

## King County Democrats Candidate Questionnaire 2022

### 1. Your Information

Anita Crawford-Willis  
judgecrawfordwillis@gmail.com

### 2. I have reviewed the instructions at the top of this page

Yes

### 3. Campaign contact information

Anita Crawford-Willis  
judgecrawfordwillis@gmail.com

### 4. Is the candidate a Democrat?

Candidate for Judicial Position

### 5. Jurisdiction

Seattle

### 6. Position Sought

Municipal Court Judge

### 7. Position number

4

### 8. Additional Campaign Information (optional)

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

Candidate pronouns (ex: she/her)

### Please list paid staff or full-time volunteers with your campaign.

Jeff Pyatt – Campaign Chair  
Shon Gates, Joan Duffy Watt, Lynn Tuttle – Volunteers

### 9. Campaign Manager information (optional)

Currently hiring

### 10. Campaign Treasurer information (optional)

Abbot Taylor  
Abbot312@mac.com  
(206) 218-3108

### 11. Campaign Consultant information (optional)

### 12. Fundraiser / Fundraising Consultant / Finance Chair information (optional)

**13. Other Campaign Contact information (optional)**

**14. Other paid staff or full-time volunteers (optional)**

**If endorsed, how can the King County Democrats promote and support your campaign?**  
I would love to earn your endorsement and then if I draw an opponent, have your support with canvassing and getting out the vote.

**15. Ways people can support your campaign (all optional)**

URL to DONATE: <https://secure.anedot.com/anitaforjudge/donate22>

**16. Additional campaign contact information (all optional)**

FACEBOOK PAGE: <https://www.facebook.com/JudgeCrawfordWillis>

LINKEDIN: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/anita-crawford-willis-8a93535/>

**17. URL to HEADSHOT (optional, used for promotion if endorsed)**

**18. I have read and understand the instructions at the beginning of this questionnaire.**

Yes

**19. Yes / No Questions**

Have you ever been a member of another political party? Qualified

Have you ever failed to pay any taxes, court-ordered judgements, or former campaign staff salaries? No

Have you or your staff ever been found in violation of a Federal Election Commission, Public Disclosure Commission, Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission, or Judicial Conduct Commission regulation? No

Does your campaign have a code of conduct for staff and volunteers? If not, are you willing to implement one? Yes

If you have paid campaign staff, would you support them joining a labor union? Yes

Are you willing to have yourself, your staff, or your peers participate in cultural competency, implicit bias, and anti-racism training? Yes

Are you willing to have yourself, your staff and your peers participate in training to understand and combat sexual harassment? Yes

Do you support the rights of all works to organize, collectively bargain, and strike without fear of retaliation? Yes

Do you support the right of public workers - excluding military personnel - to bargain and strike?  
Yes

**20. For any yes / no questions you answered "qualified" please explain:**

As a judge, I must abide by the Canon 4 of the Washington State Code of Judicial Conduct which states that judges and candidates for judicial office shall not engage in political activity that is inconsistent with the independence, integrity, or impartiality of the judiciary. As such, I am not a member of a political party.

**21. Please briefly describe your background (education, employment, community and civic activity, labor union affiliation etc.)**

I was appointed to the Seattle Municipal Court in January 2017 and elected to a full term in 2018 after nearly 30 years of public service as a public defender, judge pro tem (1994-2016), and administrative law judge. Since taking the bench, I have been deeply involved in ensuring equal access to justice and expanding the Seattle Municipal Court's Resource Center to provide community services to those who need it most. The Court Resource Center provides bus tickets, emergency food bags, hygiene kits, clothing, service provider referrals. I currently serve on the State Supreme Court Gender and Justice Commission as well as a member of the Seattle University Board of Trustees. I am a former member of the Washington State Access to Justice Board, former board member of the Boys and Girls Club board, and former governor of the Seattle University Law School Board of Governors. I served as chair for the administrative justice committee which focuses on access issues in administrative hearings. Our initiatives included tackling access issues such as eliminating language barriers, representational accommodation and Implicit Bias training for ALJs. I worked my way through school with a job at Safeway, where I was a member of the Retail Clerks Union (which is now a part of UFCW.) My parents were proud, lifelong members of IAM 751. I am a proud graduate of Seattle University and the Seattle University School of Law.

**22. Please describe your history of involvement (if any), in local, regional, and/or state politics with particular emphasis on the last five years.**

As a judge, I'm not involved in political organizations.

**23. Position sought**

Seattle Municipal Court Judge

**24. Describe the progress of your campaign and campaign goals. What is your plan to win? If you have received endorsements, please list them here.**

I am just getting started this year, but I have enjoyed engaging the community and feel positivity from them. I hope my record over the last three decades of experience practicing law and in the judiciary will appeal to knowledgeable voters in King County. As of now, I am unopposed. However, I am running a competitive campaign by hiring staff, having a campaign committee that will raise money, and taking nothing for granted.

My fundraising committee raised more than \$33,000 for my last campaign. I have nearly \$20,000 between new donations and surplus funds. Endorsements are coming in every day and I am very proud of and humbled by all of the support and good people helping my campaign.

