

1. Affordable Housing: Estimates show nearly half of all D.C. renters spend more than 30% of their income on rent. What resources, if any, will you implement to create more affordable housing options in the District?

My approach starts with preservation. Displaced residents may not be coming back. Residents need a real and funded path to live, stay, and age in the District. I'd advocate to maintain strong tenant rights, including the Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act, and for the Planned Unit Development process to be leveraged more aggressively to require that every developer receiving public subsidy include workforce housing components. Encouraging tenants with stable wages preserves our existing units and allow those who develop a community to remain in it.

For production, I will require that every developer receiving public subsidy, zoning relief, or tax incentives include affordable, workforce housing as a condition of approval. Stakeholder engagement requires that I calibrate requirements with advocates and developers, so mandates are ambitious enough to produce a real effect in stabilizing area median income and keeping market rates affordable.

Finally, I will align existing affordable housing preservation funds with a single clear priority to ensure the living conditions of our residents. Preservation is less expensive than production and more just than displacement.

2. Safe Housing: What policies will you advocate for to provide safe housing to people across D.C., including those living in poor rental conditions?

DC residents deserve housing that is affordable, accessible, and safe. Year after year, the Department of Buildings fails to perform timely inspections, resolve violations, and maintain landlord compliance records, because of a lack of certified and trained professionals for inspections. Yet, at a time when the federal government fired many of the most qualified people in the country, we as a city are unable to train or retool them, despite the existence of an educational institution like UDC and other notable institutions, to demonstrate their expertise as DC public servants. We require a high-performing school in every ward to provide a safe environment for children.

I've tracked attendance reports. Children living in poor rental conditions rely on schools as their most stable environment. A school provides breakfast and lunch. A school can provide a quality education. With an investment in adequate before- and after-school programming, our children can engage in enriching activities. Schools fundamentally minimized the burden on students who live in poor rental conditions by maximizing the exploration of their options. I kept them too busy to take over anything. And, it why we need a high-performing school in every ward.

3. Shelter Capacity: D.C.'s low-barrier shelters are often at high capacity. Do you think there are enough shelter beds and locations, including spaces for women, men, youth, and LGBTQ+ individuals? If not, what new facilities (low-barrier, non-congregate, etc) would you advocate for?

No. There are not enough shelter beds, and the distribution of existing capacity does not reflect the actual need. DC's shelter system has chronic gaps for women fleeing domestic violence, LGBTQ+ youth, transgender individuals, and seniors. They are predictable failures of a shelter system that cannot reliably serve them. I will advocate for expanded non-congregate shelter options.

A Shelter is not a solution. It is a bridge, and every bridge needs a destination. We must look at our rental market. Many of our residents experiencing homelessness work. Yet, they are locked out of an affordable rental market. We must leverage workforce housing policies, allowing public servants to access the community beyond their work, to have stable incomes for new development and the preservation of existing units. Residents must have accessible options to thrive beyond a shelter and a pathway to stable rents.

4. Encampment Closures: D.C. officials recently said the city "shouldn't have encampments" and has been closing encampments regularly for the last several years. What is your stance on the city's encampment engagement policy, and should the city be closing more or fewer encampments? What resources should people be offered during encampment closures?

Closing encampments without offering genuine housing alternatives does not solve homelessness. It moves it. And moving a problem is a failure of both policy and basic human decency. We may not be a state, but we must act like a state and do it many times better in our fight for statehood.

I understand the concerns that drive encampment closure policies. The pandemic showed us the fragility of our quality of life. But the answer to visible homelessness is not making it less visible. It is making it less common (rare, brief, and nonrecurring), and that requires investment in the housing to move people off the street permanently.

An encampment should be cleaned regularly. Compare this to someone living in poor living conditions. Outreach workers, not police, should lead engagement so that personal belongings are protected while we discard trash to ensure sanitary conditions. The goal is not fewer visible encampments, but fewer people without homes. I will govern as if I understand the difference.

5. Vouchers: This year, the mayor's budget proposal does not include any new housing vouchers for people experiencing homelessness. How would you advocate to respond to homelessness given the city's limited resources?

The mayor's decision to include no new housing vouchers in the FY27 budget is a choice. Vouchers are cost-effective tools we have for moving people out of homelessness and into stable housing. Eliminating new vouchers during a housing crisis does not solve a fiscal problem. It demonstrates the District's inability to retool qualified human capital from the federal government to serve locally as public servants or new small and local businesses. Many federal workers still struggle to find work, hurting income tax revenue while increasing unemployment expenditures, and risking losing their housing, needing to rely more on government assistance. We have failed to capitalize on the excess supply of qualified human capital to solve our most stubborn issues, like access to reliable and quality services and programming.

This is not just bureaucratic or administrative inefficiency. I will also push for reforms that make existing vouchers more effective: faster processing timelines, landlord incentive programs that expand the number of units accepting vouchers. I will apply the Government as a Service model to voucher administration, because a resident who qualifies for a voucher and cannot use it due to bureaucratic barriers has not been housed. They have failed by paperwork.

6. Stakeholder Input: How have you involved people with lived experience of homelessness in your policy-making, and how will you in the future?

People with lived experience of homelessness are experts whose knowledge is essential to building policy that actually works.

I have seen firsthand what happens when the people closest to a problem are excluded from its solution. As a school leader, the most important insights I received came from students, families, and community members who experienced our system's failures directly. The same principle applies here. Formerly homeless residents, current shelter residents, and people living unsheltered know things about what works, what fails, and what is missing that no policy document or fiscal analysis can capture.

I will establish a Lived Experience Advisory Council composed of current and formerly homeless DC residents, with dedicated seats for women, LGBTQ+ individuals, youth, and seniors, that meets regularly with my office and reviews policy proposals before they are introduced. This council will have a documented role in the legislative process, not a ceremonial one. When their input shapes a decision, I will say so publicly. When it does not, I will explain why.

I will also ensure that outreach, shelter intake, and housing navigation services are designed with input from the people who use them, because services designed without that input consistently fail the people they are meant to serve.

Lived experience is expertise. I will resource it, respect it, and let it shape what I do.