

Nooksack Indian Tribe Government Relations Candidate Questionnaire

Local & Regional Elections – Whatcom County

Purpose

The Nooksack Indian Tribe values strong government-to-government relationships grounded in mutual respect, responsible stewardship, economic opportunity, public safety, infrastructure coordination, and the long-term well-being of future generations.

The Tribe recognizes that strong partnerships among tribal governments, local governments, public agencies, schools, ports, businesses, and regional organizations help support long-term economic stability, infrastructure investment, workforce development, environmental stewardship, and community well-being throughout the region.

The Tribe believes tribal governments should have meaningful opportunities for early communication, coordination, and participation in discussions and decisions involving projects, policies, or initiatives that may affect tribal sovereignty, treaty-protected resources, cultural resources, infrastructure, or regional communities.

This questionnaire is intended for candidates seeking to build a constructive relationship with the Nooksack Indian Tribe in local and regional elections throughout Whatcom County, including city councils, county offices, school boards, port commissions, public utility districts, conservation districts, and other local elected positions.

This questionnaire is intended to better understand each candidate's experience, perspectives, and willingness to engage respectfully and collaboratively with tribal governments on issues that may affect tribal sovereignty, treaty rights, natural resources, infrastructure, economic development, public safety, education, healthcare, and community well-being.

This questionnaire is nonpartisan and is intended to better understand how candidates approach issues affecting tribal governments, tribal communities, and the broader region.

Candidates are encouraged to provide concise, specific responses and, where helpful, include examples of prior work, votes, partnerships, or policy approaches.

Government-to-Government Framework

The following authorities and frameworks help guide government-to-government coordination with federally recognized tribes in Washington State and provide important context for this questionnaire:

- The Centennial Accord
- The Millennium Agreement
- RCW 43.376
- Washington Governor Executive Order 21-02 regarding Archaeological and Cultural Resources
- Other applicable state and federal laws, policies, and intergovernmental frameworks related to tribal consultation, cultural resources, environmental review, and government-to-government coordination

This questionnaire seeks to better understand how candidates for local and regional office will approach collaboration, communication, coordination, and compliance with existing laws, policies, and government-to-government responsibilities involving tribal governments.

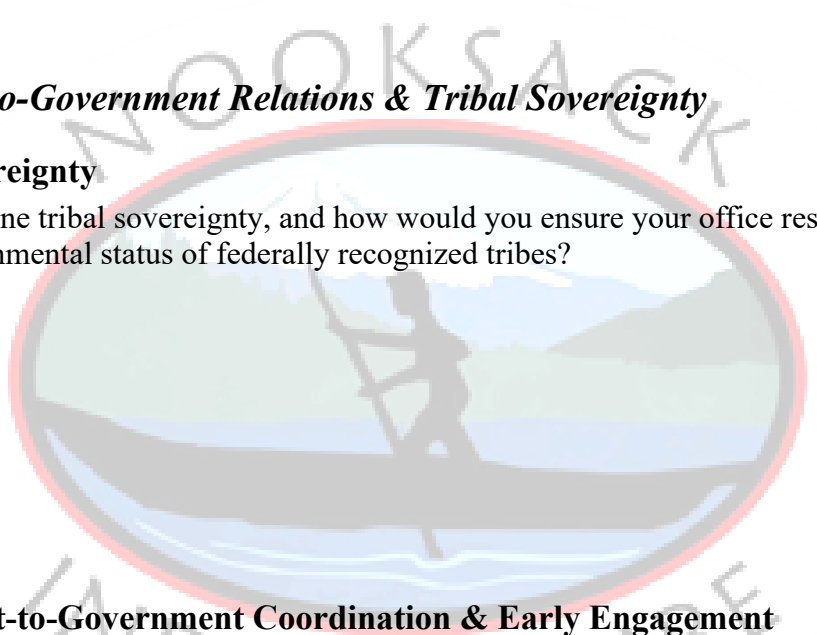
Candidate Information

Name: _____
Office Seeking: _____
Jurisdiction: _____
Political Party (if applicable): _____
Email: _____
Phone: _____
Campaign Website/Social Media: _____

Government-to-Government Relations & Tribal Sovereignty

1. Tribal Sovereignty

How do you define tribal sovereignty, and how would you ensure your office respects the sovereign governmental status of federally recognized tribes?



2. Government-to-Government Coordination & Early Engagement

What specific steps will you take to ensure meaningful government-to-government communication, early engagement, and coordination before decisions are made that may affect tribal rights, treaty-protected resources, cultural resources, infrastructure, or jurisdiction? Please explain what meaningful engagement means to you and how tribes should be included early enough to inform planning and policy decisions.

3. Relationship Building

How would you build and maintain long-term relationships with tribal governments outside election cycles and beyond periods of controversy?

4. Tribal Inclusion in Regional Decision-Making

How would you ensure tribal governments have meaningful opportunities to participate in regional discussions and decision-making on economic development, infrastructure planning, transportation, environmental stewardship, emergency management, and other regional priorities?

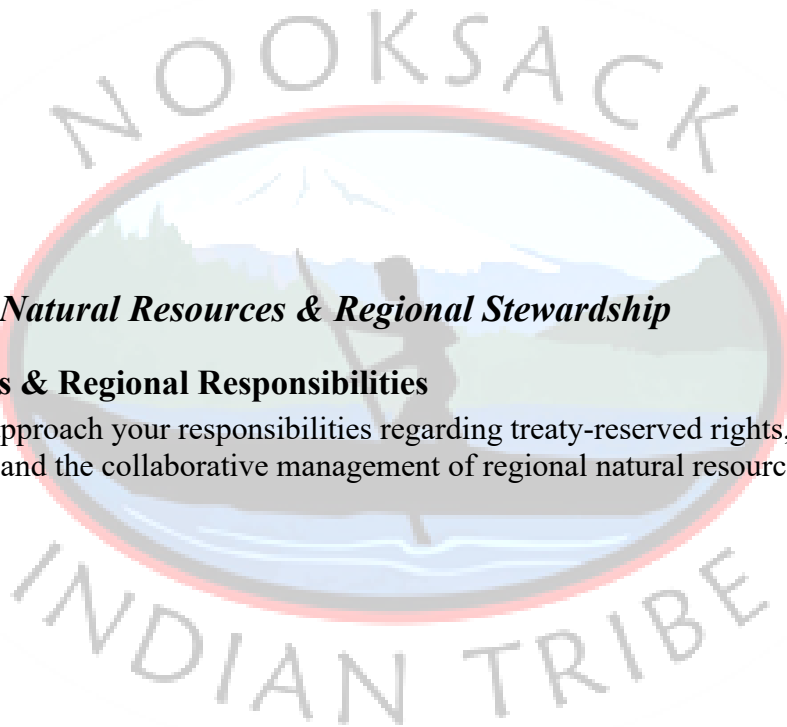
Treaty Rights, Natural Resources & Regional Stewardship

5. Treaty Rights & Regional Responsibilities

How would you approach your responsibilities regarding treaty-reserved rights, longstanding legal obligations, and the collaborative management of regional natural resources?

6. Salmon Recovery & Watershed Health

Salmon recovery is important to tribal culture, treaty rights, environmental sustainability, and the regional economy. What actions would you support to advance habitat restoration, fish passage, water quality, watershed protection, and floodplain restoration?



7. Collaborative Stewardship & Natural Resources

What role should tribal governments play in collaborative stewardship, co-management, and regional decision-making involving natural resources, waterways, fisheries, forests, and environmental planning?

8. Cultural Resources, Coordination & Project Planning

Washington State has established government-to-government coordination frameworks with tribal governments through the Centennial Accord, the Millennium Agreement, RCW 43.376, and Executive Order 21-02 regarding archaeological and cultural resources.

How would you ensure your office, agency, or governing body approaches infrastructure projects, land use decisions, permitting, and economic development in a manner that complies with applicable coordination requirements, provide tribes with early notice and meaningful engagement, consider impacts to cultural and archaeological resources, and support collaborative problem-solving?

9. Land Use & Comprehensive Planning

How should counties, cities, ports, and local agencies incorporate tribal coordination, treaty obligations, infrastructure planning, and cultural resource considerations into comprehensive plans and land use decisions?

Public Safety, Health & Community Well-Being

10. Public Safety & Intergovernmental Coordination

How would you support coordination and collaboration among tribal, local, county, state, and federal public safety agencies?

11. Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and People (MMIWP)

What actions, partnerships, funding priorities, or policy approaches would you support to help address the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and People crisis?

