

NETWORK 49 MAYORAL CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

Candidate Name: Kam Buckner

1) Professional Background

1. What progressive policy issue/achievement are you most proud of?

There are several key legislative achievements that I'm incredibly proud of, including:

- a. [HB 5855](#): The Assault Weapons Ban. Makes it unlawful to manufacture, deliver, sell, or purchase an assault weapon. I co-sponsored this landmark legislation, which passed in the Illinois House of Representatives on the morning of January 6th, 2023. In the wake of the Highland Park shooting, this victory is a crucial step towards making the people of Illinois safer.
- b. [HB 4757](#): The Ghost Guns Ban. Prohibits the transfer, purchase, manufacture, importation, possession of unfinished frames or receivers and serialized firearms. I sponsored this legislation, which proved that we can take on the gun lobby and pass common-sense gun control legislation in our state.
- c. [HB 804](#): The Clean Energy Jobs Act (CEJA). This was the most comprehensive and consequential clean energy legislation in the United States, and I was proud to be a co-sponsor on this bill.
- d. [HB 2908](#): The Elected Representative School Board (ERSB). I was the lead negotiator on this bill, which was a priority for the Chicago Teachers Union. When the Mayor turned her back on a promise to get this done, I made sure we fulfilled the promise.
- e. [HB 3932](#): Task Force on Missing and Murdered Chicago Women Act. This legislation set the groundwork for examining the systemic causes behind violence that Chicago women and girls experience, tracking and reporting on data, and creating new policies to rectify the issue. I sponsored the legislation and am incredibly proud of the progress that it has enabled.
- f. [HB 4920](#): Extension of the EITC. I co-sponsored this legislation to bring pivotal additional tax credits to working folks in Illinois. Expanding its accessibility was a tremendous step towards building equity for Chicagoans.
- g. [HB 3904](#): Name, Image, Likeness Act. This generational legislation allowed college athletes to make money based on their name, image, and likeness which largely impacted women and minorities. This bill created equity and parity for a class of people who have been historically commodified but haven't been able to monetize their success, and paved the way for a national change by the NCAA.

2. What have you worked on/toward that you regret NOT having accomplished?

I am currently working towards passing [HB 3917](#), which will change the evidence-based funding formula to consider student need and lead to more equitable school funding. It hasn't passed yet, but I intend to get it passed before I become Mayor.

2) Climate Change / Sustainability

1. How will you fight and address the impacts of climate change? How do you plan to move Chicago towards a greener city?

I have a proven track record fighting for the kinds of solutions that can make a difference on climate change. I founded the Lake Shore Caucus to address erosion issues on Lake Michigan and create solutions across our state. I was a co-sponsor on the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA), which passed in 2021, and continues to be the most consequential and comprehensive clean energy bill passed in the United States.

As Mayor, I've laid out my [comprehensive plan for the environment](#) that will take us one step closer towards tackling the impacts of climate change and becoming a greener Chicago. It calls for establishing, staffing, and fully funding the Department of Environment (DoE). I will appoint a Commissioner to lead the department, rather than a Director, to ensure institutional integrity that

is not subject to mayoral inaction. The DoE will create a comprehensive plan to address existing environmental threats across Chicago and I'll prioritize that work.

2. What policies and practices will you initiate to promote environmental justice and reverse environmental racism which has steered hazardous industrial sites to be located in low-income communities?

Environmental justice is critical to building equity in our city, and I will continue to fight and advocate for better treatment in our most marginalized communities. I stood with Little Village and demanded that the Hilco report be released by the Inspector General after a recent implosion blanketed their community in dust. I stood with South Chicago to demand the city deny General Iron's application for a construction permit in our community. And I was the only candidate to speak up about the [green wastewater infrastructure](#) after recent storms and floods. My administration will make sure that we make decisions that have communities in mind and don't make unilateral decisions that disproportionately impact already disinvested communities.

3. Do you support the creation of a Chicago Department of the Environment?

Unequivocally yes – it's the first commitment I make in my environmental platform. I have not only committed to reinstating the Department of Environment in my environmental platform, but I will ensure it is fully staffed, fully funded, and led by a Commissioner-level leader (rather than a Director) to ensure institutional integrity within the office that is not subject to mayoral inaction. My administration would first and foremost task the DoE with creating a comprehensive plan to address existing environmental threats across Chicago.

4. How will you address preservation and protection of our lakefront to include fighting lakefront erosion and supporting ecosystem projects?

In Springfield, I founded the Lakeshore Caucus: this group of legislators that represents the lakefront works to address erosion issues on Lake Michigan and create solutions across our state. This group continues to advocate for protecting the shoreline and the communities along the shoreline. My environmental plan commits to coordinating with the Illinois Waterway system to put in a concerted effort to protect Lake Michigan, including constructing physical protections.

3) Health

1. What will you do to improve mental health services and how?

I'm the only candidate in this race who has released a [comprehensive mental health plan](#) that outlines my plan to improve access to mental health services in Chicago. I call for reopening the shuttered mental health clinics, standing up a true mental health responder program, piloting mobile mental health units to provide real-time support when it's needed, and more. I'm also committed to recouping state and federal funding for these initiatives that have been left on the table by the current administration.

2. What is your position on (a) Treatment Not Trauma, (b) opening closed mental health clinics, and (c) developing non-police responses to mental health emergencies?

(a) I'm a vocal supporter of the Treatment Not Trauma movement.

(b) I will reopen the closed mental health clinics; it's the first point on my mental health plan and it's a critically important step. I will also make sure 4 of those clinics are open 24/7 so that people can get the help they need when they need it.

(c) My administration will stand up a true responder model – not just a co-responder line. There are instances where a co-responder model is still too policed; this dedicated line will create a support unit that brings in mental health professionals to respond to mental health crises. I commit to this in my mental health plan as well.

3. What will you do to ensure equitable access to acute care hospitals in the city?

Public health, just like public housing and public education, has been used as a weapon against underprivileged communities, rather than a tool to build equity, for far too long. Healthcare should be a human right for every Chicagoan regardless of their economic position, and that should include mental and physical healthcare.

There's an opportunity to develop partnerships with healthcare delivery organizations and Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) to stand up community based clinics. There are abandoned schools across the city that have been vacant for years – we can convert those spaces into places that the community can go to receive the healthcare they need.

My legislative district includes more hospitals than anyone else, including Provident, University of Chicago, Northwestern and Lurie, so this is especially important to me. I've fought in Springfield to keep safety net hospitals in Chicago open and funded year after year. I'll make sure that CDPH coordinates with the county, state, and federal government to make sure we have viable medical acute care options in the communities that need it most.

4. What will you do to ensure seniors and the disabled are able to remain in their homes and have access to health care?

I want to build a Chicago that works for everyone – that includes building better community programs that are informed by those who are most impacted. First and foremost, I would listen to the community leaders who have been doing this work to understand the core needs of people with disabilities. That will allow my administration to focus our efforts on the right programs to make the most impact.

I would ensure that the eligibility requirements for programs that service people with disabilities are fair and inclusive, and I would look to state and federal resources to fund additional hours of support.

The ultimate goal always has to be increasing independence for people who require these services, so I would work to also expand not just the maximum hours, but the range of services including Electronic Home Response and home modifications. I would double the amount of weekly home service time offered by MOPD from 6 hours to 12 hours and work with the State and Federal government to get the funding needed to execute this.

5. How are you going to address structural racism in health care access?

I will task CDPH with instituting specific anti-racist policies, including specific provisions that will deal with administering vaccines and tackling maternal mortality, especially among Black women. I helped write the Legislative Black Caucus pillar that focuses on healthcare, which has now been signed into law.

This work isn't new to me – in the state legislature, I was a co-sponsor on [HB 158](#), which addresses the following (among other provisions):

- Increases payment rates for psychiatric treatment at hospitals serving primarily low-income patients.
- Updates the state's online Child Care Assistance Program Eligibility Calculator.
- Provides funding to preserve and maintain OBGYN services at safety-net hospitals.
- Creates the Special Commission on Gynecologic Cancers to determine best practices for early detection of gynecologic cancers and reducing disparities in treatment.
- Expands coverage of doula services and home visiting services for pregnant women.

I will bring this same commitment to addressing these issues at a city level as Mayor.

4) Diversity/Inclusion

- 1. Given Chicago's racial and ethnic diversity, what is your position on how to unify our city in relation to race, ethnicity, cultural, and sex/gender orientation?**

Our city is incredible because of its diversity, but it's plagued by centuries of systemic segregation that stands in the way of building productive coalitions. As a kid who grew up on the South Side, I know that these issues are deep-rooted. My administration is committed to building coalitions – that means engaging with activists of all backgrounds and inviting them into the decision-making process. I will make sure that the diverse and often-forgotten populations that make our city so great are invited to the table and given a voice in building comprehensive solutions. I will build an administration that looks like the city of Chicago and collaborates in the way we need Chicago to collaborate.

- 2. How will you address the reparations movement with regard to American descendants of chattel slavery, stolen indigenous lands, etc.?**

I will address this issue swiftly and unapologetically. I'll begin by working on what Chicago reparations should look like on day one while simultaneously pushing the Federal government to do their part in addressing this issue. Ultimately, this should be addressed at a Federal level, but cities can do their part and my administration will take a concrete step towards addressing reparations for our most marginalized people. Black Americans are the only people who came to this country as a commodity and we need to repair the wrongs done to the Black community in this city, state and country.

- 3. What solutions will you propose for the Chicago government to address systemic racism in city structures, especially in CPD, CPS, city government offices, etc.?**

As a Black kid from the South Side, I also know what it's like to lay face down on a wet pavement, handcuffed, because a police officer said I "fit a description." I recognize that these structures need to be addressed at their root if we want to see real change. My public safety plan commits to building a better police force and focusing on de-escalation tactics.

- 4. What have you done to address policies and practices specifically regarding harm to or support for American Descendants of Slavery and Indigenous peoples?**

My [call for a special session](#) to deal with issues specific to the American Descendants of Slavery (ADOS) sparked the work that created the [Illinois Legislative Black Caucus pillars](#). This was the most sweeping ADOS-specific legislation that any state legislature has ever passed nationwide. I would expand this work to issues specific to Indigenous peoples and make sure we have a roadmap at the city level to address these systemic harms.

5) Safety / Police / Accountability / Equity

- 1. What is your plan to support city compliance with the federal consent decree and ensure accountability in police use of force, training, discipline, etc.?**

A recent report from the Independent Monitor showed that only 5% of Chicago's consent decree is in full compliance and just 17% are secondarily compliant – that is not sufficient. Mayor Lightfoot and Superintendent Brown have systematically failed to prioritize officer wellness and compliance with the majority of mandated reforms. The promised eleven wellness counselors have not been hired, despite budget allocations, and the Officer Suicide Prevention Plan has not been implemented despite monitors noting that Chicago's officer suicide rate is 60% higher than the national average.

CPD's community policing program is half-baked at a time where our city is desperate for real solutions to crime and the gun violence epidemic that plagues us every day. I know that there is deep distrust that goes both ways with many Chicagoans and the police, and it's indefensible

that a Mayor who promised reform has delivered so little where it matters most—public safety. My public safety plan commits to making meaningful progress on the reforms outlined in the Consent Decree, and I'm the only candidate in this race who has experience helping a big city police department work through the requirements of a Department of Justice Consent Decree from my time in New Orleans. This is a top priority for my administration.

2. What will you do to improve public safety and increase our sense of security?

The current administration hasn't proven a commitment to addressing violent crime across Chicago – at a time when the city demands a plan to solve these issues, the Mayor is bringing nonsense “solutions” like closing city pools in the summer and instituting a curfew. The biggest reason why I'm running for mayor is to bring a true commitment to prioritizing public safety to City Hall.

Chicago is facing a crisis – we need a balanced approach to safety and justice to both address violent crime and tackle its root causes. Our city is currently failing to do the most basic work to make Chicago safe, like filling the hundreds of police vacancies. It's not enough to just change policing in Chicago, we have to change the way Chicago views public safety entirely.

