

Indivisible Benton County — Candidate Questionnaire November 2026 Midterm Election

Thank you for your interest in an endorsement from Indivisible Benton County. **Please complete this questionnaire and return it to voter@indivisiblebc.org by Aug. 12.** Responses will be reviewed by our candidate research committee, and excerpts may be shared with our members.

Please do not use generative AI (artificial intelligence) when completing this questionnaire. We would much rather see grammatical errors in answers that reflect you personally than perfect writing that doesn't originate from your own thoughts!

Please reach out to voter@indivisiblebc.org if you have any questions about the questionnaire or our endorsement process.

SECTION 1: CANDIDATE & CAMPAIGN INFORMATION

1. Full name: **Evrek Smith**
2. Office sought: **Ward 4 City Councilor**
3. Campaign website and social media accounts (if applicable): <https://evreksmith.org> (up soon), @evreksmithward4 (Instagram, Facebook)

SECTION 2: BACKGROUND & MOTIVATION

4. Why are you running for this office? What do you hope to accomplish if elected?
I'm running for City Council because I care deeply about the Corvallis and want to ensure City Government is democratically serving the people and working for us in this time of rising fascism, economic stagnation, and unaffordability.

I hope to pass a Universal preschool program, develop affordable housing, fix the budget deficit by restricting City Income so large employers and wealthy residents pay their fair share, and create better transparency and accountability in government; we need a government organized for the people, making Corvallis safer, stabler, and accessible for everyone.

5. Describe how your prior experiences (such as public service, community organizing, professional expertise, volunteer work, schooling, family responsibilities, etc.) have contributed to the knowledge and skills you will use as a city councilor.

I have budget and project experience management from high school where I fundraised for and managed club finances, I helped organize and set up events for my church, I volunteered for Zohran Mamdani's campaign in New York and

Kat Abughazaleh's in Illinois, and I've gained collaborative skills in my lab position and the Biomedical Engineering Society at OSU.

SECTION 3: ACCESSIBILITY, TRANSPARENCY, & ACCOUNTABILITY

6. How can the City Council and Mayor ensure that the Corvallis city government is transparent, accessible, and accountable to all constituents, *especially historically underrepresented voices*?

City government *must*, by law, be better integrated into the community. This could mean mandating a volunteer position to connect councilors with their Ward; this could mean mandating regular councilor participation in public ward events. This must mean implementing a clear, accessible way to evaluate and understand City Staff and City Manager performance.

I also support measures to give our neighborhoods more control, such as making Neighborhood Association involvement mandatory for large development. Strengthening our democracy ensures underrepresented voices and marginalized groups can speak their minds and be listened to, and stronger democracy additionally means the City runs and operates for the people better.

I support measures to empower vulnerable communities, such as giving them more control over local development.

In addition, if you are running for Mayor: How will you ensure that advisory boards, commissions, and committees are representative of Corvallis' population, range of experiences, and perspectives?

N / A

7. How will you approach working with people, both on the Council and in the community, with different political views, personal experiences, or approaches to decision-making than you? If possible, provide an example of a time (at a job or school, or within a community, political, non-profit, or other organization) when you disagreed with someone yet worked together towards a solution.

It would be irresponsible to let differences in opinion hamper my ability to work. There are some problems I will not be swayed on (the need to protect trans people, immigrants, People of Color, etc., for example); but disagreements in some areas don't make it impossible for me to work with someone on other issues. Separating conflicts from work and putting them aside for Corvallis is necessary. Similarly, effective communication is crucial in working with others who differ in how they work.

I used to be Mormon, and once I figured out I was transgender, the disagreements between me and that community grew even larger than when I was just pro-LGBTQIA2+ and anti-Trump. Despite this, by focusing on how I can work *with* people for everyone's benefit, I successfully did a lot of good community work and got them to do the same; I was also able to change some

minds by listening to people and respectfully engaging with them.

SECTION 4: VALUES & PRIORITIES

8. What are the top three issues you would prioritize if elected? What actions/policies can the City implement to address these issues?

Affordability, Democracy, Safety.

Develop more affordable housing, implement universal childcare, restructure city revenue away from working families and onto big businesses and wealthy residents.

Mandate regular engagement in Ward events, create volunteer liaisons to connect councilors to constituents, create clear effective systems to evaluate city manager and city staff performance, increase transparency and communication with the people, and give neighborhood's more control over how they are run.

Proactively banning AI surveillance Automated License-Plate Readers (ALPR), anti-racist police trainings, humane alternatives to homeless sweeps (e.g., managed campgrounds), improve public transit for fewer people need to drive, improve pedestrian safety on the roads.

9. How would you approach Corvallis' current budget gap while honoring the Corvallis Strategic Plan?¹²³

We need to restructure City Revenue. We cannot grow economically with working people constantly burdened by regressive fees. Implementing progressive taxation plans that make large employers and wealthy residents pay more can increase revenue without squeezing hardworking families for more; this addresses the gap and does not impede the Strategic Plan. Furthermore, a more sustainable budget improves city resiliency, long-term sustainability, and economic vitality.

10. How could/should city government address the trickle-down effects of decreased federal spending?

We must prioritize our residents and ensure all activities are done to benefit them. This means cutting only the least beneficial programs, and—more importantly—it means recuperating these losses without making working people and retirees pick up the extra weight.

¹ <https://www.klcc.org/politics-government/2026-06-17/corvallis-city-council-still-considering-new-taxes-weighs-other-options>

² https://gazettetimes.com/news/local/government-politics/article_21949038-0be4-5f95-856b-f76dc7b80de1.html

³ <https://www.corvallisoregon.gov/mc/page/strategic-plan>

SECTION 5: SPECIFIC POLICIES

11. What role do you believe our local government should play in protecting the rights of marginalized or vulnerable community members (e.g., immigrants, LGBTQ+ residents, people of color, people with disabilities)?

