



MCMC: MoCo Council Candidates Questionnaire - 2026 Primary

The Montgomery County Muslim Council (MCMC) is a 501c(4) civic-engagement organization located in Montgomery County, Maryland, focused on elevating the needs and topics related to the Muslim Community and broader community in Montgomery County. MCMC engages with local elected officials, advocating for and representing our residents, institutions, children/students, and more.

On behalf of the Montgomery County Muslim Council (MCMC), we present the following set of questions to all Montgomery County Council candidates, both At-Large and District seats, who are running during the 2026 Primary elections. We greatly appreciate your participation and responses to these questions, as it will allow our community to be informed about issues pertaining to them, and the positions taken by each candidate. MCMC plans on publishing responses to its website.

Please return your responses via email to: president@mcmcmd.org

Please return your responses by: **Wednesday, April 29 2026 (COB)

Question 1

Topic: Civil Rights

Montgomery County is one of the most diverse counties in the nation. Accordingly, many MoCo residents who are members of the Arab and Muslim community have engaged in public protests but have unfortunately experienced a curtailing of their first amendment rights to free speech. This includes doxxing, student and teacher suspensions, unequal response by local police.

1. What are your thoughts on the county's response thus far, in light of what was just shared? What has worked? What has not worked?

Montgomery County must protect the First Amendment rights of all of our residents and work with communities to understand specific threats they're facing not just to their freedom to peacefully protest but also to their safety. I will hold our school system and local law enforcement accountable for abiding by fair and equal policies and procedures across the board.

2. What specific steps will you take to protect the free speech of residents and students, regardless of their positions on issues? What is your stance on the county's response to peaceful advocacy and protests? How will you protect the free speech rights of residents on local and global issues?

I will inquire with the appropriate departments or agencies when issues arise,

demand equal and fair treatment according to the law, and push for improved policies, procedures, and personnel in legislation and through the Council's annual budget process.

Question 2

Topic: Non-Profit Support

Many Muslim-led non-profits, like MCMF (Montgomery County Muslim Foundation), provide critical social services that the county cannot. Some may not even be aware of grant funding opportunities let alone have experience applying for competitive grants.

1. How will you ensure an equitable approach to communicating and granting funding for faith-based community organizations?

I support working with you and your members to survey Muslim-led organizations to understand if they didn't know grant opportunities were available or why they were not awarded grants if they did apply and were unsuccessful. We can have a fair and impartial process while also being more proactive to make sure underrepresented communities in prior grant rounds are communicated to effectively, in partnership with trusted community leaders.

Question 3

Topic: Housing and Displacement

Montgomery County is becoming increasingly unaffordable.

1. What do you propose to prevent current skyrocketing housing costs across Montgomery County, especially with residents facing record high interest rates?

This issue is personal for my peers and me, who increasingly see owning a home as inaccessible not only to low-income residents, but to teachers, firefighters, and even federal workers and upper-middle class professionals. As a renter who checks Zillow often, I know that there was only one single-family, detached home for sale in District 1 for under \$900,000 last week. Here are three priorities for taking on our shortage of affordable housing:

- **Strengthen Our Affordable Housing Programs.** My master's thesis is about the economics of low-income housing. Today, the largest source of federal support for low-income housing is the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit. However, rules at the State level have meant that Montgomery County has been largely boxed out of this program. I will reform how Low-Income Housing Tax Credits are administered in Maryland, so Montgomery County can implement more projects to create affordable housing. I will continue to fund the Housing Production Fund, which is generating new mixed-income housing throughout the County. And since our high land costs stand in the way of affordable housing construction, I will work to leverage publicly and non-profit owned land to make more projects possible.
- **Help Seniors Age in Place:** I will work to modernize our county's Senior

Property Tax Credit to give longtime homeowners relief from climbing assessments. By lowering the required time in a residence from 40 to 25 years, we can open up eligibility to more longtime residents and provide them with the financial stability to remain in Montgomery County.

- **Build the Right Housing in the Right Places: The dream of homeownership that was achieved by our parents and grandparents is out of reach for too many. I will work to leverage existing sites like the White Flint Mall that are ripe for redevelopment to ensure we grow without causing county residents unnecessary growing pains. Neighborhoods like King Farm, Crown, Kentlands, and Pike & Rose offer us successful, thriving, and vibrant blueprints. When we center growth in business districts, we see businesses grow and become neighborhood staples. I will work to unlock the pipeline of projects and address policies standing in the way of already approved housing actually happening.**

2. What is your plan to prevent the displacement of immigrant and low-income families, who have been disproportionately impacted?

I support expanding investment in the preservation of existing affordable housing and adjusting Right of First Refusal laws to make it easier for tenant organizations to take over ownership of a building at the time of a potential sale - with the financial assistance of the County and affordable housing providers.