Putting my vision for public safety into place is a priority. The first policy plan I issued on my campaign is my Safer 77 Plan, which was the first comprehensive vision for public safety in this race and stood alone as the only public safety plan for months. My plan calls for both safety and justice to keep our city safe.

My administration will work to strengthen the existing public safety and justice structures in place, foster collaboration among law enforcement and the communities they serve, increase violence prevention investment, provide support for our first responders, and solve more crimes.

Additionally, we need to think beyond just policing and civilianize many sworn officer roles. My administration would develop the necessary mental health resources for police officers and communities, going further than the current co-responder pilot and having dedicated mental health professional teams appropriately answering calls, and investing in a true community policing model.

Public safety should protect us from risks across the city – lack of affordable housing options, an underfunded education system, and understaffed resources to support in a crisis. If we invest in these resources, Chicago can lead on what safety looks like. My full plan is available at www.kamformayor.com/4-star-agenda/public-safety.

3. How will you improve the relationship between police and communities?

One way to strengthen the relationship between communities and law enforcement is for law enforcement to successfully bring justice to portions of the community that have been left behind. I have committed to facilitating this work by writing and passing [HB3988](#) aimed at helping law enforcement find answers to the epidemic of missing and murdered women and girls in Chicago.

I'm committed to making sure that every CPD employee, new and existing, will be thoroughly trained in implicit racial bias and violence de-escalation techniques. Additionally, as mayor, I will make sure CPD is in full compliance with the federally mandated Consent Decree, which will make the department stronger and better equipped to serve the community. Coming into compliance with the consent decree is a top priority in our Safer-77 [public safety plan](#). And as the only candidate in

this race with experience in Consent Decree compliance for a major city Police Department, I understand how this should work.

My plan also outlines that we will require all use-of-force incidents to be recorded and then publicly posted within 30 days of the incident to increase accountability and transparency within the police force. My administration will also pass the [Anjanette Young ordinance](#) to strengthen the rules around police raids to prevent discriminatory practices and wrongful raids.

- 4. What alternatives to current policing practices will you pursue to improve public safety?**
We need to rebuild lost trust in our police department and invest in non-police resources that will keep our communities safe. I would civilianize certain functions in the Police Department and commit to the Treatment Not Trauma campaign by instituting a non-police crisis response line. I will also invest in the Office of Gun Violence Prevention to tackle these issues at the root. In Springfield, I was the lead sponsor on the Ghost Guns Ban, which gets unserialized, 3D-printed guns off of our streets. I also helped get the Assault Weapons Ban across the finish line this year.

6) Urban Planning / Housing / Homelessness / Infrastructure

- 1. Will you support the Bring Chicago Home Ordinance? Why or why not?**
I've been a vocal proponent of the Bring Chicago Home Ordinance. Homelessness is an epidemic in our city and the Bring Chicago Home Ordinance outlines critical steps to resolving it. My [housing platform](#) commits to RETT reform, in line with this ordinance, and my administration will do this work to make meaningful progress on addressing this issue.
- 2. What will you do to promote affordable housing preservation and development?**
I outline my vision for housing in my comprehensive [housing platform](#). It includes provisions to reform the Real Estate Transfer Tax (RETT) and ensure those funds go directly into combatting our homelessness crisis. I'll also build affordable housing options across our city through strategic partnerships and prioritizing affordable options with public transportation access. This all needs to be centrally managed at a city level – I will ensure that we appoint a cabinet-level position who is focused on managing affordable housing. This person will coordinate across departments, work directly with builders, and manage the creation and maintenance of affordable housing across the city.
- 3. How would you work with communities and local community organizations regarding neighborhood development and investing in Chicago's disinvested communities?**
It's important that we listen to the people in each of our communities and include them in the decision-making process. I'll ensure that development decisions are made in partnership with community members, not in a silo. For too long, our communities have had decisions thrust upon them and their
- 4. How do you plan to improve residential streets, sidewalks, lighting, parks, and green alleys, and bicycle lanes and paths?**
We need to make our city liveable, and that means making our parks accessible, creating safe and protected bike lanes, and investing in non-automobile infrastructure.

I grew up playing in Chicago's parks, participating in sports leagues at the parks, and enjoying Ridge park with my family. Our parks make a difference and I'm going to see to it that we prioritize investing in our parks and green spaces to ensure kids in future generations, including my son, can enjoy our parks as much as I have over the years. This is personal to me.

Parks are an important community resource and I want to make sure they remain a priority which is why I plan to include the Park district in all zoning and environmental decisions and create a partnership with CPD on youth engagement. I also plan to expand upon the Openlands

Plan, set to be instituted by 2023 and increase urban agriculture areas by creating greater opportunities for Urban farmers to develop land through business licenses and incentives.

We also need to invest in creating walkable and bikeable streets so people without cars can get around. I've signed on to the [Bike Grid Now](#) proposal to build a connected, protected citywide bike grid. Beyond just signing onto the Bike Grid Now pledge, I have committed to it as part of my [overall transportation plan](#), among other pro-biking provisions. This will be a dedicated effort in my administration.

7) Immigration

1. How will you maintain and promote Chicago's status as a sanctuary city? What would you do differently, especially in response to immigrants being sent to Chicago?

The need for Chicago to serve as a sanctuary for residents is multi-fold: it should serve as both a legal sanctuary as well as a welcoming environment for immigrants, undocumented or otherwise. This doesn't stop at schools – it requires the entire city to work together to welcome these families into our communities by increasing outreach and providing the services families need: housing, healthcare, childcare, after school programs, and job training.

While in Springfield, I supported [SB 1565](#), which would allow undocumented residents to vote in school board elections so they have a voice in the process and in their childrens' education. Though this bill did not leave the Senate, I will continue to advocate for creating programs and services that allow undocumented individuals to feel safe and protected in Chicago, without fear of detention by federal agencies.

There's a lot I would do differently from the current administration. My wife is a first-generation American whose parents fled from despotic regimes and poverty in Cuba and Ecuador, so this is personal to me. I will make sure that we open our doors while also making sure our communities are involved in the conversation. We need to find a way to both house these migrants and make them feel safe and welcome while also bringing communities along in the process.

2. Will you increase funding to the Department of Family and Support Services to help address the current migrant crisis?

Yes.

8) Education

1. Given the history of under-investment in neighborhood schools, particularly in communities of color, what specific measures will you take to ensure high quality education in all Chicago public schools?

With key leadership changes and strategic investments, Chicago's public education system can be a valuable tool to bridge equity gaps that have plagued our city for generations.

If we want students to enroll in our schools, they must be best in class. We need to work with Springfield to make sure that our schools receive funding based on need, not based on criteria that have only perpetuated inequities. I've led this fight in Springfield as a sponsor on [HB 258](#), which seeks to create a more equitable funding formula for our schools. I would work with ISBE to accommodate factors such as generational trauma and poverty in the funding formula.

We also need to give schools sufficient resources to manage day-to-day student needs. I'm committed to making sure every single neighborhood school is staffed with a librarian, a social worker, and a nurse. These supports are critical for the health and safety of communities, and it's time we prioritize funding in CPS' budget to allow our schools to fully support the health and wellbeing of our students.

These commitments and more are detailed in my [education plan](#).

2. What is your position on charter schools?

As a product of the Chicago Public School system, I understand the importance of a school system that meets the needs of students and their families. Charter schools can be options for students, but shouldn't be opened in lieu of neighborhood schools. Investing in our neighborhood schools and providing them with the resources they need is key to providing equitable education opportunities to all students.

3. By 2027 Chicago will have a fully elected school board. What measures do you advocate that will lead to equitable school board membership? Do you support limits on campaign financing in school board elections? Should elected school board members be paid for their service?

Championing the Elected Representative School Board in Springfield and getting that bill across the finish line is one of the things I'm most proud of as a State Legislator. I'm currently working on legislation that will put comprehensive campaign finance limits on elections.

Before the board is fully elected, it will be a hybrid board, which I fought for to help us prepare for these changes. As Mayor, I'll select 11 board members who have proven they're committed to working for kids in our schools and look like the school district they serve. That could be LSC members, people who have worked in the education space, parents of CPS students, people with a vested interest in the district, and people with experience in growing enrollment. Ultimately, I'm committed to making sure that we bring in individuals who will be working to bring the best outcomes for our young people.

4. Do you support a continued moratorium on school closings?

I support truly investing in our schools to increase enrollment and improve overall outcomes. I worked to pass the moratorium in Springfield to protect students in a time of uncertainty. The reality is each school is different – we should not close all under-enrolled schools without understanding needs at a school- and neighborhood-level. When schools close in Chicago, there needs to be a clear process, transparent communication, and straightforward plan for the students and families impacted.

9) Art & Culture

1. How will you support culture, equity, and the arts in Chicago – both for organizations as well as for individual artists and collectives (visual arts/theatre/dance/music)?

The arts have always been incredibly important to me – as an avid music fan, some of my fondest memories have been enjoying and appreciating the arts ac

2. Will you support a funding increase for arts education, sports, and extracurricular programs in our schools and parks?

Yes. Many of our parks are only accessible from 9am - 5pm; the majority of the time that our parks are open are when our kids are in school. We need to make our field houses accessible to residents for as many hours as possible, and for as many hours as we can that people actually need them. That means keeping these resources open from 5-9, not just 9-5.

CPS and the Park Advisory Councils should work with the city to help us come up with a comprehensive vision for these spaces. In my administration, private companies will no longer dictate the development of green spaces – the city will own the vision to make sure it's supporting our communities.

NETWORK 49 MAYORAL CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

Candidate Name: Sophia King

1) Professional Background

1. What progressive policy issue/achievement are you most proud of?
 - a. As the Alderwoman of the 4th Ward and Chair of the City Council's Progressive Caucus, I led the fight for a \$15 minimum wage in Chicago and carried the measure through the City Council. I know that every Chicagoan deserves a living wage. After that ordinance was passed 400,000 Chicagoans got a raise and 100,000 Chicagoans were lifted out of poverty, and I am immensely proud of that.
2. What have you worked on/toward that you regret NOT having accomplished?
 - a. I also fought to eliminate the tipped subminimum wage within the city during that same fight because it hurts our families and is a legacy of entrenched racism, but we were not able to do so. I wish we had, and I will keep fighting for that.

2) Climate Change / Sustainability

1. How will you fight and address the impacts of climate change? How do you plan to move Chicago towards a greener city?
 - a. Sophia understands that we must expand our environmental policy out of its silos and into every part of our city. Chicago residents deserve clean water, clean food and clean air as basic human rights. The only way to truly combat climate change is for it to reach into all facets of our government. To that I will create a Department of the Environment to ensure that there is a cabinet level position advocating for, overseeing, and implementing greener policies.
2. What policies and practices will you initiate to promote environmental justice and reverse environmental racism which has steered hazardous industrial sites to be located in low-income communities?
 - a. In order to address the impacts of environmental racism, like the inequity of concentrated air pollution for Black and Brown neighborhoods along highways and trucking routes we can take the following steps to reduce the burden in these communities. First, we must center community priorities and identify the potential for equitable technology to reduce impact. We can hold community town halls, complete studies and training for truck drivers, identify public health strategies to reduce the impact and explore creative financing options to fund changes. Secondly, for implementation, we can draft a Zero Emission Truck Policy Action Plan that details regulatory responsibilities and reflects a just transition framework, accountability measures and sustainable support. Thirdly, we can assess the feasibility and inform the development of a Zero Emission Truck Pilot including in-depth driver consultation, community engagement, suppliers, costs and lessons learned around the country.
3. Do you support the creation of a Chicago Department of the Environment?
 - a. Yes, I wholeheartedly support the creation of a Chicago Department of the Environment.
4. How will you address preservation and protection of our lakefront to include fighting lakefront erosion and supporting ecosystem projects?

