



# Candidate Questionnaire

## November 2022 Midterm Election

**Food Lifeline’s goal is to elevate the issues of hunger with candidates during the election cycle.** Each candidate for state office received our questionnaire. For every candidate that replied, their original responses are presented as submitted. See all results at [foodlifeline.org/advocacy](http://foodlifeline.org/advocacy).

<b>Lindsey Keesling</b>	<b>Candidate for Washington State Senate District 15</b>
<p><b>In Washington, 1 in 6 children experience food insecurity. What steps or legislative actions would you take to address child hunger?</b></p>	<p>I think the first step would be expanding the already existing programs, especially addressing some of the pitfalls that keep them from being effective: restrictive guidelines, unclear communication, mail requiring a response arriving after the deadline for the response, wait times of four hours or more for phone lines, and the list goes on. There are broad systemic issues that prevent families from receiving the aid they need. Broad systemic assessment of the program and funding the necessary changes has to happen.</p>
<p><b>If elected, in what areas would you support making investments to overcome structural racism and racial inequities?</b></p>	<p>I previously mentioned the need for funding and requiring broad systemic change- I think addressing systemic racism falls under the same umbrella. When the system doesn’t function smoothly, it’s inevitable that communities with the least resources historically would feel the biggest difficulty in overcoming those challenges. The long wait times, unclear communication, deadlines passing without notice, etc, are all things that will cause increased burdens on BIPOC communities. There is also the fact that in many cases, social workers are given leeway in approving certain applications with or without some kinds of documentation. While I applaud approving personal statements of things like expenses without additional proof in many cases, where individuals are given judgment to make potentially discriminatory decisions, there does need to be a system of accountability to avoid discrimination. I do not personally know what system currently exists to identify potential discrimination and rectify it, so I certainly would want to ensure that anti-discrimination reviews are a matter of course.</p>
<p><b>Discussion of reforms to public safety and law enforcement are often polarizing but require law enforcement and community working together to focus on facts and agree on solutions. If elected, will you commit to working on these issues and what outcomes would you prioritize?</b></p>	<p>As a white woman, I feel that I could only make a statement about prioritizing certain outcomes in cooperation with the communities most affected. I strongly believe in bringing the primary stakeholders in these discussions to the table, and letting their needs and voice guide the outcome. What I do know is that any coalitions between communities and law enforcement need accountability measures and transparency measures in place to ensure that actions taken aren’t just symbolic, so any initiative that I support would have to come with stakeholders in a majority of the board or counsel, with clear accountability and transparency, and a fair opportunity for broad community buy in.</p>

Please note that Food Lifeline is a nonprofit, nonpartisan 501(c)(3) organization and is prohibited from participating or intervening in any political campaign on behalf of, or in opposition to, any candidate for public office.



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<p><b>What measures will you support that promote equity and fairness in Washington’s tax code and create more opportunity for community investment?</b></p>	<p>Personally, what I find the most frustrating about Washington’s tax code is the fact that the sales tax structure means people living in poverty will always pay an effective tax percentage higher than the wealthy. The only way to level the playing feels would be to incorporate a marginal tax rate on high dollar or luxury items, or to introduce an income tax on earnings above a certain line. I’m not an economist, so I’d certainly want to see a study on what options are available and to have a healthy debate on what is the most just; but the system we have currently is unjust and unfairly taxes those people who must spend every penny they make to survive.</p>
<p><b>If elected, what will you do to alleviate hunger and poverty, and create economic opportunity for Washington state residents?</b></p>	<p>I know one of the biggest issues facing my own district, is the egregious lack of transitional and low-income housing. This forces families to relocate an excessive amount, causing both food and employment insecurity, as well as being unduly disruptive to children’s education and social-emotional development. A multi-tiered plan to increase housing and supportive services, as well as a universal basic income for at-risk children, could help to bring back stability and community growth.</p>
<p><b>Yes/No Section</b></p>	
<p><b>Will you commit to support a 1% levy on wealth held in financial assets, such as stocks and bonds for individuals of worth over \$1 billion?</b></p>	<p>Yes.</p>
<p><b>Will you support expanding access to school meals at no student cost?</b></p>	<p>Yes.</p>
<p><b>If elected, will you insist proposed laws, bills, policies, and practices be evaluated for racial justice and equity?</b></p>	<p>Yes.</p>
<p><b>Will you commit to supporting the work of the Food Policy Forum and its recommendations?</b></p>	<p>Yes.</p>
<p><b>Will you commit to implementing the recommendations in the Use Food Well Washington plan?</b></p>	<p>Yes.</p>

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