electorate.

We will also offer virtual candidate interviews with members of the WTIA Policy Steering Committee for a discussion to gain a more thorough understanding of your answers. Following the interview process, we will make our endorsement decisions.

Please send your responses to Kelly Fukai at kfukai@washingtontechnology.org by Monday, August 28th.

Please note that this questionnaire and your responses will be published on the WTIA website and used in a digital voter guide provided to Seattle-based tech employees.

Candidate Questionnaire

1. What are your top three priorities for the City of Seattle, and what will you do to accomplish them?

Priority 1: Public Safety

Everyone has a right to feel safe in this city, free of threat of crime or unequal justice. I have had the knees of injustice on my neck, which is why I understand firsthand the importance of rooting out systemic injustices that lead to Black folks being overrepresented in the criminal legal justice system. Seattle is experiencing a troubling rise in crime and gun violence. I support policies that will be an effective solution to the crisis of gun violence. This includes taking a public health approach to these issues as well. We must enact BOTH effective prevention strategies to ensure a better tomorrow AND appropriate response capabilities to meet the realities of today.



I will fight hard to make sure our city is safe, equitable, accessible, and welcoming for all to enjoy. Here's how I will accomplish this:

- Ensure timely responses from police and first responders.
- Invest in non-armed responses, such as behavioral health and social work responses when appropriate.
- Hire, train, promote, and retain the right number of good, community-centered police officers.
- Strengthen community engagement and trust.
- Mandate background checks on all gun sales.
- Protect individuals from the threat of gun violence with voluntary waivers and extreme risk protection orders.
- Require safe storage of firearms in the home.
- Coordinate with other localities and other levels of government to trace and track firearm data.
- Empower police and first responders to effectively carry out their public safety mandate and hold them accountable if they fail to do so in a just, equitable, unbiased, and constitutional manner.

Priority 2: Housing

As the son of a Nigerian immigrant father who was a frontline warehouse worker, I experienced living in public and low-income housing growing up. Everyone deserves safe, quality affordable housing in a thriving community. A severe lack of housing for people at all income levels means that those at the bottom are suffering the most, and being pushed out of the city.

We need a city that is liveable and affordable to those who work here. Here is what we need to do:

- Build more affordable housing at all income levels, particularly low-income housing and workforce housing for middle income residents.
- Reform our zoning laws to add density where growth makes sense.
- Remove red tape to accelerate and improve the permitting process.
- Implement anti-displacement strategies to keep people in their communities.



Priority 3: Take Action to End Homelessness

As a former foster kid, I know what it's like to be completely uprooted and swept away. We must do better for our unhoused neighbors. Sadly, the homelessness crisis in our city has turned into a total humanitarian catastrophe. It is our moral imperative to take urgent action now. Addressing homelessness requires navigating a complex web of intertwined issues. However, it's evident that the primary contributors to the escalating homeless population are housing instability, limited access to crucial services, and shortcomings in the response system's efficacy. As a City Council member, my unwavering commitment rests on enhancing housing stability, fostering accessible service provision, and ensuring systemic outcomes that actively prevent and reduce homelessness.

We need to:

- Organize a coordinated interagency response focused on city cleanup and encampment removal that connects people with shelter and services.
- Explore options for designated lots.
- Increased mental health treatment facilities and services.
- Partner closely with local, state, and federal governments to solve this complex issue.

0. What do you see as the role for the tech sector in Seattle's future? How would you partner with the tech sector to foster a robust and resilient community?

The tech sector plays an indispensable role in shaping Seattle's destiny. I envision the tech sector not merely as an economic powerhouse, but as a catalyst for positive change that ripples through every corner of our community. The key lies in forging a partnership between the tech sector and the city, a partnership anchored in shared values, innovation, and a commitment to resilience.

To foster a robust and resilient community, collaboration is paramount. My approach centers on building bridges between the tech sector and local communities, channeling their collective energy into initiatives that uplift every resident. We must create avenues for tech companies to engage with the community, whether through mentorship programs, volunteering opportunities, or collaborative projects that address pressing issues.



Equity is the cornerstone of this partnership. I will work tirelessly to ensure that the benefits of Seattle's tech boom are accessible to all, regardless of background or circumstance. This involves advocating for workforce development programs that provide pathways into the tech industry for underrepresented individuals. By working hand in hand, we can cultivate a diverse workforce that fuels innovation and reflects the city's vibrant fabric.

Resilience is a watchword in a world of uncertainty. I will partner with the tech sector to build systems that can weather challenges, from economic shifts to environmental upheavals. This involves investing in sustainable practices, harnessing technology to enhance disaster response and recovery, and developing tools that empower communities to thrive in the face of adversity.

Education is the foundation upon which we build the future. I will collaborate with tech companies to establish educational initiatives that not only equip our youth with technical skills but also foster a culture of critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving. This is about more than just preparing a future workforce; it's about nurturing the architects of tomorrow's innovations.