3) Health

1. What will you do to improve mental health services and how?
 - We need to understand that mental health centers, are both essential care that we should provide to our residents, and a great way to tackle the fundamental problem affecting Chicago today: public safety. Calls for non-violent interventions – frequently caused by mental health incidents – make up over 50% of all calls to 911. I might not eventually choose to reopen every single mental health facility based on individual cost-benefit analysis. However, I would make investments in the current ones and to reopen them in communities that lack mental health care and improve existing facilities which is a priority in my overall public safety budget. We can pay for this under our existing budget by reprioritizing resources. And the clinics can also expand their focus to include more healthcare options and/or be Diversion Centers for people experiencing mental health or homeless insecurities. We can also use them for our critical response teams responding to non-violent crisis cause by homeless, and mental health insecurities.
2. What is your position on (a) Treatment Not Trauma, (b) opening closed mental health clinics, and (c) developing non-police responses to mental health emergencies?
 - I believe support of all the above. Please see my first answer in this section.
3. What will you do to ensure equitable access to acute care hospitals in the city?
4. What will you do to ensure seniors and the disabled are able to remain in their homes and have access to health care?
 - Seniors deserve to live with dignity and remain in the homes and neighborhoods they love. As Mayor, Sophia will bring back the respect that our elders deserve. As Mayor, Sophia will collaborate with HUD to increase landlords' accountability to senior housing units and tenants, develop additional property tax incentives to ensure Seniors are able to maintain their homes, and coordinate with the council to develop a Seniors' Bill of Rights focused on protecting our most vulnerable from scammers, bad landlords and predatory practices
5. How are you going to address structural racism in health care access?
 - Chicago, in spite of all its diversity, continues to perpetuate racial divisions across neighborhood divides and political divides. As Mayor, one of my goals will be to continue to build a true coalition of trust among the community leaders across all groups. Understanding the systemic issues that perpetuate inequality among Black and Brown communities and the steps we must take to break down barriers to progress will always be at the forefront of my administration. Ultimately systemic racism, sexism and genderism fueled by ignorance and a lack of cultural competency keeps us from reaching our true potential. We need to continue to educate as well as fund equitably the values that we espouse or that we seek. We do not do a good job of that. As Mayor, I would lead with compassion and demand true equity in approaching these hurdles.

4) Diversity/Inclusion

1. Given Chicago's racial and ethnic diversity, what is your position on how to unify our city in relation to race, ethnicity, cultural, and sex/gender orientation?
 - a. Chicago has the talent, diversity, affordability and infrastructure to be the leading tech hub in the nation. We can create the Silicon Valley of the Midwest by launching a new tech ecosystem with vocational/technical education to develop a world-class workforce that is ready for the opportunities of the future. We know that overall, connectivity within the city that links neighborhood to neighborhood, and each neighborhood to downtown, enables equity and economic vitality. Affordable and accessible public transportation connects to our jobs, our schools, entertainment, pharmacies, grocery stores, with our families. We have had a disparity of connectivity where much of the West South Side has been left out of this basic core community element. The pandemic impact on public transportation has been dire but as we address affordability and create more housing we can create new business corridors and density to increase accessibility and public transportation. By creating a Chicago which works for everyone, we can create a Chicago where all feel welcomed, supported, and at home.
2. How will you address the reparations movement with regard to American descendants of chattel slavery, stolen indigenous lands, etc.?
3. What solutions will you propose for Chicago government to address systemic racism in city structures, especially in CPD, CPS, city government offices, etc.?
 - a. I believe that these inequities were intentionally constructed, and that we need to be intentional about how we repair them. One striking example is the distribution of speed cameras. The existing cameras are inequitably and disproportionately distributed prying on mostly poor black and brown people. With collaboration we could redistribute the cameras more equitably including placing them in areas that provide more safety and more revenue. We can then have safety, more equity, and actually increase revenue.
4. What have you done to address policies and practices specifically regarding harm to or support for American Descendants of Slavery and Indigenous peoples?
 - a. I will continue to show up and fight for my Black neighbors every day as Mayor just like I have as Alderman. I have been a consistent leader above and beyond the Mayor pushing her into nearly all of the most positive things she has done for our community. I led the fight to rename Congress Ave. to Honor Ida B. Well. She fought me on that. I led the fight to rename Lake Shore Drive to DuSable Lake Shore Drive. She fought me on that. I won. I also added an honorary street name for Lerome Bennet Jr. I am leading the continuing development of the former Michael Reese Campus into the new Bronzeville Lakefront, which has a \$25M commitment to education, 20% affordable housing on site, and 60% minority participation in contracting. a project that has been recognized nationally by outlets like the New York Times as a leader for minority inclusion in contracting, affordable housing, and service to the community. Throughout my ward, we have cleared 40% minority contractor participation for new development, mostly African American given the demographics of my Black majority community, far exceeding the goals or actual attainment of the city. I led the fight for \$15 minimum wage which gave 400,000 Chicagoans a raise, and lifted 100,000 out of poverty – many of them Black. Even before I was an alderman, I founded and ran a non-profit dedicated to driving employment and

investment in Black communities in Chicago. Even before that, I helped to found Ariel Academy to make sure that my neighbors, my community, got the same quality education that the students at the Latin School did.

5) Safety / Police / Accountability / Equity

1. What is your plan to support city compliance with the federal consent decree and ensure accountability in police use of force, training, discipline, etc.?
 - a. Under this administration we have seen the department of Constitutional Policing underfunded, and its leader fired for asking for the resources he needs to do his job. In order to actually tackle these problems, we need to start taking them seriously and make sure this effort is properly funded and staffed with the right people. I have outlined a comprehensive 10-point plan through which we can both uplift our police and hold them accountable. You can read more at www.sophiaforchicago.com.
2. What will you do to improve public safety and increase our sense of security?
 - a. A Safe Chicago is a Strong Chicago. We must ensure our city is a uniformly safe place to live, work and raise a family. My public safety plan is comprehensive in nature addressing real systemic change as well as the emergency of now -violent crime. It is designed to address the immediate need for new leadership and increased staff while prioritizing diversity, modern comprehensive training, and providing our officers the resources to prioritize community policing. While arrests for violent criminals are of course necessary, we simply cannot arrest our way out of crime. We need a comprehensive approach that is collaborative and community focused.
3. How will you improve the relationship between police and communities?
 - a. In part by Committing to real criminal justice reform. We must address the cultural divide among officers and communities of color. We must fully implement the federal consent decree. But in addition, we must commit to fully funding violence prevention. Mayor Lightfoot only spent \$5 million of \$85 million appropriated to mitigate violent crime.
4. What alternatives to current policing practices will you pursue to improve public safety?
 - a. As mayor, I will fund \$200 million to scale up anti violence programs that are proven effective and create a Department of Gun Violence Prevention. We can further reduce tensions by rapidly expanding alternative responses to 911 and developing additional pre-arrest diversion programs for substance abuse, mental health issues, and extreme poverty.

6) Urban Planning / Housing / Homelessness / Infrastructure

1. Will you support the Bring Chicago Home Ordinance? Why or why not?
 - a. I support a compromise version of the ordinance. I think that we do need more funds to ensure access to housing for Chicagoans, but believe that the current proposals may be too much of a tax increase.
2. What will you do to promote affordable housing preservation and development?
 - a. With housing costs rising faster than incomes, I understand that in order to improve housing affordability, we need better alignment of zoning, taxes, and subsidies. By leveraging multiple solutions to create a wider array of housing types across Chicago, we can ensure a healthier distribution of affordable homes of all shapes and sizes. Chicago can optimize opportunity zones to create more affordable housing. I will work with community stakeholders and business leaders

- to create a vision for residential and mixed-use housing. I am focused on taking the immediate need to deliver on the thousands of affordable housing units needed in the city. With more than 30,000 people waiting for housing assistance from the CHA we cannot afford to wait.
3. How would you work with communities and local community organizations regarding neighborhood development and investing in Chicago's disinvested communities?
 - a. I would bring the same spirit of collaboration in development to the fifth floor as I have had in the City Council. I lead one of the 4 striking developments in the City - Bronzeville Lakefront, the former Michael Reese Site. There are three others: the 78, Lincoln Yards and the Obama Library. Each of the others have experienced some protest and acrimony. Again, I brought all of the interests to the table and now have a development where the developer and the community are both able to see an upside and is being heralded as one of the most equitable in the country by The NY Times.
 4. How do you plan to improve residential streets, sidewalks, lighting, parks, and green alleys, and bicycle lanes and paths?

7) Immigration

1. How will you maintain and promote Chicago's status as a sanctuary city? What would you do differently, especially in response to immigrants being sent to Chicago?
 - a. As Mayor, I will follow in the steps of Harold Washington to protect our immigrant community through executive order, through lobbying Congress and through joint support with our Congressman, state leaders and our Governor. Chicago has a long history of being a welcoming city for immigrants. I believe that Chicago should be a welcoming and safe city regardless of their citizenship status. As Mayor, I would support policies that help immigrants by issuing municipal identification documents and driver's licenses to all residents; providing wrap around services to provide housing, job training and language support.
2. Will you increase funding to the Department of Family and Support Services to help address the current migrant crisis?
 - a. Yes.

8) Education

1. Given the history of under-investment in neighborhood schools, particularly in communities of color, what specific measures will you take to ensure high quality education in all Chicago public schools?
 - a. I will also seek to increase neighborhood schools and neighborhood components of selective enrollment schools. I will also increase the trades, tech and STEAM education in schools. We will support partnerships to support disengaged students. Great schools drive and stimulate economic development to sustain great communities. I believe that every child deserves an excellent education regardless of their zip code or neighborhood. As Mayor, one of my top priorities will be to ensure that every school open in Chicago is a school any parent can be proud of and trust with the education of their children. I will support high quality schools of choice that serve a clear need in the community.
2. What is your position on charter schools?

- a. I have a record of building opportunities for youth. As a former educator, I diversified classes at the Latin School of Chicago and promoted co-curricular education at Chicago Public Schools. With an eye on equity, I helped establish the Ariel Community Academy to provide the North Kenwood-Oakland residents with the same quality education that my students at Latin received. As President of the Kenwood Park Advisory Council, I never stopped fighting to expand youth programs to keep children safe and engaged. I believe that every child deserves an excellent education regardless of their zip code or neighborhood. As Mayor, my top priority will be to ensure that every school open in Chicago is a school any parent can be proud of and trust with the education of their children. I will support high quality charter schools that serve a clear need in the community.
3. By 2027 Chicago will have a fully elected school board. What measures do you advocate that will lead to equitable school board membership? Do you support limits on campaign financing in school board elections? Should elected school board members be paid for their service?
 - a. Our newly elected school board should be a partner with the city and state to create a great educational experience for every student. Schools have limited vehicles to raise revenue and will continue to depend on the city for resources. However, we will endeavor to bring the school district to financial independence but not at the expense of our students, families and educators.
4. Do you support a continued moratorium on school closings?
 - a. Investing in public education is the most important thing we can do to secure the future of Chicago. We must use our tax dollars to create a public education system that helps every child reach their full potential regardless of the zip code in which they live. Closing schools is an important decision that can have grave consequences on a community. We will seek to increase density, housing and bring quality education and schools to every community. Decisions will be made in context and with community.

9) Art & Culture

1. How will you support culture, equity, and the arts in Chicago – both for organizations as well as for individual artists and collectives (visual arts/theatre/dance/music)?
2. Will you support a funding increase for arts education, sports, and extracurricular programs in our schools and parks?
 - a. Yes.

NETWORK 49 MAYORAL CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

Candidate Name: Ald. Roderick T. Sawyer

1) Professional Background

1. What progressive policy issue/achievement are you most proud of?

I have quite a few to name, but the Police Reform and Accountability ordinance I passed after a seven-year fight is the one I would name first. I welcomed Mayor Lightfoot when she was first elected because she campaigned on the issue of police reform, but she had a very different outlook when it came to real reform with civilian oversight.

I worked for years with community groups across Chicago, we studied policy in other cities across the country and around the world, and when we finally had a sweeping, nation-leading reform package, she stood in the way and tried to block it with her own watered-down proposal that lacked civilian oversight or any real accountability.

