

## 2018 Candidate questions

### Whitman County Auditor

1. What education and experience has prepared you to be Auditor?

I bring years of process improvement and customer service experience to this Auditor's Race. At its heart, government is a service oriented industry with the taxpayers as our bosses. My auditing experience stems from working in the Quality Division at Schweitzer Engineering Laboratories right here in Pullman, WA. There are four key aspects of conducting an audit: preparation, audit performance, audit reporting, and audit follow up/closure. For me, the most important part of the audit is follow up and addressing a plan of action in order to address audit findings.

When conducting audits, a non-bias repeatable process is key. At SEL, the set of standards were followed from the ISO (International Organization for Standardization) 9000 Quality standards. This holistic approach to quality and process improvement involves all aspects of the organization with a focus on using human capital and teamwork for continuous improvement.

A candidate for office not only needs the technical skills to get the job done, but also reflect the values of the community in which they serve. I am passionate about giving back to the community that helped make my success possible. I currently serve as Vice President for United Way of Pullman, where we partner with local nonprofits to raise funds for programs that improve health care, expand access to education, and support our community members.

I also enjoy giving back to the community in my role as Chair of the Whitman County Democrats. Through this organization, I am able to work with community leaders across the region on rural healthcare accessibility, policies that grow our regional economy, affordable access to education, and common sense solutions to environmental and water rights problems.

2. What three key things would you like to accomplish as Auditor?

Three major issues that have continued to face the Auditor's Office are the need for increased transparency and communication between the Auditor's office and municipalities of Whitman County, experienced staff retention, and a reexamination of our election processes with a GIS (Geographic Information System) as a basis for district boundaries.

The most urgent and easiest issue to address would be the transparency and communication between the Auditor's Office and the public. Everyone in Auditor's Office is a public servant and we have an incredibly important job to do keeping track of taxpayer dollars. We must make sure our office is in order to provide the necessary services and transparency that is required of us. Some internal process controls can be standardized in order to make that happened, for example, documenting roles and responsibilities for finance and IT Functions. Another way to create a more efficient office is to develop a training initiative for employees. This training should ensure that department staff are well qualified to perform their finance functions as well as be experienced in the different financial software systems that are used in the Auditor's Office.

3. The purpose of the Whitman County Auditor is to "... manage the Office of the Auditor with the goal of continuous improvement in the delivery of services to the residents of [Whitman] County." How specifically do you plan to continually improve delivery of services?

I love this question because I believe that an organization, whether that be government or private business, should always be striving for a continuous improvement of not only the services it provides but how it operates. Data is extremely important when it comes to process improvement, and there needs to be good internal data on how much time and resources are being spent providing different services in the Auditor's Office. Perhaps more important than data, employee involvement in striving for continuous improvement is critical. There are number of tools to use in order to foster a culture of continuous improvement, I particularly like the Plan, Do, Check, and Act Method (PDCA).

Plan - During the planning cycle we should be asking questions such as; what are we trying to accomplish, what changes can be made that will result in improvement, and how will we know that the change is an improvement at all? Gather data.

Do - Testing the change or a different process.

Check - Measuring the process and making sure that is working as needed.

Act - Focus on implementing the process throughout the whole organization.

This cycle is repeated over and over again fostering a culture of continuous improvement within the organization.

4. The Auditor has responsibility over voter registration and elections, among other things. Please explain how you will ensure election fairness and transparency, especially in light of election ballot problems that have recently occurred in this office.

As head of local elections, the Auditor's Office has an commitment to the constituents of Whitman County to carry out fair and transparent elections. We have a very transient population and this provides many challenges in making sure every ballot gets to where it needs to go. Because of the unique needs from the community at WSU, there needs to be a on site-ballot service station on campus. Many students are first time voters and an on-site ballot service center would not only be informational, but would help the county better manage provisional ballots.

Currently, there are only two ballot service centers in Whitman County, one in Pullman City Hall and another in the Elections Office in Colfax.

Participation in the 2018 midterms and 2020 general election is expecting to be greater than ever before, and residents need accessible local ballot stations to address their needs.

In addition, we need a reexamination of our election processes with a GIS (Geographic Information System) as a basis for district boundaries. This would provide an immediate solution in making sure that constituents receive the right ballot for their district. I am very exciting to see the county taking an initiative on this issue and hope to see some development with this project before the new year starts.

Remember that this year we have paid postage for our ballots! A stamp is no longer needed!