

Denver Mayoral Candidate Questionnaire - Mayor Michael Hancock

This questionnaire is presented on behalf of the Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition and the Refugee Action Coalition of Colorado to better understand the candidates' positions on key issues impacting the immigrant and refugee community.

Email address *

info@hancockfordenver.com

1.a. Do you support citywide policies or strategies to protect and assist Colorado's refugee population? *

Yes

No

1.b. Briefly explain your response. If you do support policies or strategies to protect Colorado's refugee population, what specific policies would you implement? *

Our Public Safety Enforcement Priorities Act supports our refugee community and is intended help make Denver's refugee population feel safe interacting with the city's public safety officials. I also issued an Executive Order to complement the ordinance, which includes specific work to engage with immigrants and refugees, as well as directives to city staff to ensure inclusion and safety for those communities. If new policies and strategies are needed, we are very open to conversations with stakeholders to determine what they would be.

2. Federal funding is being cut for refugee resettlement and integration programs and the State of Colorado currently provides no funding for such efforts, despite reports that show refugees provide net economic benefits to our communities. Would you consider the use of City/County of Denver's funds for integration efforts to assist Denver's refugee population should federal funding continue to be cut? *

Yes

No

Comments

We are absolutely open to those discussions should the need arise.

3. Under your leadership, the Legal Defense Fund for immigrants was created. Right now, it is supported only through amendments from the city council and donations. Do you support additional financial assistance from the City/County of Denver's general fund to continue the Legal Defense Fund at the amount of distribution from the first year (\$380,000)? *

Yes

No

Comments

We will continue to appropriate general fund dollars in the budget to support the Denver Immigrant Legal Services Fund until we have sufficient grant and community donation dollars to make the fund self-sufficient without public money. It is important to remember that in addition to City dollars, I helped launch the Legal Defense Fund with an initial \$50,000 in seed money.

4.a. Do you support additional protections/policies at the city/county level that would ensure individuals confronting the deportation process have access to the justice system and immigration courts? *

Yes

No

4.b. Briefly explain what policies and protections you would support. *

Every new action taken by the Trump White House that targets immigrants and refugees requires us to evaluate what policies need to be enacted to support and protect our immigrant and refugee community. As the need for those new policies comes to the forefront, whatever they may be, we are committed to working with the community and CIRC to develop them.

5.a. Do you agree with using family separation as a deterrent for undocumented immigrants coming across the Mexican border? *

Yes

No

5.b. What do you believe can be done at the city/county level to support families who have faced separation? *

Supporting reunification efforts is an avenue we could explore including in the work of our Immigrant Legal Services Fund.

6.a. In August 2017, you signed the Public Safety Enforcement Priorities Act prohibiting city/county officials from participating in federal immigration enforcement activities. Do you believe this policy has been effective? *

Yes

No

6.b. Please briefly explain your answer. *

One of the goals of the Public Safety Enforcement Priorities Act is to reassure our immigrant and refugee residents that Denver's public safety officials are there to protect them and their communities, not enforce federal immigration law. We see its effectiveness in every immigrant who calls in to report a crime or a safety issue in their community, rather than not reporting in fear that our officers will turn them over to ICE.

7. Data shows that underemployment of refugees and immigrants costs the city in terms of tax revenue and economic activity. What would you do to decrease barriers for refugees and immigrants seeking suitable workforce opportunities? *

We can increase efforts through our workforce development programs to engage immigrant and refugee residents and connect them to the positive, gainful employment opportunities.

8. Barriers to childcare, affordable housing, and transportation can be amplified in communities of color and communities where English is a second language. How do you propose to ensure equal access to these vital family supports? *

In July 2018, I launched an Equity Platform aimed at closing and eliminating these types of gaps. Solutions include increasing and improving resources, hiring resource navigators who are fluent in languages other than English, and providing written information and material in those languages as well. Our Office of Human Rights and Community Partnerships and the Denver Immigrant and Refugee Commission are also focused on eliminating barriers and ensuring equal access to services and supports.

9. Will you commit to ensuring immigrants and refugees are hired among your appointee selection? *

Yes

No

10.a. Do you support an Office for New Americans at the state level? *

Yes

No

10.b. If re-elected mayor of Colorado's largest municipality, how would you support the formation of such an office and how would you involve the refugee and immigrant community in the process? *

We've had great success engaging our immigrant and refugee community in the creation of our Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs. Our experience and the voices of our community would be an important asset in the creation of a statewide office, and I would hope to bring those experiences and voices to that conversation.

11. If re-elected, would you be willing to meet with members of the Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition and the Refugee Action Coalition of Colorado to discuss these issues? *

Yes

No

By typing my name below, I certify that I am authorized to answer these questions on behalf of Michael Hancock for Denver. *

April Valdez Villa

This form was created inside of Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning.

Google Forms