When voters cast their ballots in this election, they will not just vote for alders and a mayor, they will vote for members of 22 newly created Police Oversight districts. That is the result of my hard work and legislative accomplishment.

2. What have you worked on/toward that you regret NOT having accomplished?

Many. But under Mayors Emanuel and Lightfoot many good policy ideas were quashed. I proposed an ordinance years ago that would have developed new, non-regressive revenue sources and phased out most of the red light and speed cameras that are especially burdensome to our marginalized communities. But as Mayor, I will revisit this issue from the 5th Floor.

2) Climate Change / Sustainability

1. How will you fight and address the impacts of climate change? How do you plan to move Chicago towards a greener city?

In a city like Chicago, environmental issues almost always are issues of equity.

The vast majority of pollutants - toxic emissions, poisonous runoffs and waste - are in lower income communities. These have demonstrable negative impacts on health, such as higher asthma rates and are due to a combination of historical redlining, zoning, lax enforcement and continual disinvestment.

This is among the issues causing our population to decline, especially our Black population.

First of all, I would re-establish a full Department of Environment and have a wide-ranging report done on issues of environmental justice to be addressed immediately.

I would invest in and empower that department to aggressively tackle issues with immediate action against polluters. I'd offer an initial remediation plan to these companies with a deadline, and then begin to levy increasing fines for non-compliance. Whatever economic benefit they are bringing to Chicago can't be worth the damage they are causing to individual health and eroding communities.

I also want to address affordable housing and homelessness with prefab / tiny homes that would be sustainable and environmentally friendly.

2. What policies and practices will you initiate to promote environmental justice and reverse environmental racism which has steered hazardous industrial sites to be located in low-income communities?

Well, as mentioned above, I would immediately address pollution issues and the hazardous industries in these communities.

In addition to the initial remediation plan and notification of coming fines and other penalties, I would empower my new Department of Environment and all the relevant city agencies to enforce the laws we have on pollution and suggest new ones to address modern pollutants and health risks that have yet to be codified.

Then I'd have cabinet-level advisors work on dismantling the systemic causes and ensuring polluters are being curbed, people at risk are assisted with options to help them relocate elsewhere in the city, and immediately develop policy that requires full transparency on current polluters and on how any future industry is located in the city.

3. Do you support the creation of a Chicago Department of the Environment?

Yes, as stated in my first answer. This is a priority.

4. How will you address preservation and protection of our lakefront to include fighting lakefront erosion and supporting ecosystem projects?

I've got some experience on these issues from my work in City Council, primarily by working next to a very capable lakefront Alder.

First of all, we have to consider erosion a serious problem. Our beaches are a treasure to our people, a hallmark of our city, and create a natural wonder that draws tourism and adds to our quality of life.

There currently are several concerns about beaches, which comprise the entire length of our city, each with different issues. I would be sure environmental activists and leaders were advising on each of these projects.

- 1) We must ensure that the lakefront on the South Side is as cared for and nourished as those in the rest of the city. In this area there is a specific concern that the historic limestone revetments will be replaced with concrete, fundamentally altering their beauty and architectural integrity. This is along the shoreline between 47th and 51st streets, the Morgan Shoal area affectionately known as Pebble Beach to the locals.

This would be a violation of the Memorandum of Understanding on Promoting Equitable Access to Nature in Nature-Deprived Communities signed by multiple government agencies in Sept. 2022. I would ensure this short-sighted, quick fix doesn't happen.

- 2) Further north there are areas of the beach that need repair either through sand replenishment, new or repaired seawall barriers, or both. I would ensure this work takes place before our beaches are further damaged and we threaten historic buildings.
- 3) Finally, we have nature conservation areas, especially on the lakefront and near the future Obama Center, that have been neglected. This has harmed not only the wildlife in these areas, but degraded the appearance of our parks and public land. I would make this an immediate priority.

3) Health

1. What will you do to improve mental health services and how?

We need a significant improvement in mental health services in several ways. First, for our citizens in need who have never had adequate mental health services from the city, especially since Mayor Emanuel closed six clinics with absolutely no plan to replace the services provided. Second, we need more mental health services provided in response to 911 calls. About 40% of 911 calls are related to people experiencing mental trauma and they should be handled by mental health and / or drug counselors - either alone or with an officer. (This also frees up police to work on apprehending criminals and making Chicagoans feel safer.) And we need to offer our police officers significantly improved mental healthcare, both through the department and through their health insurance. The spate of police suicides is the most tragic evidence of how this department has been mismanaged. Deploying overworked police who are suffering from exhaustion, trauma and other issues makes them less effective in their jobs, and sometimes more of a danger to those in neighborhoods that have been traditionally over-policed but under-protected.

2. What is your position on (a) Treatment Not Trauma, (b) opening closed mental health clinics, and (c) developing non-police responses to mental health emergencies?
 - (a) I'm working with the author of Treatment Not Trauma in the Health and Human Relations Committee I chair and hope to pass it before the new term.
 - (b) I favor opening more mental health clinics, but I also think we need to develop a broader and more powerful policy than relying on static, single-use clinics. When Mayor Emanuel closed six clinics I toured the remaining six and was told by staff I was the first elected official ever to do so. They were understaffed and underused. I will enact a more

dynamic policy that relies heavily on outreach where other city services are provided - from aid offices to health clinics to the DMV. People with mental health issues often need more outreach and assistance to find services than the city currently offers. Then I would begin offering mental health services in areas where the people in need already are. Once I staff up the department with more mental health and drug counseling professionals, I will have them keep hours in communities around the city. They could set up in a well-known community location in Humboldt Park on Mondays, Englewood on Tuesdays, and Hegewisch on Wednesdays, for example. We have to meet the people in need where they are, not just at six more static, underused facilities.

3. What will you do to ensure equitable access to acute care hospitals in the city?

Under a Sawyer Administration equity is always a top concern - services will be available to everyone regardless of income, insurance, and other barriers to good health care. Our responsibility is to encourage and incentivize medical centers and hospitals to set up facilities with both economic, racial and geographic equity.

4. What will you do to ensure seniors and the disabled are able to remain in their homes and have access to health care?

First, we must do a better job of promoting all currently available exemptions that far too many people aren't aware of. As an alderman I am routinely contacted by people about to lose a home when they could have been helped by one of many city programs. That sounds simple, but it's a real issue and a place to start.

I'd also seek an ordinance that creates a cap on how much a home assessment can increase in a year, particularly for seniors and long-term property owners. Protecting homeowners with an assessment cap after, say, 10 years, and then maybe a lower, more rigid cap after 20 years, etc.

I'm also interested in a city-backed, non-profit reverse mortgage or similar program that would allow people to stay in their homes as long as they are alive and physically capable. More of the value would be retained in their home than if they entered into the same arrangement with a for-profit company, and any heirs could arrange to buy the home from the city at a favorable price that pays the city only the cost of administering the program.

We also need to ensure that seniors are getting all the services and support they can from the city. They need streets and sidewalks that are safe and accessible, streetlights that work, and help with things such as lawn maintenance, basic home upkeep and shoveling snow. Those services could be provided by an intergenerational arrangement with youth organizations that could offer employment, mentoring and job / life-skills training.

5. How are you going to address structural racism in health care access?

We have to work with healthcare providers to open locations in our marginalized communities, potentially by offering them incentives or creating public-private partnerships to do so. I'd also like to see healthcare providers offer more mobile health services - an RV or mobile treatment vehicle that would visit neighborhoods where there are not enough healthcare assets to

provide physicals, vaccines, flu shots and other routine healthcare, while screening for more serious issues and referring patients for higher-level treatment if needed.

Studies have also shown telehealth has been helpful in bridging the disparity in healthcare by race and income. It would provide access to basic checkups and screenings to people with transportation issues, mobility issues, and other challenges to accessing healthcare.

4) Diversity/Inclusion

1. Given Chicago's racial and ethnic diversity, what is your position on how to unify our city in relation to race, ethnicity, cultural, and sex/gender orientation?

This seems like a much bigger question than can be answered here, but I'll offer a few ideas of how we start.

- 1) We ALL want to be safer. Crime creates fear, and fear creates paranoia. We aren't our best selves as people when we are afraid, and we aren't our best selves as a city. Like in so many issues, this begins with reducing crime and improving public safety. When people begin to feel safer they will go out more, feel more comfortable around people who aren't like them, and generally have more will to embrace one another.
 - 2) The police reform for which I fought seven years is an important step in this process. A reformed police department is a stronger police department. We need people in historically mistreated neighborhoods to begin to trust the police as part of feeling safer and being more willing to embrace others outside of their community.
 - 3) I plan to have a committee of advisors on almost every demographic, community, and interest in our city, but especially the ones that are marginalized - Black, Latinx, low-income, seniors, youth, LGBTQ, etc. I want their frequent and frank input on issues preventing unity and how to improve them both immediately and in terms of longer term systemic issues.
 - 4) I also want to have a robust, positive and effective anti-hate / pro-unity marketing plan that people will see over and over again until it becomes synonymous with life in Chicago.
2. How will you address the reparations movement with regard to American descendants of chattel slavery, stolen indigenous lands, etc.?

I am the founder of the Reparations Subcommittee in the Chicago City Council, and I had to fight Mayor Lightfoot to get that. I wanted a full committee, but this is all she would allow.

My vision is to create a structure of programs for all of the disenfranchised groups you list that would include scholarships, professional training services, low- and no-cost loans (unrelated to credit score) for home ownership, business development, and other programs to close the many gaps that exist - wealth gap, income gap, education gap, and many more.

3. What solutions will you propose for Chicago government to address systemic racism in city structures, especially in CPD, CPS, city government offices, etc.?

My successful effort to pass meaningful police reform is the model I would use. A major component of police reform is addressing systemic racism in that system.

I would apply its principles to all the city government offices, including CPD, CFD, CPS and all government agencies.

4. What have you done to address policies and practices specifically regarding harm to or support for American Descendants of Slavery and Indigenous peoples?

See above, I founded the reparations sub-committee and was the driving force behind police reform..

I have been active on all issues of importance to Black, Brown and other marginalized communities my entire career. I either sponsored or supported ordinances to help low-wage workers, rideshare drivers, home healthcare workers, gig workers and others, many of whom are from these specific communities.

5) Safety / Police / Accountability / Equity

1. What is your plan to support city compliance with the federal consent decree and ensure accountability in police use of force, training, discipline, etc.?

This is a simple answer. I will demand compliance on the schedule laid out in the decree, and I'll accept no excuses. As soon as elected I will promote a new Police Superintendent from within the ranks of CPD - someone who has the trust and respect of the rank and file, who knows Chicago's culture and its crime - and make sure they share my belief that complying with the consent decree is a top priority.

2. What will you do to improve public safety and increase our sense of security?

I have a plan that makes Chicago safer on Day One of a Sawyer Administration, while also taking a longer-approach to an ever-improving police department in terms of its effectiveness, and its ability to engage in modern, progressive techniques such as de-escalation, community engagement and intervention.

First, I will create an auxiliary police force that brings back retired officers and uses people from other departments - off-duty firefighters, EMS, etc - for things such as crowd control and responding to 911 calls in which the victim is no longer at risk. Last year we had nearly 30,000 911 calls that took an hour to be answered and some never were. Not only are those people traumatized by the fact they called the most serious emergency response network there is and were treated with absolutely no urgency, the people who victimized them got a head start of an hour or more on the police - and we know the crimes that are responded to the fastest are solved most frequently. This response team would be trained to get the pertinent information, get it out on the police scanner, prepare the victim for further steps in the investigation, and then make sure they are safe and refer them to any additional services they need.

Next, I will have the federal government replace the 250 senior officers we have patrolling our airports with federal agents and put them in more urgent duties.

Then I'd make CPD a destination department that draws the best talent from around the nation - a place known for reform and modern tactics where officers want to work. Not only would this be enhanced by better academy training with a reform mentality, but they would receive first-in-class mental health services. The spate of recent police suicides shows officers have been mismanaged and worked to exhaustion, and that's good for them or safe for our people.

