

# #4

**COMPLETE**

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## Page 1: Questionnaire

### Q1 Candidate Information

**Candidate Name:** Jenny T. Sarmiento  
**Email:** jtsarmiento831@gmail.com  
**Phone:** 831 239-8458  
**Website:** jennytsarmiento.com

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### Q2 What office do you seek to be elected to?

Watsonville City Council, District 4

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**Q3 Please choose the option best describing your candidacy:** **Open Seat**

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**Q4 Do you identify as LGBTIQ?** **No, but I strive to be a LGBTIQ ally!**  
Is there anything else about your identity that you'd like us to know?:  
I am a woman of color.

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**Q5 Are you a member of the GLBT Alliance?** **No, but I'd like information on how I can become a member.**

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**Q6** Please describe your qualifications for the elected position you seek. Include your main issues, priorities if elected, key endorsements, plus anything else that you'd like our members to know about you and your candidacy.

I am running for Watsonville City Council because I want to give back to the community that welcomed me over 20 years ago as a social services professional. I earned an Associate of Arts from Fullerton Community College and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology and Psychology from California State University – Fullerton. I also completed a Non-Profit Management Certificate program from San Jose State University and courses in the Academic Counseling Master's program. I've served on the Watsonville Planning Commission for the last 5 years, with the previous year as the Chair of the Commission, where I have advocated for policies and businesses to improve Watsonville's economic and housing vitality. I am a strong supporter of womxn's rights, LGBTQI+, healthcare for all, sustainable and alternative transportation to single passenger automobiles, free or low-cost community college education, organized labor and several other progressive causes. As an executive director of local nonprofits, I served on several committees to address school dropout and gang prevention; mental health and substance use services; and other public health issues, such as violence prevention. Throughout the years, I have collaborated with other nonprofits, law enforcement, and several public health governmental entities to address and advocate for services to underserved communities. In 2016, I was elected as South County's Democratic Central Committee member. During that time, I managed the So. County Democratic office. I am also Co-Chair of the Pajaro Valley Cesar Chavez Democratic Club. I received the Democrat of the Year and Democrat of Region 7 Awards in 2017. My priorities are to expand affordable housing programs; improve accessibility of resources and services for mental health needs; expand safe places for all youth to assemble, collaborate and grow; improve employment opportunities; and protect our wetlands. Endorsements: SEIU Local 2015, Monterey/Santa Cruz Counties Building Trades, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, United Food & Commercial Workers, Santa Cruz for Bernie, Watsonville Mayor Lowell Hurst, Watsonville City Council Member Felipe Hernandez, Watsonville Planning Commissioner Chair Anna Kammer, Watsonville Planning, Commissioner Jenni Veitch Olson, Watsonville Planning Commissioner Rick Danna, Former Watsonville City Council Member/Mayor Dennis Osmer, Former Watsonville Planning Commissioner Bill Neighbors, Former Watsonville Planning Commissioner Marty Corley, Santa Cruz City Council Member Martine Watkins, Scotts Valley Vice Mayor Jack Dilles, Monterey County, Supervisor and Former Watsonville Mayor Luis Alejo, San Benito County Supervisor Robert Rivas, Santa Cruz County Office of Education Superintendent Michael Watkins, Santa Cruz County Office of Education Superintendent Elect Faris Sabbah, Santa Cruz County Office of Education Trustee Abel Sanchez Valencia, Pajaro Valley Unified School District Trustee Maria Orozco, Franklin-McKinley School District Governing Board Member Omar Torres, Aurelio Salazar, Jr. Vice President Hartnell College Board of Trustees. (All titles for identifying purposes only.)

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**Q7** Why are you seeking the endorsement of Santa Cruz County's grassroots LGBTIQ political organization, the GLBT Alliance?

I am seeking the endorsement of the Santa Cruz County's GLBTIQ Alliance because I have spent most of my adult life committed to social justice and equity for all. As a woman of color, I have strived to learn, understand and find common ground with every marginalized and underrepresented community. We all have a right and deserve to be treated with dignity and respect.

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**Q8** Please tell us about any past or current experiences or involvement you've had addressing LGBTIQ issues or work you've done to support the LGBTIQ community.

As a young health peer counselor working in a community clinic in Los Angeles during the 1980's, I provided outreach, translation during health visits, and sexually transmitted disease education to the Latino Gay community. I participated in several marches and events supporting LGBTQ causes in Southern California. During my work as an executive director for a local Watsonville nonprofit, we partnered with the Diversity Center and were funded to implement a program to address the tobacco industry's efforts to target LGBTIQ+ youth. Most recently, in collaboration with Las Revolunas, I helped organize the first Womxns and Trans Rally in Watsonville on International Women's Day.

**Q9** What historic political or civil rights struggles are you familiar with that impact LGBTIQ equality?

I grew up in Los Angeles with people from various parts of the world, including race and sexual orientation. I attended some of the marches and events in the early 80's to outlaw discrimination based on sexual orientation. I'm familiar with the Clinton's "Don't ask, Don't tell" military policy. The Hate Crimes Sentencing Enhancement Act was a win for most marginalized communities, which under the current administration may be at risk. and after many years of fighting the courts, Same sex Marriage was supported by a sitting president, Obama. I believe the LGBTIQ community along with other communities of color have overcome many employment, housing, and healthcare discrimination challenges. Unfortunately, under the current administration, the progress made may be at risk.

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**Q10** What is your philosophy about working with minority communities of which you are not a member, and how will this manifest in your future work with the LGBTIQ community?

I learned early on to be open and get to know the community I live in or work with. Because I'm a woman of color, sometimes people make assumptions about me. I try not to do the same about communities of which I'm not a member. In the 80's, I was invited to attend a weekend women of color's retreat. There were 100 women from all over California. I and another woman from the Bay Area were the only cis women. I learned a lot from them and about them. It also gave me an opportunity and foundation to reflect on some of my own biases and the steps I needed to work on. I will always be grateful for that experience.

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**Q11** Please describe any programs you know of that impact the LGBTIQ community and that are governed by or funded through the elected office you are running for? Include any suggestions you may have for improving these programs.

I'm not familiar with any programs funded specifically for the LGBTIQ Watsonville community. Watsonville and Pajaro Valley High Schools have clubs to support LGBTIQ youth. I would like to work closely with those clubs to learn about how the city and the school district can collaborate to be more welcoming and inclusive.

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**Q12** If elected, how would you use your position to help further issues of importance to the LGBTIQ community?

I will continue to be an ally and provide opportunities for young LGBTIQ people to be more involved in local government to highlight their issues of high importance.

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**Q13** If you receive the GLBT Alliance's endorsement, will you display it in your campaign literature?

**Yes, please send me the GLBT Alliance's logo (jpg file) so I can proudly announce the endorsement on my campaign literature, social media and website!**

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