## **25. Ratings and Endorsements**

Bar Association *ratings* received to date: In progress

*Endorsements* received to date: National Women's Political Caucus - Washington

*Additional Endorsements* you are seeking: Legislative District Democrats, MLK Labor

## **26. Please describe your legal background and experience? What pro bono work have you done in the last 5 years? (please list)**

I was appointed to the Seattle Municipal Court in January 2017 and elected to a full term in 2018 after nearly 30 years of public service as a public defender, judge pro tem (1994-2016), and administrative law judge. I am proud of my longstanding and active role as a mentor of students (primarily, although not exclusively, students of color) enrolled at both the University of Washington and Seattle University law schools. I took on this role soon after my 1986 law school graduation and, over the years, have mentored hundreds of young people seeking a career in the legal profession. In 1996, I helped establish a formal externship program with the Seattle University School of Law and the Office of Administrative Hearings. I have continued to supervise that program over the years as we have welcomed (and helped train) some 30 externs to date, to be leaders in their practice – championing justice and humanity. It is immensely satisfying for me to see my mentees pursue their legal studies with vigor and optimism, then to pass the Bar Examination and take up their respective roles in the legal profession. Many of them today are not only successful practitioners, they are mentors themselves. I previously served on the board of Northwest Women's Law Center (now Legal Voice). I was also a member of Washington State Trial Lawyers Association's (now WSAJ) Urban People's Law School 1994-95.

## **27. What do you believe are the most important qualifications and qualities for justices and judges? What is your experience serving as a judge/justice, pro tem, or within the judicial system and how will this inform your perspective on the bench?**

The most important qualification is to learn to listen with an open mind and heart. This includes being self-critical and willing to accept criticism from others. It also means recognizing one's own biases and being willing to struggle against them. Next, is a willingness to work hard; keep abreast of developments in the law, read the briefs and other materials provided by the parties; do independent research; give guidance to law clerks and externs and teach them to be good lawyers. Finally, learn to be patient with those who appear before you, with your colleagues, and with yourself.

## **28. How would you further equity and access to justice for all in the legal system? Provide specific examples of what you have done or commit to doing to further this goal.**

I'm committed to educating and empowering the public about our judicial system while strengthening the legal profession's pipeline for diversity. For the last year, I have served on the Supreme Court's racial justice consortium. The purpose of the justice consortium is to address and identify issues which have historically and continue to negatively impact BIPOC communities. The consortium was tasked with hearing from all the voices involved in the criminal justice system and making recommendations for how the courts across Washington state can begin to make changes to take to our system and make it more just and fair for our communities of color. I've served as a member of the Washington state Access to Justice Board which included tackling all kinds of access issues, including eliminating language barriers and developing forms in everyday language to simplify processing court proceedings. Throughout my career I've always been involved with organizations whose main goal was to improve access to the criminal justice system.

**29. Judges are expected to fairly apply the law and perform all duties without bias or prejudice. Please provide examples when you have realized and self-checked your own privilege and/or bias or encouraged others to point out to you your own implicit biases?**

As a Black woman, being a judicial officer is one of the few times that I do have a privilege in our society. One of the primary reasons that I sought to be on the bench at Seattle Municipal Court because of the diverse population of parties appearing in the court room. I felt it was important for people to see with someone who looked like them in order to help restore the trust that has been lost in our judicial and criminal justice system. As a Black woman, I bring a different lens to the bench. I have been the subject of many biased attitudes and assumptions. I understand how the parties coming before the court might feel in these spaces. I will make a strong effort to make parties feel like they are seen and heard and respected during the entire process. I believe it's very important that people coming into the courtroom see someone who looks like them who are in a position of authority. It's very important for me to restore the trust of BIPOC individuals in our justice system.

**30. How would you address the disproportionate impact of sentencing, punishment, and incarceration in the criminal legal system on Black, Indigenous, and Communities of Color, marginalized, and other vulnerable communities and how would you work to address it? Please provide specific examples (alternatives to incarceration, bail reform, etc.)**

During my tenure on the bench, I have been trying to serve with integrity while embracing the role of ensuring that each trial is fair and just to every party in my court. I'm focused on all parties experiencing an impartial process in which everyone is seen, heard, and respected. I also want to make sure everyone has a full understanding of the legal process. One of the things I appreciate about being a judge in Seattle Municipal Court is the ability to structure a sentence to address a person's particular needs. We are not bound by sentence reform guidelines, but I can tailor each sentence for each person within the maximum penalty. This is what I try to do in everything, every case that comes before me. I'm looking at what brought the person to my courtroom, identifying the root cause of their issues, and then trying to help address those issues while still holding parties accountable. We use many alternatives to incarceration, including requiring treatment, community service, classes provided by the court resource center, and

referrals to social services which might benefit the party and help them get back on track. I strive to provide a holistic approach to sentencing and providing services to parties.

**31. I, candidate, affirm that all the information provided in response to this questionnaire is true, complete and correct, to the best of my ability, and that no relevant matter has been omitted.**

Anita Crawford-Willis 5/11/2022

**32. Information in this questionnaire was input by:**

Candidate