



## AFT Washington 2022 Candidate Questionnaire

### About AFT Washington

AFT Washington represents approximately 6,500 education professionals working in community and technical colleges, regional universities, early learning, and K-12. Our members work with all ages of students, from young children in pre-K education settings to adults in higher education, as well as all facets of education. Our members are bus drivers, maintenance workers, faculty, paraeducators, food service workers, custodians, success coaches, grounds crew members, and more.

Together, with our members and national organization, we advocate and fight for:

- Safe, welcoming, and thriving neighborhood schools for every student, and high-quality, affordable post-high school opportunities to fulfill our paramount duty to help *all* students succeed, at every level;
- Economic and advancement opportunities for everyone;
- Affordable, high-quality healthcare for everyone;
- Democracy, pluralism, and voting rights by involving the voices of students, parents, and the community, side-by-side with educational employees and elected officials;
- Racial, social, financial, and civic equity, and fighting back against discrimination, hatred, and bigotry.

We hope you will take this opportunity to complete the questionnaire below and allow us to better understand your candidacy. Completing the questionnaire is required for consideration of endorsement or possible campaign contributions. If our Committee on Political Education (COPE) decides they would like further information, we may ask you to participate in an interview.

To be considered, return your completed questionnaire via email, by close of business, on March 25<sup>th</sup> to [aftwashington@aftwa.org](mailto:aftwashington@aftwa.org). If you have questions, please leave a message at 206-242-4777.

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### Candidate Biographical Information

**Name:** Emily Alvarado

**Candidate for which office:** State Representative 34th Legislative District

**Party affiliation:** Democrat

**Political background** (*offices held or currently hold, offices ran for, party positions, etc.*): None

**Community or organizational memberships** (*past and present*): Board Member, Washington Low Income Housing Alliance

Board Member, Housing Alliance Action Fund  
Board Member, Gates Public Service Law Program  
Member, Washington State Bar Association  
Member, Genesee Hill Parent Teacher Association

**Current occupation:** Vice President & Pacific Northwest Market Leader

**Current employer:** Enterprise Community Partners

**Are you currently a member of a labor organization?** No

**If yes, which labor organization, and how long have you been a member?**

**If not currently a member of a labor organization, have you ever been?** No

**If yes, which labor organization, when, and for how long?**

### *General*

#### **1. Why are you running for this elective office?**

I believe we can build a future that works for all Washingtonians, not just a few. In a state and region with such incredible wealth, we should have shared prosperity by working people. I have spent my entire career fighting for social justice— I have the skills, values, policy chops and community relationships that contribute positively to the legislature.

Growing up in a community of teachers, activists, and artists, I am committed to public service while centering social and economic justice. Washington has tremendous economic assets, innovation and opportunity, but our economy does not work for everyone. Wealth inequality continues to grow, and more than 1 out of every 10 Washingtonians lives in poverty. Prices for child care, housing, and health insurance have risen faster than wages for years. Simultaneously, the COVID pandemic has undermined economic security and the existing social safety net. I think we can and must better leverage the success of Washington's growth to invest in working families, and build a stronger middle class.

#### **2. What qualities distinguish you from other candidates for this office?**

I have a track record of carrying out my values as a government leader. As the Director at the City of Seattle Office of Housing, I worked to implement the first Community Workforce Agreement on City-subsidized housing, fought for wage transparency under our tax incentive programs, built accountability to our Race and Social Justice Team, expanded our racial equity analyses, and advanced policies generated by BIPOC community leaders.

Housing policy is inextricably intertwined with other community priorities: climate, labor, transportation, racial justice. At the Office of Housing and as a board member of Washington Low Income Housing Alliance, I have worked to incorporate an intersectional lens into our policy approaches in order to build connected, safe, healthy, and housed communities.