3. How will you improve the relationship between police and communities?

I've spelled this out with my answers on my police reform legislation and how I would comply with the consent decree.

4. What alternatives to current policing practices will you pursue to improve public safety?

As mentioned above, the most modern training in de-escalation, community engagement and intervention, as well as mental health and drug counselors helping with emergency calls.

6) Urban Planning / Housing / Homelessness / Infrastructure

1. Will you support the Bring Chicago Home Ordinance? Why or why not?

While I support the intent of this law, I think it has several flaws that will render it ineffective. I would develop an impactful and immediate plan to significantly reduce our homeless population, however.

My problem with Bring Chicago Home is that the money raised will go primarily to developers and other middlemen, not to the actual needs of the homeless. And the tax will harm our efforts to increase our population and keep Chicago a big, powerful, economic engine.

A better plan would be to first take the thousands and thousands of vacant and abandoned properties and refurbish units to house the people we can help most immediately. Then we would work with non-profits in the tiny home and alternative housing space to begin outreach to the large portion of the homeless population who need more than just a house, they need therapy and wrap-around services to leave their displaced community and move into a residence.

2. What will you do to promote affordable housing preservation and development?

This is a crucial issue we have to tackle from several angles.

First, we have to create an office focused exclusively on developing and maintaining affordable homes - from creation to ensuring they are safe and dignified. That office would work with other social service agencies to identify and overcome current obstacles, work with non-profit

organizations that would help build safe, sustainable housing (tiny homes, shared and multi-family units), and work with all the relevant departments that oversee building.

Then we should use affordable housing as a redevelopment tool to revive neighborhoods in need. I would use empty and abandoned buildings that can be rehabbed, vacant land, and other existing city assets that are a burden on disinvested communities.

And I would tie fees from developments in wealthier areas to affordable housing citywide, not just in the area where they are building. Large developers have told me they are often hesitant to build here because our city is unresponsive and painfully slow in permitting. These developers would pay a significantly enhanced permitting fee for a focused, streamlined process on a timetable that is predictable and guaranteed, assuming no deficiencies.

3. How would you work with communities and local community organizations regarding neighborhood development and investing in Chicago's disinvested communities?

Well, the answer above includes some of the steps. I'd also create commissions in all 77 communities to advise on what development their communities need. Every neighborhood should be self-sustaining with recreation, entertainment, professional services and economic opportunity.

4. How do you plan to improve residential streets, sidewalks, lighting, parks, and green alleys, and bicycle lanes and paths?

This is an area in which simply making something a priority is a big step. We know streets, sidewalks, lights, bike lanes and everything on this list degrades over time, and we need comprehensive long-term planning and budgeting to have regular maintenance, upgrades and replacement scheduled.

We also have to empower CDOT and related agencies to perform maintenance, upgrades and replacements on a predictable schedule. It should never be a sudden surprise or a budget crisis to replace a sidewalk or bike lane.

7) Immigration

1. How will you maintain and promote Chicago's status as a sanctuary city? What would you do differently, especially in response to immigrants being sent to Chicago?

I was proud of ordinances from my committee supporting our sanctuary city status, and I will continue to support such laws. As mayor, I'd add more actions to proactively ensure the safety of these displaced people and delivery of services to them.

This is another area in which planning is critical. It wasn't a major surprise that migrants were delivered to our city by Southern governors, but our current mayor acted as if it was. We need to have a plan and capacity in our system for situations such as this.

It also means frequent, open communications with both the migrant advocates and the communities in which they are placed. I would engage the existing communities early and have an ongoing dialogue with them about how new residents would be housed and served in their communities. It shouldn't come as last-minute information that a migrant center will be placed in a community with only a few days notice.

2. Will you increase funding to the Department of Family and Support Services to help address the current migrant crisis?

I would ensure the budget is what is needed to safely house and serve migrant families, though I think the problem is more in the planning than in the overall dollar amount.

8) Education

1. Given the history of under-investment in neighborhood schools, particularly in communities of color, what specific measures will you take to ensure high quality education in all Chicago public schools?

CPS spends more than any other school system in America per student - currently about \$30,000, and yet our outcomes are often bad and getting worse. It is crucial we right-size the administration and bureaucracy of CPS first. There are far too many administrators, and not enough teachers, nurses, librarians, counselors, nurses, etc.

Once the school closing moratorium ends in 2025 we have to look at a well-planned, thoughtful, consolidation of resources. We have far too many schools under-enrolled at 20%, 10%, even 5%. These schools frequently have the worst student test scores and outcomes. (I realize there is more to education than test scores, but it's one of many benchmarks that show we are failing these students.) A school so under-enrolled it can't field a sports team, have a debate club, a theater program or any of the tools to assist with social and emotional development is not serving its students.

Our commitment to educating students must be to the students, not to empty buildings. Maybe that means building one new, state-of-the art school that consolidates two or three others and makes much more efficient use of resources for the goal of producing educated, emotionally healthy children with good social development.

To be clear, this isn't an effort to cut the budget. I don't want to do that. I want to keep or even increase the budget, but make sure it is getting to the education of students.

Then I'd want educational experts to look at our highest performing selective enrollment and magnet schools and develop similar models and redeploy some of the best talent into our neighborhood schools.

2. What is your position on charter schools?

I'm against charter schools and any policy that takes money from our public schools and causes the further erosion of CPS.

3. By 2027 Chicago will have a fully elected school board. What measures do you advocate that will lead to equitable school board membership? Do you support limits on campaign financing in school board elections? Should elected school board members be paid for their service?

Yes, I'd like the elected representative school board to actually be representative of the community. It should include parents with children in CPS, educational experts and experts in non-profit finance, not special interests who get elected because of a financial advantage.

I'd like to see members get a stipend that covers their cost of serving - enough to compensate them for their time and commitment, but not a career-level salary.

4. Do you support a continued moratorium on school closings?

I support the current moratorium that goes through 2025. We needed that pause after Mayor Emanuel closed 50 schools with absolutely no plan on how to care for the displaced students or how the closures would affect their communities.

But we have schools such as Frederick Douglass Academy which is at 5% or less of full enrollment. We have to have a commitment to high-quality education, not just nearly empty buildings.

The simple, binary yes/no ideology on school closings is far too simplistic. How are we serving these students when we have only 44 kids in a school meant for 900 and they have no nurse, no librarian, no counselor, no sports, debate club or extracurricular activities? We are failing them not only in their education but in the social and emotional growth and development that happens in school.

9) Art & Culture

1. How will you support culture, equity, and the arts in Chicago – both for organizations as well as for individual artists and collectives (visual arts/theatre/dance/music)?

The first step is to hire a strong advocate for the arts to lead the Department of Cultural Affairs, someone who knows our artistic community and how to best use its resources.

I favor a robust grants program for both individual artists and collectives, grants and tax breaks for arts spaces, and the creation of arts districts across the city, especially in disinvested communities where it could also be an economic boon to the area.

2. Will you support a funding increase for arts education, sports, and extracurricular programs in our schools and parks?

Yes. I consider this a priority for a world class city in which people enjoy a full quality of life and children have an opportunity to enjoy all the arts the world has to offer. Chicago has a rich tradition in this area and it would be a crime if that were to diminish.

NETWORK 49 MAYORAL CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

Candidate Name: Jesus “Chuy” García

1) Professional Background

1. What progressive policy issue/achievement are you most proud of?

- I have worked at every level of government and am proud of my work at all levels. The highlights are:
 - Through aggressive recruitment, mentoring, and fundraising support, bringing in a diverse coalition of people from across this city who relentlessly deliver for all our communities. Thus, we have taken down the corrupt, racist, and sexist machine that characterized Chicago politics and government for generations.
 - My community violence prevention as the founder of ENLACE a nonprofit in my home in Little Village
 - My work in Congress to secure billions of federal dollars, which kept our city afloat and have paved the way for generational investments in our infrastructure that will build a more equitable future for us all.

2. What have you worked on/toward that you regret NOT having accomplished?

- I’ve been fighting for immigrants my entire career, and it was regrettable that we were not able to save DACA, and comprehensive immigration reform that is humane and just in the last Congress. We had a great chance, with Democrats in control of both chambers, but we needed 10 Republican votes in the Senate (unless we abolished the filibuster - which I support) and were not able to get there.

2) Climate Change / Sustainability

1. How will you fight and address the impacts of climate change? How do you plan to move Chicago towards a greener city?

- The Inflation Reduction Act, Infrastructure, Investment & Jobs Act, and Chips & Science Act are historic federal investments that will catalyze historic investments in green technology. These projects are funding expansions to our public transit, making it more affordable for families to install heat pumps and solar panels, and creating pathways for good-paying green jobs. It will be the job of the next mayor to shepherd these funds in a equitable way, and I have the experience at all levels of government — including in the Congress — to do just that.
- A new Department of Environment will focus Chicago’s attention on viable, permanent, proactive, and responsive solutions to environmental challenges and to create environmentally just communities.
- Improve and expand services on the CTA, and improve and expand all regional public transportation services through my appointments on Metra and the RTA and through the city’s active involvement on RTA reform in Springfield, and Efficient public transit can help to reduce emissions and restore equity all at the same time. I believe in a strong public transit system and I will work with Springfield to support reforms that will guarantee great service and sustainable funding.
- I will look to find ways where Chicago will support the efforts of Illinois toward electric vehicles and implementation of clean energy law.

- On the housing front, we need to be prioritizing equitable transit-oriented development, incentivizing the construction of housing convenient to the “L”, Metra stations, and bus routes. We can work with the private sector and non-profit housing providers to achieve these ends..
- 2. What policies and practices will you initiate to promote environmental justice and reverse environmental racism which has steered hazardous industrial sites to be located in low-income communities?**
- The work of environmental justice is a moral imperative and cannot be separated from climate action writ-large. As Mayor, I will bring back the Department of Environment. I will also prioritize replacement of lead service lines, especially in disinvested Black and Brown communities on the south and west sides, where residents live with older systems that are especially dangerous for young childrens’ brain development. It’s an infrastructure priority that I’ve already been addressing in Congress, where I secured federal funds to replace lead pipes in my district. This year, I delivered \$2 million to decontaminate lead pipes in Cicero.
 - Direct that the Department of the Environment and Department of Planning and Development, work in cooperation with other city, county, state, and federal agencies to create through mitigation measures new investment opportunities in communities that contain brownfields or environmentally hazardous structures.
 - **Chicago Zoning Reform** - Industrial corridors are regularly rezoned to benefit new economic development. These may come into conflict with surrounding communities and often fail to include resident input. The City continues to react to large development interests which promise to provide large tax revenues on the condition of large tax and infrastructure subsidies from the City. Gentrification is often the result, pushing long term residents from their neighborhoods and often out of the city to suburbs - one of the many causes of our rapid decline in population. In many instances, industrial expansions ignore the wishes of surrounding communities, one example being the expansion of the Norfolk Southern Line in Englewood on the south side, Similarly, the consequences of the catastrophic demolition of the Crawford plant in Little Village and the proposed relocation of the rebranded General Iron scrap operations received appropriate attention from the Lightfoot administration only after strong protests from the affected communities.
- 3. Do you support the creation of a Chicago Department of the Environment?**
- I support the re-establishment of the Department of Environment and I will push Chicago towards environmental sustainability. It has now been a decade since the Department of Environment that I voted to create was disbanded under the Emanuel administration. Since then, enforcement and environmental programs have been spread across multiple departments including Planning & Development, Public Health and the Mayor’s Office. Without coordinated oversight and inter-agency collaboration, Chicago cannot prioritize and effectuate equitable, comprehensive solutions to address environmental injustices and climate change. We need a new Department of the Environment, with a focus on making it viable, permanent, and responsive to the growing Environmental Justice community.
- 4. How will you address preservation and protection of our lakefront to include fighting lakefront erosion and supporting ecosystem projects?**

The newly re-established Department of the Environment will serve as the City's central agency working in collaboration with other city agencies, to ensure protection, improvement, and comprehensive planning and management for Lake Michigan, Lake Calumet, the Chicago and Calumet Rivers and surrounding waterways. This includes the critical activities of water conservation and stormwater management, natural areas restoration and access, and recreation and education opportunities for all Chicagoans. Investments in stormwater retention and management must be accelerated to protect homes and businesses from flooding and protect our waterways from sewer overflows. Strategic investment in critical water infrastructure will prioritize equitable access to clean water and sanitation, saving money by avoiding increased public health challenges flood remediation.