12. Healthcare & Behavioral Health

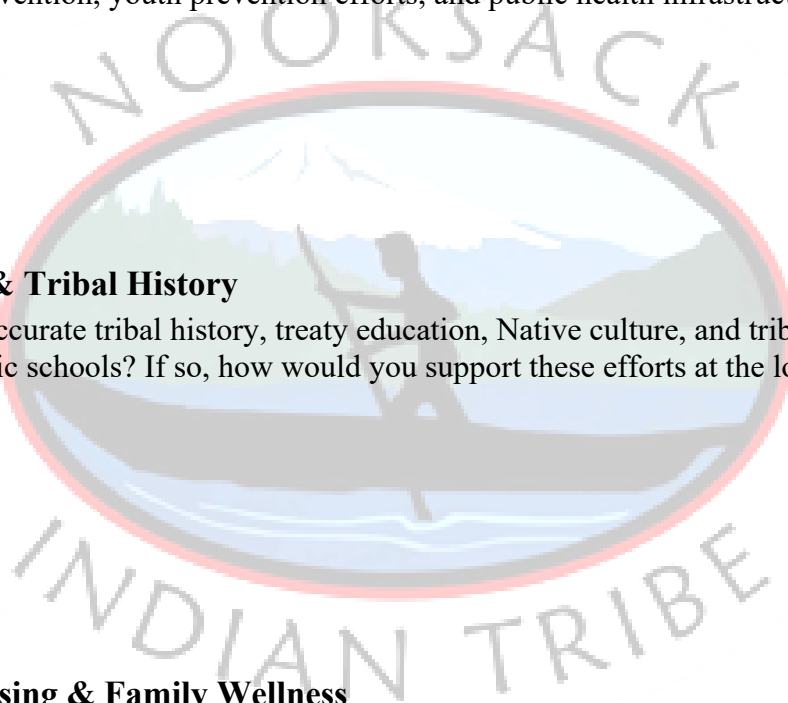
How would you support partnerships and investments in tribal healthcare, behavioral health, substance use prevention, youth prevention efforts, and public health infrastructure?

13. Education & Tribal History

Do you support accurate tribal history, treaty education, Native culture, and tribal language education in public schools? If so, how would you support these efforts at the local or regional level?

14. Youth, Housing & Family Wellness

How would you support efforts related to youth wellness, prevention, recreation, behavioral health, housing stability, infrastructure, and educational opportunities that strengthen tribal families and communities?



15. Emergency Management & Regional Resiliency

How would you support coordination and collaboration between tribal governments and local jurisdictions on emergency preparedness, flood response, wildfire planning, climate resiliency, public health emergencies, and disaster recovery?

Economic Development, Infrastructure & Regional Partnership

16. Tribal Economic Development

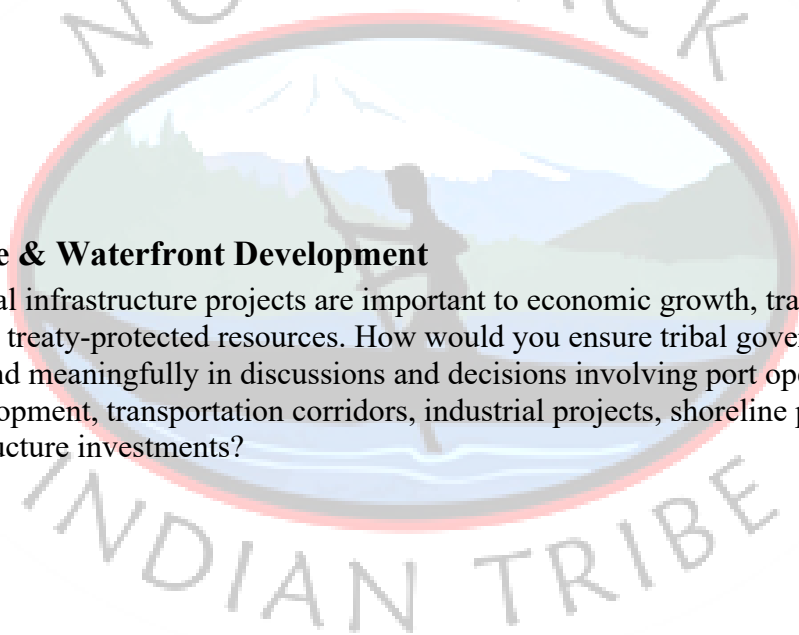
How would you support tribal economic development involving tribally owned enterprises, workforce development, tourism, housing, healthcare, energy, infrastructure, and sustainable regional growth?

17. Port, Trade & Waterfront Development

Ports and regional infrastructure projects are important to economic growth, trade, environmental stewardship, and treaty-protected resources. How would you ensure tribal governments are included early and meaningfully in discussions and decisions involving port operations, waterfront development, transportation corridors, industrial projects, shoreline planning, and regional infrastructure investments?

18. Infrastructure & Public Investment

How would you support investment in infrastructure affecting tribal communities and the surrounding region, including roads, bridges, broadband, ferries, water systems, sewer systems, housing infrastructure, and resiliency projects?