### *Revenue and Education*

1. For decades Washington State has had the most regressive tax system in the country, contributing to underfunding of public education and many other investments in the public good. **The pandemic has highlighted the numerous gaps in education funding that persist, for example in the form of the digital divide, the need for wrap-around services, stagnant wages, etc. When new funding is allocated, it is often for specific populations of students or specific programs and in relatively small sums. How will you approach finding new sources of revenue to both invest in Washingtonians and create a more progressive revenue system?**

I believe tax reform is one tool to add fairness to our regressive tax system, provide funds to help families and small businesses, and jump start a recovery with investments in infrastructure and critical services. For too long, gains for worker wages remain dwarfed by corporate profit growth. Washington needs to increase investments in core pillars of our economy, but not through regressive taxes. I would support efforts to generate progressive revenue. I believe robust investments in infrastructure can help to create good, quality wage union jobs across Washington and also improve bridges, public transit, affordable housing, climate change mitigation, high-speed internet and more.

**Do you support...**

	Yes	No
<b>Capital Gains Tax?</b>	<b>x</b>	
<b>Wealth Tax?</b>	<b>x</b>	
<b>Estate Tax?</b>	<b>x</b>	
<b>Elimination of cap on Workforce Education Investment Account tax?</b>	<b>x</b>	

2. During the pandemic, many Washingtonians have lost their jobs and been evicted from their homes. The poverty rate has increased during the pandemic, particularly for BIPOC Americans. In the 2022 legislative session, a bill was introduced that would have given cash assistance to those below the poverty line with a stipend, also known as Universal Basic Income or Guaranteed Basic Income. **What is your position on this policy? Do you believe it can help address the racial wealth gap?**

I support universal basic income programs as an additional tool in our public policy toolbox, but I do not think universal basic income programs alone are sufficient to addressing poverty or housing and homelessness in our communities comprehensively.

I approach these issues as someone who has spent their career in public service fighting for social justice and to improve the lives of working people. I recognize that the gains labor unions are fighting so hard for at the bargaining table are often eaten up by skyrocketing housing costs in our community. For this reason, for over a decade, I have worked collaboratively to create affordable housing throughout our region, championing policies and investments that foster inclusive, healthy communities and reduce homelessness. I believe government has an obligation to meet the basic human needs of all people: ensuring affordable housing, quality public education and health care.

As Director at the City of Seattle, Office of Housing, I fought hard, including during the pandemic, to support the needs of working families by delivering rental assistance, making record level investments in affordable housing across the City, advancing cutting edge policies to address displacement and support climate resilience, building supportive housing for homeless neighbors, and expanding homeownership

and foreclosure prevention programs. At my time at the Office of Housing, I was honored to work collaboratively with the King County Building and Construction Trades and several of their affiliates on developing a CWA for affordable housing development they hold up as a model for our region to this day. I know how to get things done within a bureaucracy, while building alliances, responding to community and ensuring that policies are effective.

In all my work, I have led with a commitment to racial justice and working with impacted communities, recognizing that we can't achieve housing and economic justice, without racial justice. I believe serving in the legislature would be an opportunity for me to expand on the work I have done throughout my career in public service, and I would be honored to learn more from AFT about how I can be a good partner to your union and your members in Olympia.

3. Public education, from K-12 through Post-High School has seen state disinvestment for several decades. **What will you do to increase the funding of community and technical colleges in order to invest in the workforce? Do you support pay equity for part-time faculty?**

While I would benefit from learning more from AFT about this issue and the best way to address it, I assume state divestment in our public education system is a result of a lack of sustainable and dedicated revenue. I believe we should close tax loopholes for wealthy corporations and enact real, progressive tax reform including a high-income earners tax. I am a proud mother of two boys in our amazing public school system and I firmly believe we owe it to our future generations to find additional pathways to support investment in public schools.

