

Section 1: Candidate Information

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- Full Name (Required) Dr. Jennifer Rios
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- District running for (Required) Prince George's County Council, At-Large
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Section 2: Questionnaire

How will you ensure that Prince George's County government leads by example in hiring, retaining, and promoting employees with disabilities, and what accountability measures will you implement?

I will make sure Prince George's County government does a better job of hiring, keeping, and promoting employees with disabilities. That starts with making sure job postings and application systems are fully accessible and that we actively recruit through disability employment organizations. It also means making sure accommodations are handled quickly and fairly, without unnecessary barriers. Once people are hired, they should have real opportunities to grow into higher-level roles, not just stay stuck in entry-level positions. Supervisors should be trained on how to properly support employees with disabilities. To keep things accountable, the county should regularly track and publicly report hiring, retention, and promotion data, and hold departments responsible for improving representation at all levels.

What comprehensive employment initiatives will you champion to create meaningful career opportunities for county residents with disabilities?

I would focus on building real career pathways for residents with disabilities, not just short-term or low-wage jobs. That means expanding job training programs that connect people to growing fields like healthcare, public service, skilled trades, and technology, and making sure those programs are fully accessible. Paid internships and apprenticeships specifically for people with disabilities should also be expanded so residents can gain experience while earning income. The county should work more closely with employers to encourage inclusive hiring and provide support like job coaching and workplace accommodations. Transportation and support services also need to be part of the plan so people can actually get to and keep their jobs.

What comprehensive, county-wide accessible transportation solutions will you develop beyond existing paratransit services?

We need to go beyond relying on paratransit and build a transportation system that is accessible from the start. That includes making sure buses, stops, sidewalks, and stations are fully usable for people with physical, sensory, and cognitive disabilities. Sidewalks need to be connected and safe, and transit stops should be easy to reach without barriers. Real-time transit information should be accessible in multiple formats, including for people who are blind or deaf. The county should also look at expanding flexible, on-demand transit options that are fully accessible and integrated with existing systems. The goal should be independence and reliability, not a separate system that people are forced to rely on.

How will you ensure that all new transit infrastructure exceeds ADA minimum standards and truly provides accessible, reliable public transportation?

All new transit projects in the county should go beyond just meeting ADA minimum standards and focus on what actually works for people in real life. That means designing stations and vehicles with accessibility built in from the beginning, not added later. Elevators, ramps, step-free access, clear signage, and both audio and visual announcements should all be standard and consistently working. Maintenance is just as important as design, since broken elevators or out-of-service features can make systems unusable. People with disabilities should also be involved in planning and reviewing projects so their lived experience is part of the design process.

What specific actions will you take to increase the supply of affordable, accessible, and integrated housing options throughout Prince George's County?

We need more housing that people with disabilities can actually live in comfortably and independently. That means requiring more accessible units in new developments and encouraging universal design so homes can work for people at different stages of life. The county should also support programs that help residents modify existing homes so they can safely stay in place. Affordable housing and accessible housing should not be separated. People with disabilities should be included in all types of housing developments, not isolated in limited options. Strong enforcement of fair housing laws is also necessary to prevent discrimination and make sure people actually have equal access.

What policy changes will you advocate to improve healthcare access including provider training and accessible medical facilities?

Improving healthcare access means making sure facilities are physically accessible and that providers are trained to work with people with disabilities respectfully and effectively. That includes training on communication, mobility needs, and both visible and non-visible disabilities. Clinics and hospitals should be held accountable for accessibility, not just in entrances but in exam rooms, equipment, and services. Transportation support to medical appointments is also important, especially for people who can't easily drive or use standard transit. Telehealth should be expanded as long as it is fully accessible, since it can make care easier to reach for many people.

How will you expand integrated, trauma-informed mental health services specifically designed for children and adults with disabilities?

Mental health services for people with disabilities need to be easier to access and more tailored to real needs. That includes expanding community-based care that is trauma-informed and trained to work with both children and adults with different types of disabilities. Schools should have stronger mental health support systems so students can get help early instead of waiting until problems become serious. The county should also invest in crisis response teams that are trained to support people with disabilities without immediately defaulting to law enforcement. Services should be easy to navigate, affordable, and designed with families in mind.

How will you ensure that first responders receive regular training on interacting with and supporting people with diverse disabilities?

First responders should receive ongoing, practical training on how to work with people with a wide range of disabilities. That includes communication strategies, de-escalation, and understanding conditions like autism, mental health challenges, hearing or vision loss, and mobility limitations. Training should be developed with input from the disability community so it reflects real experiences, not just theory. It should also be repeated regularly, not just a one-time session. Accountability matters too, so the county should track who has completed training and make sure it is actually being applied in the field.

How will you ensure adequate funding and accessibility of programs that help older adults maintain independence when they acquire disabilities?

As people age and develop disabilities, the county needs to make sure they can stay independent and supported in their homes and communities. That means expanding in-home care, transportation help, home modifications, and caregiver support. Services should be easy to find and not overly complicated to access, especially during emergencies or sudden changes in health. Coordination between aging services and disability services also needs to improve so people don't fall through the cracks. The goal should be helping older adults remain safely at home for as long as possible, with dignity and support.

What will be your top three legislative priorities to advance disability rights and full inclusion in our county? (Please list and briefly describe your top three priorities.)

My top three priorities are improving accessibility in transportation and infrastructure so people can move freely and safely throughout the county; expanding inclusive employment opportunities so people with disabilities have real career paths and not just limited job options; and increasing access to affordable, accessible housing so people can live independently in their communities. These three areas are all connected, and improving them would make a real difference in making the county more inclusive overall. The focus should be on removing barriers so people with disabilities can fully participate in everyday life.

Consent & Submission

Consent checkbox (required)

I consent to my responses being shared publicly in full.



Campaign Website or Contact Information:

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