



2023 Denver Mayoral 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: [Mike Johnston](#)
2. What is the candidate's party affiliation, regardless of whether the race is partisan or non-partisan? [Democrats](#)
3. Who should we contact if we have questions? (i.e. name of campaign manager, if applicable) [Jordan Fuja](#)



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

jordan@mikejohnstonformayor.com

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

281-217-1144

6. Campaign social media handles listed by platform

Twitter: [@mikejohnstonco](#); Facebook: [@mikejohnstonco](#)

7. Campaign website www.mikejohnstonformayor.com

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

I'm running for mayor because I believe in the City of Denver and I see a path that can bring the city together and make our city work again. I have a long track record of bringing broad coalitions together to fix Denver's toughest problems, and I want to continue doing that as Mayor, from ending homelessness to making housing more affordable to improving public safety, in order to make Denver a vibrant, safe, and affordable city for everyone.

9. Do you support a small tax on landlords to fund legal representation for tenants who are being evicted?

Answer not listed in spreadsheet



On the Issues

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

10. 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.¹ 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.² 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 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?**

All Denverites, regardless of their citizenship, deserve the right to fair representation and Denver's Immigrant Legal Defense Fund provides this crucial assistance, which is why I fully support it. As mayor, I will work to ensure the DILSF is fully funded and accessible to everyone by working with local non-profits and immigration advocates.

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

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



11. 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.³

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

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

Denver should be a city that is welcoming and embraces everyone, regardless of their immigration status. Our city is stronger when the people who live here feel safe, supported, and have the opportunity to succeed. When people are nervous about deportation or ICE knocking on their door, they can't do the work they need to do to help themselves and their families thrive. To limit police collaboration with ICE in Denver, I would make sure to re-evaluate our Police and Sheriff Chiefs to ensure they are aligned with the goals of my administration.

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



12. Our groundbreaking report titled, “**Sabotaging Sanctuary: How Data Brokers give ICE access to Colorado’s Data and Jails**,”⁴ 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?

The City of Denver should be contracting with organizations that match our values and work daily to uphold them. As Mayor, I would re-evaluate our contract with LexisNexis and take steps to renegotiate so that information sharing is not permitted on their end or work to end the contract and negotiate with other data organizations who will not share information with ICE.

13. 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

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https://notechforice.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Sabotaging-Sanctuary_Final-Report_Design-4.pdf?link_id=2&can_id=c3f37b433cea47238c8ae84f743f8f72&source=email-new-report-shows-ice-uses-data-brokers-to-skirt-sanctuary-laws&email_referrer=&email_subject=new-report-shows-ice-uses-data-brokers-to-skirt-sanctuary-laws



thrive.”⁵ 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?

The City of Denver and the broader network of community non-profits has done an admirable job supporting an unprecedented influx of immigrants and refugees.

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

We need to be prepared for additional waves of migrants that may arrive, and my first step would be to pursue a regional approach. Denver cannot handle this volume of inflow all the time, but we can partner with other cities around the region and around the State who would help absorb some of the migrants as their services permit. The more advance planning we do the better prepared our partners would be. We also need to be preparing to support migrants in the amnesty application process. Additionally, there is a tremendous need for labor all across the metro region, so we must prepare to help them immediately get to work when they get documentation, since that is precisely what our undocumented neighbors want—a steady job.

14. 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

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



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 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

15. 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?

I have been working on a solution to this problem proactively for more than a year, long before I got into the mayor's race, alongside community leaders like Luis Antezana and Marissa Molina. I am the only one in the race to release a public plan on our equity platform to address how we will ensure that 14,000 DACA recipients in Colorado don't lose their jobs. DACA recipients are an important part of our fabric as a city, and overturning DACA would be bad for our families and kids, bad for our economy, and bad for Denver. Leaders in Denver have a responsibility to



ensure DACA recipients can continue to live, work, and play in the city they call home.