The tech sector's impact isn't confined to economic growth; it resonates through the arts, the environment, and every facet of city life. As a City Council member, my commitment is to cultivate an environment where this sector flourishes while being a force for good. By harnessing the tech sector's capabilities, we can address local challenges, amplify community voices, and build a city that thrives in the face of change.

Ultimately, the role of the tech sector in Seattle's future is one of partnership, purpose, and progress. Together, we will forge a path that honors our past, seizes our present opportunities, and paves the way for a brighter, more equitable tomorrow.

0. Given the importance of the tech sector's contributions to the Seattle economy, what would you do to increase Seattle's competitiveness vis-a-vis emerging tech hubs like Denver, Miami, and Austin? What initiatives would you put forward to support tech employers, entrepreneurs, and employees?

The pulse of Seattle beats in harmony with the innovation that emanates from its tech sector, a dynamic force that fuels not only economic growth but also the city's vibrant spirit. Yet, as the landscape of emerging tech hubs like Denver, Miami, and Austin shines brightly



on the horizon, we must be resolute in our commitment to ensure Seattle remains a beacon of technological prowess and opportunity.

My vision for boosting Seattle's competitiveness is rooted in a multifaceted approach that combines innovation, support, and collaboration. To start, we must foster an environment that attracts and retains tech talent. This involves investing in world-class educational institutions and creating partnerships with tech companies to develop specialized training programs that prepare our workforce for the ever-evolving demands of the industry.

Entrepreneurs are the lifeblood of innovation. I will champion initiatives that ease the barriers to entry for startups, from streamlining regulatory processes to offering accessible funding options. By creating an ecosystem that nurtures creativity and risk-taking, we can ensure that Seattle remains a hub of innovation that births the next big ideas.

Tech employees form the bedrock of the industry. I will advocate for initiatives that support their well-being, from affordable housing options to improved transportation infrastructure. Additionally, mental health services and work-life balance programs will be a cornerstone of my agenda, acknowledging that a healthy workforce is a productive and innovative one.

Collaboration is key. I will work to establish partnerships between tech companies and local communities to foster a sense of shared responsibility. This includes mentorship programs, community engagement initiatives, and collaborations on projects that address local challenges.

Equity is a lens through which every initiative must be viewed. I will advocate for diversity and inclusion programs that ensure everyone has a seat at the tech table. By nurturing a workforce that reflects the diversity of our city, we foster an atmosphere of innovation that draws strength from different perspectives.

In the realm of tech, adaptability is key. We must embrace emerging technologies ourselves, integrating them into city services and processes. This not only improves efficiency but also showcases our willingness to evolve.

In essence, my approach is about fostering an environment where innovation is nurtured, talent is cherished, and collaboration is the guiding principle. Seattle's allure lies not only in its tech prowess but in the vibrant tapestry of its communities. As a City Council member, my pledge is to ensure that this city thrives as a tech hub that leaves no one behind and upholds the values that make us Seattleites.



0. How would you work toward ensuring the successful advancement of policies and programs that create equitable outcomes for underrepresented communities and BIPOC individuals in the tech industry?

In the vibrant tapestry of Seattle's tech landscape, the promise of innovation is both undeniable and transformative. In the tech industry, the need to ensure equitable outcomes for underrepresented communities and BIPOC individuals in the tech industry is not just a moral imperative, it's also essential to developing a vibrant tech industry.

To drive forward the advancement of policies and programs that create equitable outcomes for underrepresented communities, my approach is one of steadfast commitment, collaboration, and systemic transformation. As a former foster child who has fought his way through adversity, I know that opportunity is a scarce resource for many. And so, I envision a tech ecosystem where barriers are dismantled, where representation flourishes, and where innovation is an inclusive endeavor.

First and foremost, collaboration is key. By forging partnerships with community organizations, educational institutions, and tech companies, we can pool our strengths and create a network of support that uplifts BIPOC individuals. This involves establishing mentorship programs, internships, and scholarships specifically tailored to these communities. By providing a clear pathway into the tech industry, we can enable those who have been historically marginalized to seize their place on the cutting edge.

Further, my advocacy extends to advocating for transparency and accountability. I will push for regular diversity and inclusion reports from tech companies, shedding light on their progress and holding them to their commitments. Equitable outcomes require deliberate action, and these reports will act as mirrors reflecting the changes we need.

Education is the cornerstone of empowerment. By collaborating with schools and colleges, we can create pipelines that lead directly into the tech industry. Through workshops, coding bootcamps, and skill development programs, we can equip young minds with the tools they need to thrive. This is about more than just jobs; it's about a generational shift that empowers BIPOC communities to reshape the tech landscape.



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At the core of my approach lies systemic transformation. I will advocate for policies that promote fair hiring practices, unbiased promotion pathways, and inclusive work environments. The journey doesn't end with entry; it's about fostering career growth and leadership positions that reflect the diversity of our city.

Equitable outcomes in the tech industry are not just a goal; they're the bedrock of a Seattle that thrives together. This journey requires collective action, unwavering resolve, and the belief that when we elevate the voices of the marginalized, innovation reaches new heights.