

Possible Responses To Those “Hard” Questions

Note: participants in previous Key Campaigns compiled these responses last year. Please feel free to personalize them for your own uses.

Where do you expect us to get the money?

- You are the budget expert. That’s one of the reasons you were elected. Our responsibility is to bring to your attention programs that are effective for your constituents.
- Alaska is a wealthy state. We should be suing the Permanent Fund for the purpose for which it was created—the good of the people of Alaska.
- The budget will not be balanced by cuts alone. There needs to be increased revenues, possibly from an income tax, seasonal sales tax, or other user fees.
- When you ran for office you said that you would demonstrate leadership. Finding funding for services that enable families to function would be an example of that leadership.
- Our state has had income taxes in the past, prior to Big Oil. I believe that a poll of all Alaskans would show more support for a fair income tax and other taxes on industries that make money off Alaska, such as the cruise ships, outside commercial fishers, etc.
- Many of the programs we support cost less than alternatives such as institutional care, foster care, etc.
- The “rainy day” is here—use the Permanent Fund in a different way.

Everyone will have to take his or her fair share of the budget cuts. Isn’t that fair?

- Individuals with disabilities and their families have already absorbed reduced levels of service compared to their basic needs. There is a wait list of more than 1,300 families. Cutting services further would be grossly unfair.
- We agree that programs should be reviewed for performance and effectiveness. Good programs should be rewarded, not cut.
- Many of our programs are preventive. A small increase now will save big bucks in the future.
- Fair does not mean “across the board” or equal cuts for all. Fair means funding that reflects the values of Alaskans, one of which is independent, healthy families.
- It is not fair to hurt the most vulnerable Alaskans and their families as a political exercise.
- The money that the state has saved by closing Harborview should follow those individuals into the community. Much of it did not—so, we’ve already taken our fair share of the pain.

Why should we fund you instead of someone else?

- Many of our programs are preventative. They allow families to shoulder their parenting responsibilities, and relieve enough of the stress that comes with parenting a child with disabilities to allow the family to remain intact. If our families are not supported, the risk of family failure is high and then children become the state's responsibility, which is very expensive.
- The small increases we have seen have not even kept up with the cost of living. Our programs keep families intact.
- It is your job to lead us as we set priorities for Alaska. If you think that families and productive, independent citizens with disabilities are priorities, then fund those programs.

When I was elected I promised to reduce the budget. Isn't that what I need to do?

- Those who voted for you expect courageous leadership. Give them the opportunity to vote for you again.
- We are also part of your constituency.
- Consider the budget for our programs have already cut out the fat. They are available for you to review and see how cost effective they are.
- You have. Now you need to look at increasing revenues and not destroy vital, effective programs.
- On a per capita basis, you have reduced as much as possible and still maintain quality of life.

Why should we continue to increase the Medicaid budget?

- Increased in the Medicaid budget will enable use to take waiver-eligible people off the waitlist. Some people have been on the waitlist for more than five years, a long time in the life of a child or a family.
- State dollars leverage to federal dollars. We get more "bang for the buck."