I will stand by our undocumented residents and create a pathway for DACA recipients to work if the program is eliminated. I have worked with allies to develop a solution that I think will create a national model for how cities and states can protect DACA recipients even after a negative Supreme Court opinion.

First, I will keep DACA recipients connected to lawful employment. Our city, like our nation generally, faces a labor shortage. But we have thousands of recent immigrants who are currently working under DACA permits and could lose their jobs as many predict the Supreme Court will eliminate DACA in 2024, leaving the future in doubt for those workers. We can prevent that by providing a mechanism for employers to employ those workers legally. As Mayor, I will lead a public private partnership to create staffing agencies that could function as limited liability companies (LLCs) that could employ undocumented residents as contractors. These staffing agencies can contract with existing employers to help provide services they need and want, and then pay DACA recipients as contractors for those services provided. This program is a win-win: we can serve the needs of our undocumented neighbors while addressing the labor shortage simultaneously. Our DACA recipients help make Denver vibrant. We need to keep our promise to them that they can work and live here.

16. 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?

Many immigrants leave their homes and come to America in hopes to find a steady job and a better life for their family, and having access to affordable housing is a key part of that. I spent the past two years traveling around the state and the country working with housing experts and visiting



cities that were doing a much better job solving the housing crisis. I realized there were three problems, regulatory obstacles that slowed down permitting, sustainable public funding for affordable housing, and amplifying the voices of the silent majority that wants to bring down the price of housing. With housing supply failing to keep pace with growth, Denver is quickly becoming a city that only the rich can afford. As Mayor, I will make affordable housing one of my top priorities so the nurses, firefighters, and workers who serve our city everyday can afford to live here. My plan for affordable housing will utilize funds made available through Prop 123 to do the following:

Create over 25,000 permanently affordable units so teachers, nurses, and firefighters can live in the city they serve.

Cut the regulatory red tape by requiring the City of Denver to approve affordable housing permits within 90 days.

Prevent rent increases so that eligible Denver residents won't pay more than 30% of their income to rent.

Build mixed income developments that ensure a healthy mix of market rate and affordable units and create diverse neighborhoods.

Put money in people's pockets by helping renters in eligible units save up to \$100 every time they pay rent.

Provide down payment assistance to help working families buy homes and support community land trusts to make buying a home more affordable.

You can read my full detailed plan and budget here:

<https://mikejohnstonformayor.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/My-publications-Housing-and-Affordability-Policy-Paper.pdf>

- 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?**

No



17. Denver recently announced plans to wind down the federally funded Emergency Rental Assistance Program due to limited federal funding⁶. 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.

a. 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.

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

I've earned the endorsement of Colorado Black Roundtable Chair John Bailey and former Councilman Albus Brooks, as well as YIMBY Denver, which is an organization that pushes for more affordable housing in our city. I've also earned the support of local immigration advocate Luis Antezana from Juntos, Lydia Prado, the visionary behind the Dahlia Center and Lifespan local, Theresa Pena, the Housing Coalition, and many others. I'm proud to have the support of these grassroots leaders who are pushing to make Denver a better, more equitable, more welcoming place for everyone, and I will continue to work with them and other community leaders to make that a reality.

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

Throughout my career, I've learned that the best way to make real change and actually get things done is by bringing everyone to the table, building broad coalitions of unlikely partners, and putting the work in to make a difference. When I was elected to the senate I was the only legislator to open a community office in

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



the heart of one of my most disadvantaged neighborhoods. I then set up a citizens cabinet where local community members could advise me on policy issues with which they had their own lived experience and expertise. This is the kind of authentic community partnership I will seek as mayor. That's what I've done in the past when I successfully passed the ASSET bill with bipartisan support, passed universal preschool, and led the campaign to pass Prop 123, Colorado's first statewide initiative to address homelessness and affordable housing, and that's what I'll continue to do as Mayor so we can fix our city's toughest challenges and make Denver the best city in America.