The re-established Department will work closely with the Chicago Park District, the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago, the Forest Preserve District of Cook County, the Illinois International Port District, Cook County government and the State of Illinois to achieve comprehensive citywide protections of the Lake and Chicago waterways.

3) Health

1. What will you do to improve mental health services and how?

We are experiencing a mental health crisis across the board, and including our young people. Mental health care should start in our schools. Every community and every school should have mental health professionals for our students and their families. New mental health clinicians should be in the areas that are being underserved – this includes the South, Southwest, and West sides of the city. We know that these are areas which deal with great trauma from discrimination, under-investment, and violence. We should also add to human resources services by advocating for rules and regulations that will streamline community health worker certifications and reimbursements. The City also needs to be a stronger partner with non-profit providers and community organizations to expand access to mental health care. Of course, We can't substitute nonprofits for direct public services, but they need to work together as part of a comprehensive strategy that meets the needs of citizens on their terms. That's why I am calling for greater integration of city mental health services with the county health system. As I've said publicly, I will walk down the hallway on the 5th floor to secure that cooperation with the County Board President. Nonprofit organizations should also be part of this overall effort but not the only partners.

What is your position on (a) Treatment Not Trauma, (b) opening closed mental health clinics, and (c) developing non-police responses to mental health emergencies?

The treatment not trauma plan calls for investing \$100 million for the creation of a city-wide non-police crisis response operation. In my plan I call for increased investment and the expansion of civilian crisis response teams and pay for it by reallocating funds budgeted ghost police positions (positions that are persistently left unfilled across budget cycles). Furthermore I will direct that the City collaborate with the County and Community Health Centers to expand the availability of mental health support.

The treatment not trauma plan calls for developing teams of social workers, paramedics, and peer-support workers who will respond to crises within the community and connect people to ongoing support through CDPH clinics to address social and mental health needs. This program would be similar to programs that already exist in other cities. I have previously mentioned in my plan my intention to increase the hiring of civilians for police administration operations and to invest in appropriately trained civilian crisis response teams.

I would work closely with the Illinois Department of Human Services to ensure that 988 systems are closely coordinated to allow referral of callers for appropriate care.

2. What will you do to ensure equitable access to acute care hospitals in the city?

I will continue as Mayor the work that I have already begun in the US Congress. Through my leadership, we delivered millions in community funding project dollars to expand hospitals and build new clinics in underserved communities across our city — especially on the South and West sides. This includes over \$3 million as part of the omnibus spending package enacted in December 2022.

3. What will you do to ensure seniors and the disabled are able to remain in their homes and have access to health care?

I support the State's Equity in Aging strategic plan and as Mayor would ensure that Chicago is working closely with Springfield to implement those recommendations. I also support efforts like those in California, Massachusetts and North Carolina making large-scale investments in complex care, including enhanced care management and provision of social services and supports, as part of statewide transformation efforts. I appreciate that finding the money to support these and other initiatives will be challenging, but doable through local, state, federal, and philanthropic sources.

4. How are you going to address structural racism in health care access?

I am on record in my Women's Policy Plan where I advocate for **requiring cultural competency training for public-facing city workers** including healthcare providers, first responders, police, and others to address systemic racism and implicit bias in health. In addition, existing City policies and ordinances will be subject to an ongoing review and corrections through the lens of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility.

4) Diversity/Inclusion

1. Given Chicago's racial and ethnic diversity, what is your position on how to unify our city in relation to race, ethnicity, cultural, and sex/gender orientation?

- We have a mayor who is bad at building bridges. I had great hopes for her four years ago, but I've since concluded that it is a fundamental flaw in her ability to lead. This matters for issues across the board. My administration will follow my example of convening communities and joining everybody at the same table. This will be followed by action. Promises and flashy press conferences are not enough. People want to see results within a reasonable time, and are told of progress along the way. That means investing in our communities, protecting and standing with marginalized communities, and delivering real legislative results. I am a coalition builder. I worked with leaders like Harold Washington and Rudy

Lozano to build a diverse coalition that defeated the machine of old and brought city politics into a new era of inclusion, opportunity, and access. Here's what I see in our city today.

2. How will you address the reparations movement with regard to American descendants of chattel slavery, stolen indigenous lands, etc.?

In Congress, I recently co-sponsored HR 40 *Commission to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans Act*, and as Mayor, I will continue to advance the cause of reparations at the city level.

Under a Garcia administration, Chicago will be the best place to raise a family for all. My holistic approach across all policy platforms will involve:

- Public Safety
- Safe streets & consistent transit
- Schools as community hubs
- Make it Easier for Small and Minority-Owned Businesses to Do Business with Chicago.
- Streamline Procurement processes, expand procurement opportunities and provide procurement liaisons for historically disadvantaged groups
- Partner with Private Sector organizations to support small and minority owned businesses in Chicago
- The future Garcia administration will balance the budget through equitable means and not through an overreliance on fines and fees that overburden Black and Brown neighborhoods. Fees are okay when they are aligned with the value of the service delivered by the City. Fines are also appropriate to deter people from breaking the law or from engaging in negative behavior. Neither should be driven by a desire to simply raise revenues.
- Universal Pre-k Would Save Black Families \$1.2 Billion Annually; ARPA Child Tax Credit Benefited Black & Latino Children Especially - **Advocate for Legislative solutions that would make child care universal and affordable**, which are critical to eliminating pay inequities. Universal Pre-K alone would save Black families over \$1.2 billion annually.
- **Work with the CDPH, community health centers, (CHCs), and Cook County to establish a reproductive healthcare pilot project** to support innovative approaches and patient-centered collaborations to safeguard patient access to abortions, regardless of residency.
- **Work with CDPH, local pharmacies and CHCs, and the County to address pharmacy, contraceptive and health deserts** on the South and West Sides
- Build more affordable housing - The CHA is required to build hundreds of additional public housing units at the Lathrop Homes, on the North Side; the Ickes Homes, now renamed Southbridge, on the South Side; and the ABLA Homes, now known as Roosevelt Square, on the West Side.
- Expand / provide new resources specifically to support housing development for very low-income individuals and families.
- Partner with Community groups on homeownership initiatives - I would work aggressively to develop City and other resources to assist in purchase of homes and to make homes more energy efficient and accessible. Working with the City Treasurer, Philanthropy and the State we can access resources to expand home construction and purchase.

- Chicago's Budget should be equitable. As Mayor, I will balance the budget through equitable means and not through an overreliance on fines and fees that overburden Black and Brown neighborhoods. The speed camera fees should return to 11 mph and there should be a statute of limitations for how long the City collects from residents.

3. What solutions will you propose for the Chicago government to address systemic racism in city structures, especially in CPD, CPS, city government offices, etc.?

When it comes to public safety, Black, Latino, and Asian communities want what every community wants:

- A safe and secure environment where their families can live and thrive, free from the fear of violence and crime. I am a member of one of these communities, and we all are the disproportionate victims of police misconduct and gun violence. So, we must balance fighting crime and fighting for police reform at the same time.
- Fair and just practices, laws, policies, contractual requirements and spending decisions that are applied equally and equitably. that undergird policing. Racist policies and practices help perpetuate racist behaviors. These are controllable and can be resolved.
- Reform city government management . This administration and prior administrations fail Management 101. We have tolerated bad behavior by public servants and Chicago agencies must undergo a culture change that is characterized as respectful and inclusive. But it is hard work and we must make it possible for Chicago's workforce to change. We often point towards the police as a problem. But, Chicago is burning out its police force. So how is it possible to reform a group that is already stretched too far. The City must make it possible for change to succeed.
- With respect to CPS, redouble efforts to recruit and retain teachers, school service providers (e.g., nurses, social workers, athletic coaches) that reflect the full diversity of CPS students
- With respect to the police: In fact, 88% of Black, 63% of Latino, and 82% of Asian Americans agree police reform is necessary, compared with 51% of white Americans. Communities of color want tangible and systematic solutions. Our goals are:
 - To Communities of Color want police to reduce the use of excessive and deadly force exerted against citizens
 - A We want a well-thought-out, evidence-based, comprehensive plan to ensure a modern and constitutional police department.
 - An We want an effective, cost-efficient, non militarized and transparent police force
 - A return to community policing and the disbandment of specialized city-wide strike forces.

- We want officials to be accountable for who is hired, how they are disciplined and how they treat us.

○

My Plan Calls For:

- Training - Deescalation, Trauma Informed Responses, Anti Bias Training
- Investments in Mental Health and Wellness and Civilian Crises Responses
- Investments in Community Violence Prevention, Intervention and Community Investments
- Compliance with the Consent Decree
- My public safety calls for fully staffing, but also, training, civilian crisis responders, investments in mental health and wellness, investments in violence prevention and in violence interruption.

4. What have you done to address policies and practices specifically regarding harm to or support for American Descendants of Slavery and Indigenous peoples?

In 2015, I endorsed an Ordinance calling for reparations for victims of police torture and for Burge victims. The package provided for:

- A full and public mayoral apology;
- \$100,000 payments to each of the approximately 60 living police torture survivors who had not received compensation from lawsuits;
- A center where victims of police violence could meet and receive professional counseling;
- Teaching the history of police torture to students in the Chicago public schools;
- Job training and free public college education for torture survivors and their families;
- A public memorial dedicated to the survivors of police torture.
- In June of 2019, Chicago unveiled its proposed memorial [for] those tortured by Burge and officers under his command. Then Mayor Rahm Emmanuel apologized in 2013. Mayor Lori Lightfoot has yet to commit any funds for the memorial's construction. Chicago could find \$2.25 million for the memorial. It's time to build the memorial.

5) Safety / Police / Accountability / Equity

1. What is your plan to support city compliance with the federal consent decree and ensure accountability in police use of force, training, discipline, etc.?

Step one is replacing Superintendent Brown. He is not trusted by his force or the public. We need a leader at the top who buys into the reforms we need to make and committed to building relationships with community stakeholders across the city. We need to invest in a police department that learns from prior mistakes instead of doubling down on them. Our city is an incredibly diverse and complex place, and we cannot continue with a one-size-fits-all approach. We need to train officers in trauma-informed, culturally competent responses to

crises. We should also move away from initiatives like Superintendent Brown's "community safety teams," which are guided by the assumption that increasing arrests make our city safer.

2. What will you do to improve public safety and increase our sense of security?

Chicagoans feel less safe because they *are* less safe and they have lost trust in the mayor's ability to make our city safer and there is no trust between our communities and law enforcement. I would fire the chief, prioritize hiring a Chicagoan to do the job, and create a fully-staffed, modern police department. We also need to address the root causes of violence. That means investing in our communities, our school — expanding career pathways, access to health care, wraparound services and more.

3. How will you improve the relationship between police and communities?

We have a Superintendent who is not trusted by the force or by the community. We need a new Superintendent, someone from Chicago who understands *all* our communities. We also need to build a force that reflects the diversity of our city, a force that is culturally competent and trauma informed.

We need to return to community policing - officers who are walking the beat, who understand their communities and who neighbors can get to know and trust. We should involve the district councils in this work

With the new district councils taking office with these elections, they will be an important ally in uplifting the voices of our communities and incorporating their thoughts into our processes.

Above all, we can only build trust with a Mayor who knows how to convene diverse communities and have tough conversations to bring about real change. It's what I've been doing my whole life, at every step of government, and I will continue to do so as Mayor.