Local government needs to do everything it can to protect vulnerable community members. Federal attacks on queer and especially trans people, people of color, immigrants, and the disabled are unacceptable and we must fight them however possible. Corvallis is a sanctuary city; we cannot remove this, and we must extend all possible protections for our residents to combat the rising fascism in our nation.

Beyond the rising fascist threat, we need to be aware of the systems in place working against vulnerable communities and try our best to dismantle them—listening to people in those communities, working with them to remedy the wrongs they face, and considering them in any decisions made.

12. What is your position on data center development in the Willamette Valley, including considerations like energy and water use, tax incentives, and community input in the permitting process?

It should be impossible to build large datacenters without explicit community approval and support. The environmental effects of them are substantial and forcing that on residents is unacceptable. They can be built sustainably, and that must be a requirement for any development.

If our community wanted a safe, regulated datacenter, I support that. Similarly, I fully support them in protecting Corvallis, and until the only way for them to be built is safely, I support a moratorium on large datacenters. We *must* protect our environment and our people.

13. Albany recently canceled its contract with Flock for Automated License Plate Readers (ALPRs). Proponents of ALPRs, and other forms of mass surveillance technology, focus on public safety benefits such as solving crimes and finding kidnapping victims. Opponents emphasize the potential for, and history of, harms due to errors and misuse of data. What is your position regarding use of ALPR's and/or other forms of mass surveillance by the City? Should the City regulate use of this technology by private residents and companies within city limits?

No company should be allowed to surveil us indiscriminately. Corvallis has an extremely low violent crime rate; this is something to be proud of. We don't need a surveillance state to deal with crime. These tools and ones like them have been weaponized against people. A GOP Congressmen said they collected "billions of identifying data points" from No Kings protestors. The misuse of these technologies exists on local levels and is especially dangerous with our current fascist crisis.

The City should heavily regulate this technology because it severely impacts Corvallis residents and violates our human rights.

14. What role, if any, do you believe local government should play in addressing climate change (e.g., emissions reduction, sustainability planning, enhancing resilience to extreme weather)?

Climate Change kills people. City Government needs to work to protect the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the land we live on. This means meeting set reduction goals, mandating sustainable development, and preparing for climate change. 14 Firefighters have died this summer; we need to protect from climate events through preventative care and preparation.

15. Based on January 2025 "Point in Time" data, Benton County had a total homeless count of 550, with 244 unsheltered in Corvallis. What is the City doing right to reduce homelessness and/or its impacts on the City? What could the city be doing differently? ⁴

The City is building some affordable housing and isn't unsympathetic to unhoused people, this is good.

The City needs to build more affordable housing and permanent supportive housing for unsheltered residents. The best solution to homelessness is to end it; until that is done, however, the City should work with local partners/nonprofits to replace inhumane homeless sweeps with humane alternatives such as managed campgrounds.

16. Corvallis voters will be deciding on reforms to the City Council in November. Do you support or oppose these reforms, and why? ⁵

I support term limits. They're popular for a reason; people support and want term limits, so the City should work to instate them. Additionally, it keeps any individuals from holding onto and misusing power.

I don't support shrinking the number of Wards from 9–6; this reduces representation and puts us at an even number of Councilors. In the Council Meeting this was put on the ballot, Councilors spoke on having fewer Councilors to improve our democracy (more competitive races). How does having fewer representatives better represent our communities? I disagree with the idea that a system is more democratic because there's competition; 1,000 candidates for 1 Congressional seat is less democratic than there being 1,000 seats. Fewer voices on City Council also contributes to groupthink and less diverse discussions. The gridlock can be broken without resorting to cutting conversations short and removing our voices.

⁴ <https://communityservices.us/2025-point-in-time-count-shows-shifting-trends-in-tri-county-homelessness/>

⁵ <https://www.klcc.org/politics-government/2026-07-22/corvallis-ballot-measure-city-council-terms-seats>, <https://corvallisadvocate.com/corvallis-voters-to-decide-city-council-reforms-this-november-heres-a-deeper-look/>

Similarly, I don't support 4-year term lengths. Council *needs* reform to function better, but these can come in better trainings for councilors and programs after the election before they're sworn in. Half of our town is students, and 4-year terms severely limits their ability to run and be represented; it betrays the ideals of democracy to remove representation from half of the population.

I support staggered elections if we have 4-year term lengths. Council elections every year aren't tenable, so having them currently doesn't make sense. 4-year terms make staggering them, so half council is elected every 2 years, which combats constant inexperience.

SECTION 6: YOUR CAMPAIGN

17. What volunteer support would be most helpful to your campaign between now and November?

Doorknocking and donating. Access to free or cheap color printing/material resources would also be very useful.

SECTION 7: CLOSING

18. Is there anything else you'd like our chapter to know about your candidacy that wasn't covered above?

I support making OSU contribute more back to Corvallis. We're impacted by many systems and need to fight for the people wherever possible. As councilor, I would push for the State to give cities more power to help residents. I also support Boycotting, Divesting, and Sanctioning Israel; City Government should not fund genocide and apartheid. Corvallis can't afford to focus solely inwards because it's not solely impacted by internal processes.

City Council must fight for the people on every level.

I'm open to connect with anyone. Email or text me at evreksmith@proton.me and (808) 796-1097

As a candidate in the race for city council in the city of Corvallis, 2026, I pledge to run a positive campaign, without resorting to negative attacks against fellow candidates.

Candidate signature: Evrek Smith Date: 08/14/2026