

2025 Municipal Candidate Questionnaire

This questionnaire is for candidates running in Municipal Elections, please complete questionnaire below. Submit a completed electronic copy by Thursday, February 27, 2025, to be considered for endorsement in the 2025 Municipal Elections.

Email *

alondabarberfordesoto@gmail.com

General Information

Candidate Name *

A'Londa Barber-Kusimo

1. District/Office Sought *

DeSoto City Council, Place 3

2. Are you a current member of Stonewall Democrats of Dallas? *

Yes

No

3. Please share any experience that illustrates your understanding of and interest in the needs of the LGBTQ+ community in your District/Role sought.

Having lived the lifestyle for 18 years, I have firsthand experience that allows me to truly understand the unique challenges, concerns, and needs of LGBTQ+ individuals. This personal journey has given me great insight into the importance of equity, inclusivity, and ensuring that all residents feel valued, respected, and heard.

Throughout my career and civic engagement, I have worked to foster unity, advocate for fairness, and support policies that create safe, welcoming spaces for all individuals. I am dedicated to listening to the concerns of the LGBTQ+ community, supporting inclusive initiatives, and ensuring equal access to city resources, opportunities, and protections.

4. As an organization affiliated with the Texas Democratic Party, Stonewall Democrats of Dallas * will only endorse candidates who affirm an affiliation with the platform and policies of the Texas Democratic Party. Do you make such an affirmation? What is your previous voting history (please explain any changes in party affiliation)?

Historically, I have voted as a Democrat; however, in recent years, I have voted as an independent. I firmly believe that our country is at a pivotal moment where leadership should not be solely about party affiliation but about who will do what is right for the people and who will work diligently to ensure the job gets done. My focus has always been and will continue to be on policies that serve the needs of our community, promote equity, and create real, lasting progress for all residents.

I respect the mission of the Texas Democratic Party and appreciate the values it upholds. While I may not always align with every aspect of a single party, my commitment remains steadfast in advocating for fairness, inclusivity, and policies that prioritize the well-being of the people.

5. Please list some of your qualifications and experiences pertinent to the office you are seeking:

My background in community service, leadership, and business development has uniquely prepared me to serve our city effectively.

Civic Engagement & Leadership

- *Member of the Charter Review Committee, ensuring accountability and transparency in city governance
- *Active participant in City Council meetings (both in-person and virtual), staying engaged in key community issues
- *Volunteer for multiple DeSoto city and school board campaigns, advocating for strong leadership and representation

Community Advocacy & Service

- *DeSoto Chamber Member and Small Business Owner, supporting economic growth and local entrepreneurship
- *Partnered with Parks and Recreation to implement a Graphic Design Summer Internship, creating opportunities for young creatives
- *Volunteered for Winter Storm Water Giveaway, assisting residents during times of need
- *Advocated for DeSoto ISD, served on the Campus Improvement Committee (CIC) and supporting initiatives to strengthen education

Commitment to Progress & Improvement

- *Supporter of revitalization efforts such as the Hampton Road Redevelopment and Nance Farm Project, promoting responsible city growth
- *Passionate about enhancing public safety, infrastructure, and city beautification
- *Strong relationships with local businesses and community stakeholders to drive meaningful change

My experience and deep-rooted commitment to service, leadership, and problem-solving make me well-equipped to represent DeSoto with transparency, dedication, and action.

6. Once you are elected, what are some of your priorities and plans specific to your office's responsibilities?

Once elected, my priorities will focus on revitalizing DeSoto's existing resources, enhancing infrastructure, and strengthening community engagement. My key plans include:

Enhancing Public Safety – I will work closely with local law enforcement and first responders to ensure transparent communication, community policing initiatives, and ongoing safety improvements that foster trust and security for all residents.

Revitalizing Infrastructure – Investing in road repairs, and modernized public spaces will be a priority. I will advocate for strategic development that improves existing structures while maintaining the city's character.

Strengthening Local Business Growth – Supporting entrepreneurs and small businesses is key to a thriving local economy. I will champion policies that reduce red tape, increase funding opportunities, and provide business development resources to encourage economic expansion within DeSoto.

Community Engagement & Transparency – I will work to improve city communication by implementing more accessible public forums, digital engagement platforms, and direct resident involvement in decision-making processes.

Advocating for Smart Growth – With DeSoto being 85% built out, I will push for responsible zoning policies that encourage redevelopment of older commercial spaces into vibrant, multi-use developments while maintaining neighborhood integrity.

These priorities reflect my commitment to serving DeSoto with strong leadership, clear communication, and actionable solutions that benefit every resident.

Housing

This section addresses housing and homelessness within the LGBTQ+ community.

7. On a scale of 1-10, 1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest, please rate your city's response to housing affordability and briefly explain your rating.

I would rate DeSoto's response to housing affordability at a 6. While there have been efforts to address affordability, there is still significant room for improvement to ensure that housing remains accessible for all residents, including seniors, working families, and young professionals

Positive - DeSoto has taken steps to offer diverse housing options, and new developments have provided opportunities for growth. There are programs in place to assist homeowners with repairs, and some efforts have been made to revitalize older areas

Opportunities - Rising home prices, increased property taxes, and higher insurance rates are making homeownership more challenging. Additionally, we must ensure responsible development that maintains the integrity of existing neighborhoods while offering affordable rental and homeownership options.

8. Please list a specific policy/ordinance you would like to introduce or repeal to address the housing supply issue

One specific policy I would like to introduce is a Housing Revitalization and Adaptive Reuse Ordinance to increase the housing supply while preserving DeSoto's existing neighborhoods. This ordinance would provide incentives for revitalizing aging properties and converting underutilized commercial spaces into mixed-use housing, helping to address both housing affordability and economic growth. It would include tax incentives or grants to encourage property owners and developers to renovate vacant spaces, zoning updates to allow for the responsible conversion of commercial properties into residential units, and considerations for accessory dwelling units (ADUs) that maintain neighborhood integrity. Additionally, I would work to expand first-time homebuyer and workforce housing programs to help more families and essential workers afford homes in DeSoto. By implementing these changes, we can ensure responsible growth while preserving the character of our community. I look forward to discussing solutions that will keep DeSoto thriving.

9. What’s the biggest threat to LGBTQ+ folks with respect to housing security and what are your plans to address housing insecurity within this community specifically?

One of the biggest threats to housing security for LGBTQ+ individuals is housing discrimination, whether in rental applications, homeownership opportunities, or access to safe and inclusive housing. Many LGBTQ+ individuals, especially youth and seniors, face higher rates of housing instability due to discrimination, lack of family support, or economic challenges.

Should we have such issues in DeSoto, I would advocate for stronger enforcement of fair housing laws to ensure that all residents, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity, have equal access to stable housing. Additionally, I support expanding local housing assistance programs to specifically include resources for LGBTQ+ individuals facing homelessness or displacement. