



## 2023 Denver Municipal Race Questionnaire

Thank you so much for taking our survey! We are excited to learn more about how you plan to address some of the issues that matter most to our immigrant community in Denver. This survey is meant to provide some background information on critical issues in Denver, please feel free to reach out to our team after you have completed the survey if you have additional questions on any of the topics discussed.

We also want to prioritize voter education and plan to publish answers publicly afterwards. We will be reaching out to all candidates in the Denver Mayoral race with the opportunity to respond. We do not plan to endorse any candidate in the Denver Mayoral race but hope this survey serves as a way for our constituents to differentiate between candidates.

This survey includes values based “yes or no” statement questions as well as qualitative open ended questions. We encourage you to add as much detail to your open ended answers as you can.

### Candidate Background Information

**Tell us more about your campaign.**

**1. Candidate name**

[Dr. Abass Y Bamba](#)

**2. What is the candidate's party affiliation, regardless of whether the race is partisan or non-partisan?**

[Unaffiliated](#)

**3. Who should we contact if we have questions? (i.e. name of campaign manager, if applicable)**

[Melissa Santos, Campaign Manager](#)

4. What is the best email to contact the campaign/candidate?

[infoline@drbamba4denver.com](mailto:infoline@drbamba4denver.com)

5. What is the best phone number to contact the campaign/candidate?

**508-951-3257**

6. Campaign social media handles listed by platform

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100088568872948>

7. Campaign website

<https://drbamba4denver.com>

8. Why is the candidate running for office (e.g. platform)?

Make cost of living affordable for the working class with cap on rents, foods, reduction of property taxes, and defeat homelessness. To take Denver out the homelessness crisis, high cost of living, public safety and clean environment

## On the Issues

Tell us more about your values and how you would tackle major issues impacting the immigrant community in Denver.

9. In 2017, Community leaders in Denver pushed council to pass an ordinance to limit police collaboration with ICE and create the Denver Immigrant Legal Services Fund (DILSF) to support community members through immigration legal proceedings.<sup>1</sup> Since the program launched in 2018, local nonprofit legal service providers have received a total of more than \$1.5M in funds to provide Denver residents with direct legal representation and affirmative relief services including support with DACA renewals and citizenship applications.<sup>2</sup> Denver residents served by this fund - who on average have called Denver home for 17 years - have been able to stay with their families and in their communities thanks to the support provided!

While the fund has been critical to expanding legal services for hundreds of

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<sup>1</sup> <https://denverite.com/2017/08/31/heres-else-denver-will-help-immigrants-risk-deportation/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://denverfoundation.org/denver-immigrant-legal-services-fund/>

Denver residents, many continue to go through immigration proceedings without representation due to gaps in available resources.

**a. Are you in support of Denver’s Immigrant Legal Defense Fund?**

Yes.

**b. What will you do to continue expanding the Denver Immigrant Legal Services Fund (DILSF) to ensure Denver residents have access to counsel in immigration proceedings?**

Create awareness among the public at large. Nothing else other than whatever is required by law to keep the fund.

**10.** The 2017 ordinance also sought to tackle long standing issues for the immigrant community regarding police collaborating with ICE and federal immigration officials. The passage of the ordinance made strides to protect Denver residents from federal overreach by prohibiting Denver city employees from asking about immigration status or sharing that information with federal agents and prohibiting Denver law enforcement from holding individuals beyond their release date for ICE.<sup>3</sup>

While this change marked a powerful shift in Denver standing up for the equal rights of all residents, there are still some key practices Denver’s Sheriff Department engages in that contribute to the separation of our immigrant families. The Denver Sheriff’s Department continues to inform ICE proactively when undocumented Denver residents are being released from custody. This practice of notifying ICE of individual release leads directly to the incarceration of undocumented Denverites and separation of Denver families through deportation.

**a. Do you support ending the practice of ‘ICE notifications’ in Denver?**

Yes.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://denverite.com/2017/08/28/ice-cooperation-bill/>

**B.What additional measures would you propose to limit police collaboration with ICE in Denver?**

ICE is a separate entity under different jurisdictions. Denver police have no business reporting illegal immigrants to ICE. Unless the action of the concerned person is endangering public safety, such a murder, drugs dealers, and any crime classified as first-degree crime. As the commander in Chief of the police department I will stop such collaboration.

11. Our groundbreaking report titled, **“Sabotaging Sanctuary: How Data Brokers give ICE access to Colorado’s Data and Jails,”**<sup>4</sup> shows how ICE contracted with the data broker company Appriss Solutions, a subsidiary of LexisNexis, to receive jail-booking data from a Colorado jail alert system (VINE). The system alerts ICE agents immediately when anyone on the agency’s target lists is booked into county jails, allowing ICE to arrest them upon release. By contracting with 3rd party data brokers ICE can obtain information on hundreds of millions of people across the country.

Further, our report also shows that Denver’s ongoing contract with LexisNexis permits information sharing with other LexisNexis customers, including ICE.

- a. **Do you support efforts to limit expansive surveillance by third party entities and law enforcement/ICE?**

Yes.

- b. **What steps would you take to address this issue in Denver?**

I will introduce what I call in my manifesto the community of accepted surveillance standards. Do what it is necessary without impeding individual and collective liberty.

