

Candidate Questionnaire on Housing Issues

2022



Ashton Ramsammy

City/Town: Blaine

Legislative District: HD32A

Party: DFL

Candidate responses in italics.

1. In July 2021, a [national poll](#) found that 68% of the public believes that elected officials are not paying enough attention to the rising cost of housing and ensuring everyone can afford a place to live. **What do you believe is the role of government in ensuring everyone has a place to call home?**

I believe that our government should ensure that everyone has a safe place to sleep and call home. I believe that by investing in programs that help families buy their first home, we can help thousands of Minnesotans buy their first home.

2. Nearly all counties in Minnesota (92%) are not able to provide sufficient shelter or temporary housing to those who are homeless. **What will you do to end homelessness?**

I believe that we need to help provide housing for people who are currently homeless and then invest more into our current existing programs to combat rises in homelessness. Something that is often left out of the conversation is the rise of senior and veteran homelessness. Homelessness is at 10%+ for ages 55 and up and veteran homelessness is still a big problem in Minnesota and our communities. And there are many other groups of people that are left out of the conversation. I strongly believe that we need to make sure to take a holistic approach to the way we view homelessness and try to identify and find the sources of homelessness within each and every community. Homelessness can affect anyone, whether its because of a mental health crisis, economic issues, or even situational. I will make sure to fight and make sure that legislation helps our homeless population, not hurt them.

3. Emergency rental assistance keeps people stably housed, as we saw with federal pandemic-related funding. Historically, nonpayment of rent is the most common reason landlords evict their tenants. During times of financial crisis, families without access to financial resources may be displaced, evicted, or even become homeless. **What will you do to prevent evictions?**

I believe that we need to pass legislation ensuring that renters have sufficient notice of evictions. At any moment a person's life can change whether it's through an accident, a mental health crisis, or a death of a family member. I believe that we need to make sure that we are understanding of these situations by ensuring that people cannot be evicted without proper notice and access to resources that can help them with payments due to circumstances.

4. Minnesota's housing crisis disproportionately harms families of color, especially Black and Indigenous households. Minnesota is one of the worst states in the nation for racial disparities in homeownership. Additionally, 58 percent of Black renters are paying more than they can afford on housing costs. **What meaningful steps will you take to eliminate racial disparities in housing?**

When my family first bought their home in 2012 we were lucky to go through first time buyer program which enabled us to own our own home. I believe that by giving more resources and access to fist time buyer programs and introducing minorities and low-income families to these programs, that we can help eliminate racial disparities in housing.

5. There are approximately 170,000 renter households in the state that earn less than \$31,200 per year. But rental assistance is only available to one out of every four income-qualifying households. Even though more than 100,000 lowest income households need homes, the state only supports the production of 100 homes each year for these families. **What will you do to support the housing needs of those at the lowest income level in Minnesota?**

I believe that the state needs to create more housing and programs that will support families of all income levels in order to provide opportunities to families that do not own a home to receive assistance.

6. Energy efficiency improvements in multifamily buildings and weatherizing single family homes improve indoor air quality, eliminate drafts, and protect residents from extreme cold and heat—delivering health benefits and lower health care costs. **What strategies do you support to improve housing conditions and reduce utility costs?**

I believe that by providing programs that allow for current and new housing to receive grants for making their house more energy efficient we could help improve housing conditions and reduce utility costs.

7. Minnesota's home values are increasing rapidly, constraining low- and middle-income families from achieving affordable homeownership, including more than 64,000 households of color. **What steps will you take to increase opportunities for renters to purchase homes, condos, or cooperative ownership models?**

We need to make sure to increase access to first time buyer programs and low interest or no interest loans for the mandatory downpayment in order to provide opportunities for renters to purchase a home.

8. Including the recommendations of the community when developing policies and programs is a best practice for effective and lasting solutions. **How will you include those most impacted by housing needs in developing and implementing housing solutions?**

I will make sure that our communities are heard when we talk about any legislation that will affect them. I strongly believe that we as candidates and elected officials need to listen more because there are many concerns across various communities that we are missing when it comes to homelessness and housing. I will make sure to address all communities when it comes to housing needs and implementing solutions.