4. Pre-K 12 employees work with students dealing with a wide range of issues outside of school, e.g. trauma, behavioral challenges, developmental disabilities, health issues and more. This can pose safety issues, for example for paraeducators who are often hit, bitten, shoved or in other ways harmed because of student behavior. Many factors contribute to this phenomenon, which translates to a range of potential solutions. **How would you approach problem solving if a group of workers sought your support in addressing this issue?**

I have the utmost respect for the work of all Pre-K 12 employees and our paraeducators specifically. Given my background in community organizing, I think solutions come from the ground up and I would start by seeking input from your union and your members to better educate me about this issue. If elected, I would also engage legislative staff, community members and other experts invested in the success of our public school system to help identify policy and budget solutions to better support our paraeducators and hopefully reduce the incidents of violence in the workplace. Like most issues, I assume the solution lies in the need for more resources, not less.

5. In recent years public officials have attempted to solve budget problems through privatization of public services. This diversion of public funds has led to a poor quality of services, reduced accountability, and a loss of good jobs, while failing to realize the promise of saving money. **What is your position on privatization in the education arena? Please explain.**

I believe public education is foundational to democracy and a thriving community. As the mother of two public school children, and the child of two public school educators, I will be an unequivocal champion for full funding to K-12 education. I believe that we have to support the whole child, by ensuring that students have access to the support they need to succeed in school and life.

**Do you support...**

	Yes	No
<b>Public tax dollars funding private charter schools?</b>		<b>x</b>
<b>Privatization of school and college resources (i.e. counseling, childcare, student services)?</b>		<b>x</b>
<b>Public Capitol Funds for projects at private colleges and universities?</b>		<b>x</b>

*Collective Bargaining*

1. Many Washingtonians recognize the value of union representation and are organizing at their workplace, such as legislative aides in Olympia, workers at Starbucks, etc. **Do you support every worker’s right to collectively bargain for better working conditions, and their right to join a union? Please explain.**

I support every worker’s right to collectively bargain. I believe standing behind workers means proactively advancing policies that allow workers to organize and form a union, and oppose legislation that seeks to limit union and worker power. I also believe that elected officials must show up. This means joining marches, press conferences, on picket lines and other actions for workers' rights.

I also believe standing behind workers means fighting for racial justice. We cannot achieve economic justice without racial justice. I will fight for an economy that works for people of color by listening to, taking lead from and being accountable to other BIPOC people. That means supporting policies and practices that are specifically designed to address racial disparities as a way to improve the life of all people. I will support efforts to grow apprenticeships and job opportunities for people of color.

2. We see ongoing attempts to weaken unions and diminish working conditions here in Washington State and at the federal level. **What policies can support unions and workers’ rights and how will you work to enact such policies?**

I support efforts to invest government resources in jobs and industries that include labor standards like prevailing wage, apprenticeship utilization, preferred hire for women- and minority-owned businesses, and project labor agreements. As previously mentioned, I worked to implement the first Community Workforce Agreement on City-subsidized housing and fought for wage transparency under our tax incentive programs.

I would work hard to protect good jobs, and unions by unequivocally opposing any and all “Right to Work” legislation and instead supporting efforts to protect the right of workers to organize, expand bargaining rights, and support enforcement of current labor laws. In addition, I will stand with workers by joining marches, press conferences, on picket lines and other actions for workers' rights.

*Social Justice*

1. What do you see as **your role** as a state official in addressing racial, social, and economic inequities in our educational system? **Please specifically address each issue.**

As a state official, I believe it is imperative we ensure our public education systems are adequately funded so we can best support our students across all identities and economic backgrounds. With the challenges facing society today, and in order to best support our future workforce, it is important that public schools from K-12 through post-High School remain strong, have the ability to attract and retain quality, caring educators at all levels, and have resources to meet the needs of all students. There has already been great work done at the state level to close the broadband access gap but gaps prevail and if elected I would see to it that we continue expanding this access.

Additionally, more students are coming to school with severe issues caused by trauma and/or other mental health needs. Creating a safe learning environment is a critical part of helping all students achieve their full potential.

I will support legislative and organizing efforts to connect people of color to post-secondary school education options such as apprenticeship pathways, training, and other job opportunities. Students in our education system are unique and succeed in their own ways. One post-secondary option is boxing in students— often based on racial and economic discriminatory factors. We must expand the options for our students so they can truly thrive.