Based on a universal declaration of human rights, every human being is entitled to privacy. I will enforce that legal protection to limit hyper-surveillance.

**12.** When Mayor Hancock signed the 2017 ordinance he stated the administration's goal of "affirm[ing] Denver's commitment to stand with immigrants and refugees" and "maintain Denver as a welcoming city where everyone can feel safe and thrive."<sup>5</sup> Over the past months migrants have been coming to Denver and the city has mobilized staff, shelter, and support to help people find security and stability.

**a. Do you support Denver's efforts to support newly arrived people?**

Yes.

**b. How do you think the city has done with the current plan to support newly arrived immigrants?**

I don't know what was the extend of the demand. I think the city has done certainly was possible with the mean at hands. The city has certainly done what was in their power. My administration will improve the current to help newly arrived people.

**c. What would you do as Mayor to support newly arrived people?**

We will continue the same program as the departing administration. My administration within its power (political, social and economic) will put everything in place to support those newcomers. Housing, work training to have skills for the labor market and much more.

**13.** H.R. 8433, introduced by Congressman Lofgren and Senator Padilla, revises the Renewing Immigration Provisions of the Immigration Act of 1929. The act allows the Secretary of Homeland Security to grant lawful permanent resident status to individuals who have been in the US since the registry date - which is currently January 1, 1972. Historically updates to the registry date have had bipartisan support with the last update happening under the Reagan Administration in 1986. This bill updates the date and changes it to a rolling cutoff so that an individual may qualify for lawful permanent resident status if they have been in the U.S. for at least seven years. This would benefit millions of undocumented Americans who currently have no path to citizenship, including

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<sup>5</sup> <https://denverite.com/2017/08/31/heres-else-denver-will-help-immigrants-risk-deportation/>

DACA and TPS recipients and their family members, farm workers, and essential workers.

a) **Would you support a rolling update to the US Registry Act?**

Yes

b) **Do you support a pathway to citizenship for all 11 million undocumented people?**

Yes

14. Though the timeline is not clear yet, we expect the 5th circuit to rule negatively on DACA, possibly ending the program in its entirety. With a split Congress, we are doubtful that a federal solution will come in time to aid the 11 million undocumented people who have built lives here in the US.

a. **Do you believe leaders in Denver have a role to play to support DACA recipients in the wake of a negative supreme court decision?**

Yes.

b. **Within your elected role in Denver, what *specific* actions would you take to support the community in the wake of a negative DACA decision?**

Explore other legal avenues. Create awareness among partners and other government entities, such as the state and federal level. Work with other stakeholders such as the press, human rights groups to form a coalition to create an alternative in case of negative decision.

15. As an immigrant rights coalition, our members have identified access to affordable and dignified housing as a top priority.

**A) If elected, what are you willing to do to expand access to affordable housing and to support Denver's immigrant community and workforce to meet their housing needs?**

The affordable housing is key point of my platform. I will put price cap on Rents based on AMI of each area. My administration will do everything within our power and possibility to keep the dignity of the immigrant community.

**B) Immigrants have also identified cost of housing as a key issue impacting mental health, financial stability, and the overall wellbeing of our communities. With housing costs and costs of living far surpassing raises in wages, **do you support local control on rent stabilization if the state repealed the ban on rent stabilization?****

Yes.

**16. Denver recently announced plans to wind down the federally funded Emergency Rental Assistance Program due to limited federal funding<sup>6</sup>. With a budget of over \$130 million, this program helped around 14,000 Denver families stay housed and displacement by offering to cover rent and utility debts. Cost of living in Denver remains inaccessibly high for too many working class Denverites and evictions are steadily climbing. **Would you support Denver reinvesting in the program to provide rental assistance at similar levels to Denver residents?****

Yes.

## **Connection to Community**

**Tell us more about the communities you work most closely with.**

**17. What grassroots leaders and organizations are supporting your campaign? Who are you accountable to?**

My campaign is accountable to every single denverite. While we are working with many other entities, we are not hostage of anyone. As a Mayor I will do what is the best for the community. My campaign is not accountable to anyone. My campaign has no patron. We are independent. We are counting on people's voices to keep that independence. Reason why my administration will have a free hand to execute my campaign pledges.

**18. What does co-governance mean to you? How do you hope to serve in partnership with the community as an elected official?**

My definition of the function and role of a mayor is like a modern day chief of a village. The head of village leads for and with the villagers to reach the well-being of

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<sup>6</sup> <https://denverite.com/2022/12/02/denver-emergency-rental-assistance-application-deadline/>

the community. Making Denver an A++ working, resting, welcoming, and entertaining and living place for residents requires some level of co-governance with community leaders and community members. That is why I call myself The People's Mayor. I am an immigrant. I drove the cab, the bus. I have been a security guard. I have been a homeless man. I understand hardship, I understand what it takes to fight back, to get a better life and be accepted. That is why I am a write-in candidate "Abass Bamba". I want the people to write-in "Abass Bamba" which is a clear mandate meaning I have people's power to act. That is the most clear co-governance and together we will make this place safe and welcoming for all.

Co-governance is the backbone of any successful social governance. That is why I am the only candidate talking about people forum I will be having every 90 days meeting community leaders in face-to-face meetings. I am a write-in candidate. For me to get elected will require a tremendous amount of effort. But it will be the most beautiful way of getting elected with a people's mandate.