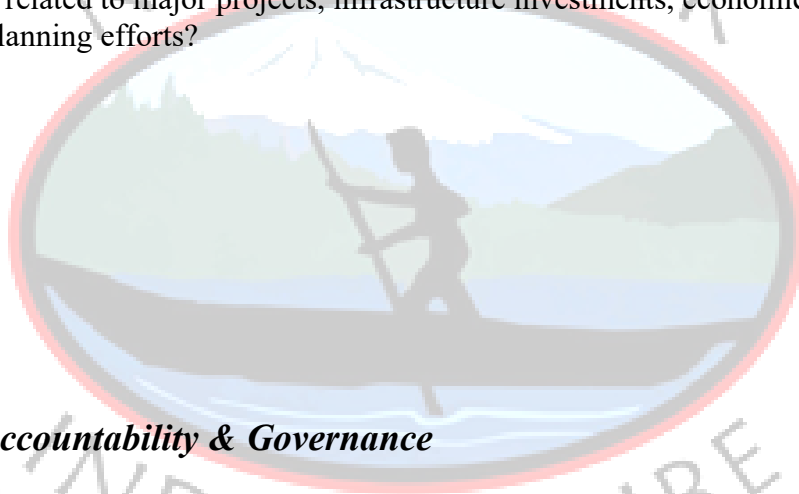


19. Dual Taxation & Economic Fairness

What is your understanding of dual taxation in Indian Country, and how would you support policies that reduce barriers to tribal economic development and self-sufficiency?

20. Regional Collaboration & Economic Partnership

Tribal governments are important regional partners in economic development, environmental stewardship, infrastructure, tourism, workforce development, and long-term planning. How would you ensure they have meaningful opportunities to participate in regional discussions and decision-making related to major projects, infrastructure investments, economic development initiatives, and planning efforts?



Leadership, Accountability & Governance

21. Previous Experience Working with Tribes

Please describe any previous work, coordination efforts, partnerships, agreements, or collaboration you have had with tribal governments or Native communities.

22. Accountability & Communication

If elected, how would you remain accountable, communicative, and responsive to tribal governments and tribal citizens throughout your term?

23. Balancing Regional Interests & Governmental Responsibilities

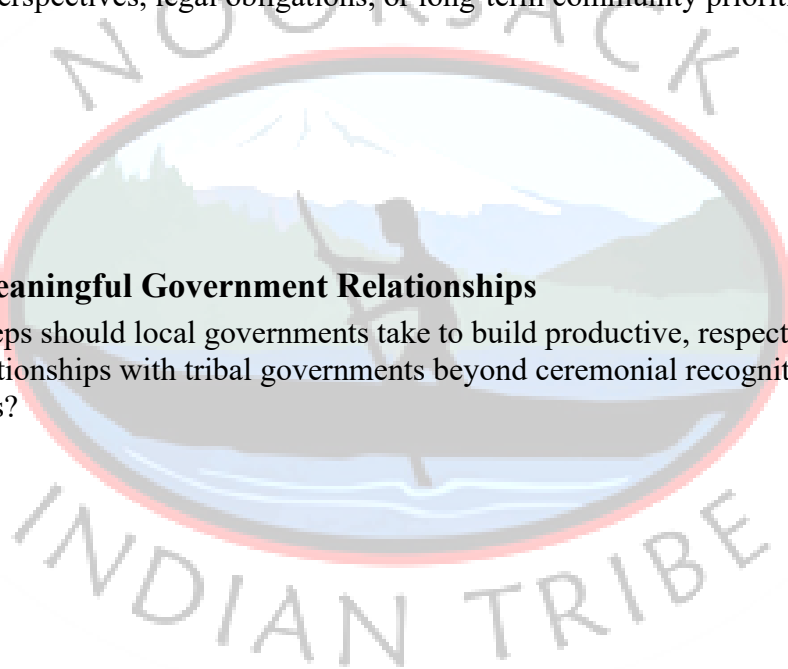
How would you approach decision-making when infrastructure, economic development, environmental stewardship, treaty obligations, public safety, housing, or regional growth involve differing public perspectives, legal obligations, or long-term community priorities?

24. Building Meaningful Government Relationships

What practical steps should local governments take to build productive, respectful, and collaborative relationships with tribal governments beyond ceremonial recognition or formal acknowledgments?

25. Final Reflection

Why is building a respectful and collaborative relationship with tribal governments important to you, both personally and professionally?



Optional Supporting Materials

Candidates may attach:

- Letters of support
- Voting records
- Policy statements
- Prior questionnaires
- Resolutions or public statements relevant to tribal issues

Questionnaire Process

Submission of this questionnaire does not guarantee endorsement, partnership, or support.

Completed questionnaires may be reviewed alongside:

- Candidate interviews
- Public records and voting history
- Community engagement
- Demonstrated collaboration with tribal governments
- Responsiveness and accountability
- Understanding of tribal sovereignty and treaty obligations
- Commitment to constructive regional partnerships

Submitted questionnaires shall be reviewed by Tribal leadership as part of the Tribe's candidate review and engagement process. The Nooksack Indian Tribe appreciates candidates who engage respectfully and thoughtfully with Tribal leadership and the broader Tribal community.

**Once completed, please submit this questionnaire to
Nooksack Council at nooksacknativevote@nooksack-nsn.gov**

