

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?

This is not only a rent affordability issue, but a home purchase affordability issue because if you are paying more than 30 percent of your income on rent you can't save for a downpayment.

There are several tools we can use:

1. Build more rental housing. With more inventory, prices will go down. One dynamic that has been happening is that market-rate rental prices have been so high that even higher-priced renters are competing for more affordable units.
2. Make renters more aware of affordable options, such as Inclusionary Zoning units in buildings across the city. DC changed its approach to IZ by making it building by building, but now there is a knowledge gap by renters of what buildings are IZ eligible and what that means for renters. We need to help renters know what buildings are IZ eligible. We could easily build an app for this.
3. Help renters understand what buildings are rent-stabilized. We built a database for this, but it's not really working. This is unacceptable, given how much time and effort has been put into this.
4. Utilize our housing production trust fund better. There is a bill before the council right now addressing this.

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?

I am a big fan of our D.C. Attorney General's housing unit. There are good landlords out there, but we need to provide a disincentive to our bad landlords. That disincentive is showing that DC will enforce housing conditions law, and they will pay for not providing safe housing.

When I joined the Council, I was surprised there was no maintenance and repair fund for our public housing communities. I used creative financing—unused project-based housing voucher money—to create that fund. We have now made the funding part of our budget, and we should continue to do so.

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?

I would advocate to make our low barrier shelters humane, clean, and safe. My sense from talking to people is that we have a lot of work to do. We need more spots for LGTBQ+ individuals, and it needs to be safe and humane.

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?

We want our residents in housing, not encampments. The goal should be housing first. The problem with our encampment approach is that it's about getting rid of encampments, not getting people into housing. That needs to change. Our problem won't go away by moving or trying to erase it; it goes away when people move into housing and live successfully in it. This means that we need to make good on the Support part of Permanent Supportive Housing.

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?

I want to work as a Council member on improving our administration of housing vouchers: I was just at a forum sponsored by Empower DC in which a woman told me she waited months and months to be able to get a rental unit with her voucher. With funding less free flowing, we need to get the most out of every voucher that we can put into use.

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

Before I became a D.C. council member, and for some time during my time on the Council, I volunteered with Miriam’s Kitchen. It helped me get to know some people experiencing homelessness and understand their lives: What I learned is there are many paths to get to that point of relying on Miriam’s Kitchen, but the one path to get out of it is stable housing.

I will continue to meet with homeless residents and those advocating for homeless residents, such as the People for Fairness Coalition. I will continue to ask them to testify at hearings, and I will continue to visit our shelters.