4. What alternatives to current policing practices will you pursue to improve public safety?

My Plan Calls For:

- Training - Deescalation, Trauma Informed Responses, Anti Bias Training
- Investments in Mental Health and Wellness and Civilian Crises Responses
- Investments in Community Violence Prevention, Intervention and Community Investments
- Compliance with the Consent Decree
- My public safety calls for fully staffing, but also, training, civilian crisis responders, investments in mental health and wellness, investments in violence prevention and in violence interruption.
- Disbanding of Special Units and a Return to Community Policing

6) Urban Planning / Housing / Homelessness / Infrastructure

1. Will you support the Bring Chicago Home Ordinance? Why or why not?

Yes. I support raising the Real Estate Transfer Tax (RETT), the one-time tax paid when a property is sold, by 1.9 percentage points on properties over \$1 million. I support dedicating the \$163 million annually to combatting homelessness. I also believe that this should not become a ceiling in support of people who are unhoused I do want to prioritize consistent and sustainable sources of revenue for homelessness and would like to ensure that the tax is properly applied to “mansions” and not commercial builders.

2. What will you do to promote affordable housing preservation and development?

I remember the pride Evelyn and I felt when we bought our first house in Little Village many years ago. We weren't rich, but we were able to purchase it because it was affordable. But that was then and this is now. We are in the midst of a housing crisis. Our unhoused population is soaring, and people who have lived here for a long time are being priced out.

We need to take an all-of-the-above approach:

Increase the supply of housing. If we do not build more units, then housing will become more scarce and prices will continue to rise. But as we build more housing, we must do so in a way that is rooted in our communities. Little Village, or as some call it, the second magnificent mile, is a jewel of our city.

I would empower organizations like CHA and non-profit housing providers to build more quality, affordable units. We should have stronger programs for first time homebuyers as well as rental assistance and things like that.

Just as we focus on building more traditional housing, we should also make it easier for families to build ADUs. They are an important component of improving affordability city-wide and also are a solution for families in intergenerational living situations.

Property Taxes. It's one of the main things I hear about on the campaign trail. And as a city resident, I feel it too. The State of Illinois overburdens our city with property taxes and Chicagoans are paying the price. This is exactly why we need a mayor who is better able to collaborate with leaders in Springfield. The only way we are going to deal with property taxes is with a mayor who is effectively able to negotiate different solutions with the state, like increasing state funding for cities through programs like the LGDF and having the state at least double its support to schools as promised in the EBFF.

3. How would you work with communities and local community organizations regarding neighborhood development and investing in Chicago's disinvested communities?

- a. I am an organizer, rooted in the community. As we build housing, it must be rooted in the needs of the neighborhoods. We need a mayor who will regularly

coordinate with stakeholders, community, leaders and residents to make sure that new housing does not bring displacement. In my economic development plan, I will outline how my administration's framework for community partnerships will draw from, engage and invest in the wisdom and energy of people who are working in their communities to achieve better lives for their families and neighbors.

4. How do you plan to improve residential streets, sidewalks, lighting, parks, and green alleys, and bicycle lanes and paths?

I have a proven track record in this. It has been a priority of mine in the Congress. I've brought home federal dollars to improve pedestrian safety in our city. In the recent omnibus bill, I delivered \$5 million to improve pedestrian safety along 34th street. And as the co-founder of the Future of Transportation Caucus, I have the experience and motivation to continue this work as Mayor. I would also like to note that bike and pedestrian safety are not just matters of recreation. We know that folks who bike and walk to work, at all hours of the day, are at higher risk of being hurt in traffic incidents. So we must think about this work as a core matter of equity and justice.

Transit-Oriented Development. We know that housing policy is what ties so many other things together. Which is why transit-oriented development is so important. We should be strongly incentivizing dense, quality multifamily housing near transit. What is better than waking up, walking downstairs, taking a few steps on the L (assuming it's on time) and being on your way to work. The city should be in the business of creating new housing in walkable neighborhoods closer to transit. This is not just good housing policy, it is good climate and transportation policy, too.

7) Immigration

1. **How will you maintain and promote Chicago's status as a sanctuary city? What would you do differently, especially in response to immigrants being sent to Chicago?**

- I emigrated to the United States as a young child. I know what it is like to move to a country and city where I didn't know the language of my new home town and the cultures of the surrounding communities. I migrated to Chicago when I was nine, and have spent my life fighting for our immigrant communities. When I was on the Cook County Board, I made sure we didn't cooperate with ICE, and in Congress I've been a leader in the fight to save and expand DACA, fight for farm workers, and many other immigrant communities. And, I worked with Harold Washington to make our city the first sanctuary city in the country
- I met the first buses of migrants to welcome them at the transition center here in Chicago, because I wanted them to know they were welcome in our city. But here's the truth: our Mayor was not prepared to welcome these migrants to Chicago. She was unwilling to cooperate with state and local agencies, community organizations, and stakeholders to find the best way to provide shelter for these migrants. As a result, Chicago's response has been rushed and has imposed solutions rather than work in tandem

with communities. I hear the concerns of Woodlawn residents worried that the use of the Wadsworth School to shelter migrants will draw away resources for their community. But this is not an either or proposition. People arriving in our City deserve our warmest welcome, and all residents of Chicago deserve resources and investment in their communities. But the Mayor failed. And like she does so often, she has pitted communities against each other. That's not what good leaders do.

2. Will you increase funding to the Department of Family and Support Services to help address the current migrant crisis?

Yes. We must also coordinate with the County, the State, the federal government and philanthropy to ensure that we have the funding required to live up to our status as a "Welcoming City".

8) Education

1. Given the history of under-investment in neighborhood schools, particularly in communities of color, what specific measures will you take to ensure high quality education in all Chicago public schools?

Across our city, school closures and learning loss have been hard on students, especially Black and Latino students. COVID exacerbated existing racial disparities in education outcomes and disparities for children with disabilities. These are our children. We must reconnect with them.

- CPS needs to find the students who have fallen out of enrollment. Each of these students needs an individual support plan that addresses their successful return.
- CPS needs proper resources, socioemotional as well as academic, to help these young people be successful.
- We need to understand the impact COVID had on families, and I intend to provide mental health services in every community to help families recover. This requires collaboration rather than competition with Cook County.
- To increase necessary funding streams, will be making the case in Springfield to accelerate the timeline to fully fund the EBFF.

We also must address dropping enrollments, an ongoing trend since the early 2000s. The sharp decline has financial and organizational consequences for CPS, but it is a mistake to see this a schools-only problem only. The declines in enrollment track the declines in population. We've already talked about my public safety plan. Separately, we can talk about inclusive economic development, community reinvestment, and how we bring capital *and* people to Chicago.

To start, CPS has to find and re-engage with the students they lost during the pandemic. I cannot overemphasize this point: those children need our help. They are vulnerable. We need to find them. We need to bring them back into the system and provide all the support they need to get back on track. To do this we need the proper administrative support, social

services resources, and mental health staff in our schools to re-engage and retain our students.

Every school needs to be welcoming and appropriately connected with the community it serves. That should take a variety of forms: staying open after school for community, offering classes for adults, to better learning, after-school activities, and athletic options.

We won't grow enrollments unless Chicago is a healthy, safe, competitive city— in *all* neighborhoods.

2. What is your position on charter schools?

In order to ensure that all Chicago students have access to a quality education, we must ensure that all their schools are adequately resourced and held accountable to the same standards as CPS.

3. By 2027 Chicago will have a fully elected school board. What measures do you advocate that will lead to equitable school board membership? Do you support limits on campaign financing in school board elections? Should elected school board members be paid for their service?

I support an elected school board and will ensure a smooth transition from mayoral control during my tenure. An elected school board will bring even more parent and community input. Still, the reforms as enacted can and should be improved. The expanded board as planned is larger than it needs to be, and the law should allow non-citizens taxpayers to vote so every parent gets a say in their child's education. I'll work with legislators in Springfield to address those issues and ensure the law is reformed so that non-citizen parents and returning residents who are parents are able to vote for the elected school board (just as they're already able to vote in local school council elections). I do support limits on campaign financing because we cannot let special interests control our school board.

4. Do you support a continued moratorium on school closings?

Yes. We should not be in the business of closing schools. We need to work with communities to address the root causes of decreasing enrollment. I support critical investments in programs across the city to reverse this trend.

9) Art & Culture

1. How will you support culture, equity, and the arts in Chicago – both for organizations as well as for individual artists and collectives (visual arts/theater/dance/music)?

Chicago is a great place because of our diverse communities that have come together to create a beautiful city. On one corner you can buy tamales, and a few shops down you can buy pierogies. We have world class museums and the most talented artists in the world. But we know the pandemic has decimated the livelihoods of many artists, and it will be the continued job of the next mayor to help the arts recover. The arts are invaluable. Theaters and galleries are centers of community and third places that are so vital to safe, vibrant neighborhoods. Our city has incredible cultural capital. If we want to revitalize downtown and bring investment to the neighborhoods, the city needs to have a stronger hand in partnering with organizations and artists. My forthcoming economic development plan offers our ideas on how to connect people across cultures and to share these experiences with visitors to the City.

2. Will you support a funding increase for arts education, sports, and extracurricular programs in our schools and parks?

The truth is, we have to work with Springfield to ensure our schools are fully funded. However, there are other opportunities to find funding. For example, philanthropy stepped up at the onset of the pandemic to close the digital divide. The City of Chicago, in partnership with Chicago Public Schools (CPS) and Kids First Chicago, successfully galvanized the philanthropic sector to quickly establish a \$50 million public-private partnership, Chicago Connected. I believe we can partner with philanthropy and civic institutions to continue this work in the future. In addition, federal funding in the form of CARES Act dollars helped us continue to meet the needs of students through the pandemic. Just like I can work with Springfield, I can work at the federal level to address the school district budget cliff.

I served in Springfield. I know how the legislature works, and I will be an effective negotiator for our city to bring more funds to CPS. I will work with the legislature to double the total EBFF contribution, realizing an immediate \$350 million increase, and speeding the ramp to full funding.

There is also room to explore other creative ways to support arts education, sports, and extracurricular programs through collaborations with our professional teams, through corporate and individual sponsorships, and our colleges and universities. Other cities do this without sacrificing artistic standards or crossing ethical boundaries.

Taking a step back, funding schools with local property taxes is a regressive model that widens inequities in educational outcomes. We need to be finding other, more just ways to fund our schools.

NETWORK 49 MAYORAL CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

Candidate Name: Brandon Johnson

1) Professional Background

1. What progressive policy issue/achievement are you most proud of?

In the wake of civil uprisings in the summer of 2020, I passed the Justice for Black Lives resolution, which called for more than \$150 million in investments in physical and mental health, staffing in the Cook County Health system, jobs, housing, restorative justice and violence prevention, broadband Internet access, and additional resources to reverse the troubling trend of over-incarceration of Black and Brown men, women and children

2. What have you worked on/toward that you regret NOT having accomplished?

My only regret is that for every piece of legislation, and every dollar amount provide for the people, I always wish that we could have done more.

2) Climate Change / Sustainability

1. How will you fight and address the impacts of climate change? How do you plan to move Chicago towards a greener city?

We need Chicago to lead the way in protecting the communities most affected by pollution, and take a strong stand to mitigate climate disaster.

We also need to make Chicago a leader in sustainability: We need to find new and better ways to support economic growth that is environmentally sustainable, and make our city a center of the growth industries of the future that involve sustainable, green and circular economy principles, where the jobs increasingly will be. We also need to address the legacy of environmental racism that has made some of our neighborhoods “sacrifice zones,” where polluters are allowed to foul the air and water in ways that undermine the health of the entire community.

As mayor, I will conduct a cumulative impact assessment to advance comprehensive environmental regulations; work to outfit Chicago Public Schools buildings with green HVAC systems, new ventilation solar panels and other renewable energy sources; and reopen and fully fund the city’s Department of Environment.

