



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?

I agree that the attacks on the rights of Muslim and Arab Americans is a problem and needs to be addressed. They have the right to gather, engage in free speech, and worship in peace. I take safety concerns seriously, and plan to engage with this and other marginalized communities to find ways to ensure that they are included in issues that impact them and that they are protected from violence and intimidation on the basis of their religion and background.

What works is law enforcement and schools working with protest organizers to have a shared understanding of expected size of the protest and what local ordinances allow regarding sound amplification, public thoroughways, etc to ensure participant and community safety. What does not work is punishing people or communities for exercising their rights

in a public forum. The Muslim community should be able to air their concerns and demand accountability from the government without fear from government agents who may disagree with the content of their speech.

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?

The right to free speech was among the first enshrined in this country's bill of rights and I believe that it is critical to our democracy and our nation's accountability to its citizens. I have participated in many marches, protests, and acts of civil disobedience for issues that are important to me. I will advocate that the protected free speech of our residents be respected and that law enforcement, schools, and other stakeholders be given guidance on how to best ensure public safety while respecting one of our most valued rights. It is not the place of law enforcement or other government entities to quell protected speech that they do not agree with and as a councilmember I will support the rights of this community to exercise their constitutional rights.

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?

The County's grant funding methods have not been strategic and have caused a number of issues for local nonprofits. I will push the county to ensure that grant funding is transparent, communicated broadly in the community, and open to all eligible organizations, including faith-based organizations. Notices of funding opportunities should be widely shared, and advertised through local interfaith collaboratives in order to ensure that all communities can be reached with critical social services.

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?

We need to use all tools available to tackle rising housing costs: new development, renovations of empty existing housing, and capping exploitative pricing. More dense housing development near transit can contribute to lower costs for families while providing opportunities to get around. I actually plan to propose a vacancy tax for housing that is not being fully utilized. Too many landowners have housing (like the abandoned apartment complexes near my home), that are being left to sit and rot because they don't want to invest the money required to provide housing in the community and would rather wait for property values to rise while creating a blight in the neighborhood. Landowners need to be discouraged from letting housing fall into such disrepair and encouraged to sell it to someone who will invest in the property and bring more housing for rent or purchase onto the market. And finally, landlords who exploitatively price their rental housing or use evictions to push out lower income renters need to be regulated and we need to expand the rights of tenants in this county. Tenant-landlord relationships are unequal, and tenant protections are needed to ensure that they are not exploited by landlords that hold more power in the current system.

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

To ensure that low income communities are not displaced, we need to ensure continued provision of affordable housing and new housing stock to reduce demand and bring down prices and rents. We need to amend current practices to ensure that designated affordable housing stays affordable, otherwise we will constantly face a shortage as affordable housing is converted to market rate. Finally, tenant protections can help prevent low-income and immigrant families, who are often renters, from unfair practices that landlords use to push them out of their homes and may ultimately push them out of the county.

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 will advocate more robust public transit, particularly "up-county." Our transit options, particularly "up county," are a relic from when this area was strictly suburban, but demand for housing in the county is quickly urbanizing the area and our transit system is not equipped to cope. I want to have buses that take people where they want to go, without having to transfer just because you don't want to go in a straight line. It seems that the routes are planned for efficiency, not for people. We also lack protected bike paths entirely, and have very few unprotected paths. Signage indicates that a cyclist can take the lane on 355, but I have yet to see anyone willing to take their life in their hands next to cars going 40+ mph. My neighborhood doesn't even have sidewalks to allow people to walk their children to the park safely. We need safe places for people to walk and bike and we need to reevaluate our bus system to account for where people need to go and how they move around the county, especially upcounty, where transit has been neglected most.

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?

I believe that healthcare is a human right, and that a denial of healthcare is a statement that those without means do not deserve to live healthy lives in our society. I support programs to expand healthcare services and health insurance to all residents. This may include supporting nonprofit healthcare partners to reach uninsured communities, or working with the State of Maryland to expand public options and awareness of public options for communities that may need to be reached.

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 can't speak directly to those specific nonprofits, as I believe that nonprofit funding should be a fair competitive process and do not want to bias in favor of specific organizations. However, I think all eligible nonprofits should be considered and that increased community needs should be considered for increased funding in the county budget, not cuts as some have proposed. Grant selection should be based on impact, however providing healthcare for a marginalized group that is not currently receiving adequate care is something that I think should also be prioritized.

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?

Montgomery County has been raising property taxes for years to cover budget shortfalls, and it is straining working families in this county. I support smart tax policies that ask high earning individuals and businesses that benefit from our county to pay their fair share without straining working families.

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

My spending priorities are schools (in desperate need of repairs and upgrades), improving transit, and ensuring that services can continue for our residents despite the shortfalls of the federal government. These priorities will require funding, which I believe can be attained through taxation on the highest earners, who have not been asked to pay their fair share, as well as vacancy tax or land tax on unutilized housing properties that have been left to rot rather than provide needed housing.