I also believe we can do more “no net displacement” projects in partnership with affordable housing providers and private developers. A prime example of such a project was Chevy Chase Lake in District 1, where the redevelopment of a series of aging properties that included Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC) housing allowed these residents the chance to stay in brand new, higher quality housing in the same community. It actually resulted in an overall increase in income-restricted affordable housing units while keeping these families in place, albeit in a new building with more modern amenities.

Question 4

Topic: Housing and Displacement

For many families (1st generation, 2nd generation, immigrant, etc.), transit is a lifeline.

1. What are your specific plans to improve the reliability of public transportation (such as the Ride-On bus system and completion of Purple Line, and more), as well as pedestrian safety in all parts of the county, but especially in the Up-County region?

I have spent much of my career in providing expanded, higher quality, and more frequent transit service for those underserved. I know how to make our Ride On system work more nimbly and efficiently for isolated communities. While working as staff at the Council, I helped create the Ride On route to Tobytown - a historic African-American community in upper Potomac that had been isolated and where many families didn't have access to a car. The Tobytown route connected this community to schools, the Rockville Metro, commercial shopping centers, and The

Universities at Shady Grove. I helped the County devise and create the Great Seneca Transit Network, connecting Travilah, North Potomac, Gaithersburg, and Rockville with high-quality, faster bus service.

A decade ago, we were confronting tragic deaths - many pedestrians - in District 1 and I brought Montgomery County into the Vision Zero movement to address traffic crashes. Now, we are beginning to see the results of safety projects. Still, far too many people die and are injured on our roads. I've led safety initiatives to "bend the curve" at the state level. At the County, I'll make sure we invest in improvements that make driving, walking, biking, and rolling safe.

Question 5

Topic: Healthcare Access

Health insurance - and healthcare costs generally - continue to rise, making access to healthcare nearly impossible for some in our county.

1. What legislative measures will you support to bridge the gap in healthcare access for uninsured or under-insured residents in our community?

We must invest more in Montgomery Cares and our terrific network of nonprofit health clinics that serve those uninsured or underinsured. This will be a budget priority for me because it is one of the most effective and directly supportive social safety net services our County offers. I will also work with our Health and Human Services public health team and local nonprofit leaders to ensure fair and equal access to funding and the County's Montgomery Cares network for all clinics looking to provide quality care.

2. What legislation could you introduce or expand to bolster funding for free or reduced cost health clinics run by nonprofits in our county, such as medical clinics run by MCC (Muslim Community Center) and ICM (Islamic Center of Maryland)?

I support expanded funding for MCC and ICM. While there may not be a local legislative solution, I will support whatever law changes may be needed at the state or federal levels to make funding more available and more flexible to use so that collectively we can serve more people with quality care.

Question 6

Topic: County Budget

Fiscal responsibility and balancing the budget in coordination with the rest of the County Council and County Executive is a paramount responsibility of the County At-Large seat.

1. Do you support tax cuts, tax increases, or maintaining the status quo?

I oppose further tax increases because it is already too expensive in Montgomery County. In particular, I oppose the County Executive's proposed 6% property tax because it is not sustainable. Because it uses one-time revenues to pay for ongoing expenses, it will require another 9% property tax increase next year, to keep everything in this budget funded. A 15% property tax increase over two years is not what our community needs right now.

Local property and income taxes, utility costs, childcare costs, and other inflationary pressures have made it extremely difficult for working class families to survive in our community and have made it hard for retirees to afford to stay here. We cannot continue to make it more expensive to live here and expect people to stay or that increasing taxes will somehow make it easier for those in-need to achieve self-sufficiency.

2. Regardless of your approach, how would you propose paying for many of the county's programs?

We must grow a thriving, private-sector economy that offers good-paying, family-sustaining wages. That is the only way we can afford to provide the services we must with the growing needs our community faces. We cannot and won't be able to tax our way out of this challenge - and, in fact, further raising costs has already begun to have the effect of reducing our revenues instead of increasing them.

My plan for restoring and growing our tax base to strengthen our social safety net will include better highlighting the talented and knowledgeable people already in our county to employers, partnering with and investing in competitive and growing industries, supporting small businesses in being more successful from day one by reforming our permitting processes, and building a more effective set of workforce development offerings and trainings at all levels so our residents can more easily access family-sustaining careers.

I bring a unique background to actually make this happen. I have an MBA from MIT, and I was the youngest shareholder at the transportation planning firm where I worked for seven years because of my track record of building a successful book of business. I am the only candidate in this race who has submitted permitting plans and had to work through the cumbersome processes to get them approved. I bring a track record of experience to get our economy moving and this will be the top priority for me as a Councilmember.