2. We are faced with numerous threats to social justice, including ongoing threats to our immigrant communities, the housing affordability and student debt crises, police accountability, and more.  
**Where have you shown leadership and acted on issues of social justice in the past? What will your social justice priorities be if you win your election?**

I have spent my entire career in public service fighting for social justice and to improve the lives of working people. For most of my career, I have worked collaboratively to create affordable housing throughout our region, championing policies and investments that foster inclusive, healthy communities and reduce homelessness. I believe that government has an obligation to meet the basic human needs of all people: ensuring affordable housing, quality public education, including access to early learning, and health care. If elected, I will advance policies that promote educational opportunity, good jobs, healthy families and workplaces. I believe tax reform is one tool to add fairness to our regressive tax system, provide funds to help families and small businesses, and jump start a recovery with investments in infrastructure and critical services. Washington needs to increase investments in core pillars of our economy, but not through regressive taxes. I would support efforts to generate progressive revenue.

3. Several bills were passed in the 2021 legislative session designed to reduce police violence and hold police accountable; in the 2022 session attempts were made to dilute the definition of excessive force and minimizing the role of de-escalation. **What is your position on these issues?**

2020 was a year of racial reckoning in our country. The bills that were designed in 2021 at the state level came out of a collective call to action— we need meaningful accountability for police violence. Watering down our legislative attempts to eradicate excessive force from the toolkit of police officers cannot continue in the 2023 legislative session. If elected, I will follow the lead of the Black caucus on how to make continued, meaningful progress.

4. Hate crimes have risen 25 percent nationally since 2015. But the number of hate crimes in Washington state increased by 97 percent. There were 542 hate-crime incidents reported statewide.  
**How do you plan on addressing the increase in hate crimes in Washington state?**

We must understand that community members can feel unsafe or wary of police interactions therefore we must create a safer environment for people to report hate crimes. I also support investment in mental health counselors for victims of hate crimes, conflict resolution, and other efforts that connect people in crisis with the resources they need.

Public safety is more than policing. We must work together on prevention to address the uptick in these horrific hate crimes. Culturally appropriate and community-led community safety is the way forward.

## Campaign Information

### **Are there any additional comments you would like to provide that you believe are necessary in understanding your candidacy?**

I believe that the U.S. needs a strong middle class to thrive. And I believe that when workers organize and come together in unions, they can make things better for themselves and the American people. I unequivocally support workers in their right to organize, to join a union, and improve working standards. I would be honored to have the endorsement of AFT and the opportunity to champion your issues in Olympia.

### **What is your overall campaign budget?**

I am working with NWP Consulting, a Seattle-based firm dedicated to supporting progressive candidates and causes, and hope to execute a comprehensive field program in my district including direct mail, doorbelling, and outreach on the phones and through social media. I have raised over \$30K on my own to date and I am working to bring on a full-time fundraising consultant as soon as possible.

### **How many volunteers are currently working on your campaign? What is your goal for volunteers working on your campaign?**

I currently have 10 volunteers and am on track to have 25 regular volunteers.

### **To date, how much money have you raised and obtained pledges for? \$30,000.00**

### **Please provide any endorsements you have received:**

State Senator June Robinson

State Senator Rebecca Saldana

State Rep. Nicole Macri

State Rep. Frank Chopp

Seattle City Councilmember Teresa Mosqueda

Seattle City Councilmember Lisa Herbold

Housing Alliance Action Fund

Win with Women PAC

And affordable housing, human services, environmental, community development, and equity leaders.

**Campaign address:**

PO Box 9100

**City:** Seattle

**Zip:** 98109

**Campaign phone:**

**Home phone:** 206-375-7815

**Email address:**

[emily@emilyforwa.com](mailto:emily@emilyforwa.com)

**Website address:**

[www.emilyforwa.com](http://www.emilyforwa.com)