It’s great that City Hall has a green roof; but that commitment to environmental sustainability needs to filter down through the entire building. A better environment will mean a more livable city for all – which will mean a better economy.

2. What policies and practices will you initiate to promote environmental justice and reverse environmental racism which has steered hazardous industrial sites to be located in low-income communities?

I was proud to come out in support of the hunger strikers and organizers of the #StopGeneralIron campaign, and I am proud to have earned the support of #StopGeneralIron organizer Olga Bautista and hunger striker Oscar Sanchez. I also

defended the #StopGeneralIron teachers from workplace retaliation, and supported their Green New Schools campaign.

Going further, I believe in fully funding and restructuring a Department of Environment that will lead, coordinate, and plan processes with other city departments and agencies to reduce carbon emissions, create strong economic opportunities for residents and restructuring permitting processes and building codes to move us forward. I would also encourage Gov. Pritzker to sign the multistate MOU for medium duty and heavy duty vehicles so that we can continue pushing for the electrification of the shipping and logistics industry, and approve no permits that would result in disasters like the Hilco explosion in Little Village in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic.

3. Do you support the creation of a Chicago Department of the Environment?

Yes.

4. How will you address preservation and protection of our lakefront to include fighting lakefront erosion and supporting ecosystem projects?

Support all policies limiting the privatization of public park spaces, and improve community engagement between public and private groups seeking to operate for profit in public parks. I will also engage grassroots safe transportation organizations, environmentalists and other stakeholders to discuss how to make DuSable Lake Shore Drive and the area around it a safer and more usable region for all. It's essential that we better manage car traffic and increase pedestrian, bike, and wheelchair access along the lakefront.

3) Health

1. What will you do to improve mental health services and how?

Reopen and fully fund Chicago's mental health clinics.

2. What is your position on (a) Treatment Not Trauma, (b) opening closed mental health clinics, and (c) developing non-police responses to mental health emergencies?

I support all.

3. What will you do to ensure equitable access to acute care hospitals in the city?

I was 19 when my mother, Wilma Jean Johnson, died from a rare heart condition. My father was unemployed, and without health insurance, her condition went untreated.

Health care is a human right, and affordable health care and is my number one priority. Next is ensuring that the communities that need the most resources have the most resources by keeping hospitals and facilities fully funded and staffed.

4. What will you do to ensure seniors and the disabled are able to remain in their homes and have access to health care?

Seniors in Chicago really rely on their housing costs staying manageable. This keeps individuals in their communities and support networks. The cost pressures many Chicagoans face can be much harder to handle on a fixed income.

Affordable housing is key to supporting seniors as they age in the community. Chicago has the ability in its community development policies to prioritize the types of affordable housing policies that help keep seniors in their homes, which could include everything from prioritizing within types of affordable housing investments the city makes to what we require from developers.

5. How are you going to address structural racism in health care access?

By building off initiatives like Medicare for All legislation, which I passed on the Cook County Board, which provided health care coverage for 40,000 additional Cook County residents through County Care. We need to center the needs of those we know have struggled with access for generations, whom we've seen suffer during the pandemic, and who we know are affected in disproportionate numbers by conditions like breast cancer and diabetes. Reverse the trends and our prioritize Black and Brown populations, and in addition to treatment, provide education on good mental, physical and spiritual health.

4) Diversity/Inclusion

1. Given Chicago's racial and ethnic diversity, what is your position on how to unify our city in relation to race, ethnicity, cultural, and sex/gender orientation?

We need to protect families threatened by gentrification and rising property taxes, fully fund and resource all Chicago public schools equitably, increase affordable housing and public housing, and provide pathways to home ownership. We must demand recognition of gender and reproductive rights, and promote city and neighborhood-based cultural hubs across all communities. Unification comes through education, but also in truly being a welcoming city for all. And this starts from within.

2. How will you address the reparations movement with regard to American descendants of chattel slavery, stolen indigenous lands, etc.?

I will be a partner, and a collaborator, in movements for reparations, and support efforts to make descendants of slavery and genocide whole.

3. What solutions will you propose for Chicago government to address systemic racism in city structures, especially in CPD, CPS, city government offices, etc.?

We must root out racism in all city agencies, and allow a no-tolerance policy for any incidents of racism found within.

4. What have you done to address policies and practices specifically regarding harm to or support for American Descendants of Slavery and Indigenous peoples?

I have been a leader on the Cook County board in ongoing work for the recognition and celebration of Indigenous Peoples' Day.

5) Safety / Police / Accountability / Equity

1. What is your plan to support city compliance with the federal consent decree and ensure accountability in police use of force, training, discipline, etc.?

While the consent decree contains many important provisions, in several crucial respects, it falls short and instead allows the CPD to create paperwork and policy revisions and claim compliance. That is not the stuff of culture change or strong leadership.

Until the CPD superintendent uses their significant power to remove racist violent officers from the streets pending full investigations, CPD officers will continue to abuse with impunity, because the department's broken disciplinary system sends the strong message that they can.

My administration will request permission from the federal court to modify the consent decree's terms to include the creation of proven, effective diversion programs such as a pre-arrest diversion program that will allow officers to divert people from the formal justice system; community mediation program that will allow community members to address disputes without relying on police; and the development of a citation program that will allow officers to give tickets — but not arrest people for quality of life and other minor offenses.

2. What will you do to improve public safety and increase our sense of security?

I will chart a new strategy for public safety, rather than relying on the same failed approaches that have brought trauma to communities across the city. I will work with police and first responders to invest in community-based interventions that de-escalate conflict, reduce violence and make our neighborhoods safer. I will create an Office of Community Safety, reopen the city's mental health clinics, fully fund year-round youth employment, and foster partnerships between communities and law enforcement to make critical investments preventing crime before it happens.

3. How will you improve the relationship between police and communities?

Trust. Urging the Chicago City Council passage of the GoodKidsMadCity Peacebook and Anjanette Young ordinance will go a long way toward improving trust among the city, its people and the Chicago Police Department. Residents want to know they are being heard by city government, that they will be protected, and that their concerns will be addressed. This ensures trust.

4. What alternatives to current policing practices will you pursue to improve public safety?

I will remove the flawed gang database and support Treatment Not Trauma, reduce inefficiencies in public safety spending, and direct more funds to violence prevention and community safety programming that address the root causes of community violence.

6) Urban Planning / Housing / Homelessness / Infrastructure

1. Will you support the Bring Chicago Home Ordinance? Why or why not?

Yes. Because every resident of Chicago deserves access to stable, long-term, affordable, healthy and dignified housing.

2. What will you do to promote affordable housing preservation and development?

I would encourage the Chicago Housing Authority to cease any land grabs or private partnerships, and instead, develop local community processes for land use to deliver on the promises to rebuild public housing in our city. This is how the City and its people and communities can address the housing and humanitarian crisis together.

My administration would also use community outreach to launch a citywide assessment of public buildings and empty schools to discuss repurpose possibilities. There are many facilities across the city that can serve as SROs and affordable housing units at cost to address the crisis of the 65,000+ unhoused in Chicago.

3. How would you work with communities and local community organizations regarding neighborhood development and investing in Chicago's disinvested communities?

The City of Chicago needs to develop comprehensive plans to support local affordable housing projects such as 18th and Peoria in Pilsen – the largest affordable housing plan in the city. We must ensure that the local average median income and local residents are considered, and encourage residents to apply for quality affordable housing units. With tax increment financing (TIF) reform, those funds can be an important source of revenue. We can also support and invest in innovative models like housing co-ops that create permanent affordable housing units, and encourage the creation of a public bank to ensure fair lending opportunities for Chicagoans.

Finally, we can protect naturally occurring affordable housing by capping property tax hikes and working with state officials to 1) create tax breaks for those who keep rents affordable, and 2) change State statute to assess taxes based on rental income.

4. How do you plan to improve residential streets, sidewalks, lighting, parks, and green alleys, and bicycle lanes and paths?

We need bike lanes installed equitably across the city, but we also need overall traffic calming features like curb extensions, bump outs, and raised crosswalks and intersections to make pedestrians safer as well. Because none of these accommodations exist in a vacuum, but instead, are part of how our city needs to reimagine street safety.

Chicago also needs reduced speed limits and automobile access in select areas of the city, and a rapid-response CDOT team and municipal sidewalk snow and ice removal program. We should also create car-free zones in communities to promote safe walkability and recreation for children.

We also need well-lit streets and parkways, so that cyclists and pedestrians feel safe on our streets.

7) Immigration

1. How will you maintain and promote Chicago's status as a sanctuary city? What would you do differently, especially in response to immigrants being sent to Chicago?

Chicago must lead with and live by the promise to be a sanctuary city and welcome immigrants and refugees, and treat them with dignity and respect. This sanctuary promise must extend to everyone who needs it in our city, and residents both old and new. Our public schools must be sanctuaries for all children by investing in dual language programs, ethnic studies and English as a Second Language (ESL). We must coordinate efforts with local communities with the infrastructure to support displaced immigrants and refugees, and coordinate efforts at all level of government to provide humane conditions for everyone.

2. Will you increase funding to the Department of Family and Support Services to help address the current migrant crisis?

Yes.

8) Education

1. Given the history of under-investment in neighborhood schools, particularly in communities of color, what specific measures will you take to ensure high quality education in all Chicago public schools?

School communities need direct investment, guarantees of staffing and program offerings. Every school should have a library and librarian, adequate clinicians and counselors, thriving arts offerings and sports programs and teams. And the mayor of Chicago has an obligation to be actively fighting in partnership for the revenue required to fulfill those basic needs for every school in the city, not just some.

2. What is your position on charter schools?

Charter schools must be held to the same standards of accountability as traditional, neighborhood public schools.

3. By 2027 Chicago will have a fully elected school board. What measures do you advocate that will lead to equitable school board membership? Do you support limits on campaign financing in school board elections? Should elected school board members be paid for their service?

I support a map that ensures all communities in this tremendously diverse city have the opportunity to have their voices heard. This is why I worked so closely with Illinois Senate President Don Harmon and community organizations on the legislation to create this vibrant model of democracy for the first time ever in the history of Chicago Public Schools.

We need campaign finance rules to prevent those with no stake in our public schools, or our communities, from controlling our democracy. We cannot have uber rich, arch-conservatives usurping the power that working people in Chicago fought so hard to win. We need candidates who are deeply invested and knowledgeable from the communities served to have a fair chance to win races to influence the education of their children.

Democratic governance requires partnership. The city doesn't absolve itself of any responsibility to schools just because there are democratically elected school community leaders sitting at the Board of Education. As mayor, I will continue to fight for resources in our schools, and maintain and build upon the coordinated support and services that the city has to offer children and families.

4. Do you support a continued moratorium on school closings?

Yes.

9) Art & Culture

1. How will you support culture, equity, and the arts in Chicago – both for organizations as well as for individual artists and collectives (visual arts/theatre/dance/music)?

We need to make culture, equity and the arts anchors of not only our city, but of all 77 communities. And that starts with education, funding and cross-collaboration between neighborhoods and cultures. Chicago remains a segregated city, but the art of expression and creativity has always been the tie that binds, and that would be a hallmark of my administration.

I know there is another Curtis Mayfield out here, another Wood Harris or another Chance the Rapper. Just think about all of the talent that comes from Chicago. Earth Wind & Fire played in a band at what used to be Crane Jr. College, which is now Malcom X College. Chaka Khan sang in the choir at Kenwood. DuSable High School burst at the seams with musical talent for decades. So I would support artist mentoring, and community programming and partnerships for outreach in Chicago Public Schools to make sure that theatre, dance and music is in every school, with the full funding to support it. Our love and admiration for the arts has to begin with our youth, so that we start developing the stars of the future, today.

2. Will you support a funding increase for arts education, sports, and extracurricular programs in our schools and parks?

Yes! I fully support increasing arts funding, funding for sports and the Chicago Park District, and also raising the standards for arts grants so that workers can benefit. I'm a progressive. I will always believe in "more" for programs and resources, as well as workers and working families when it comes in the context of fiscal responsibility.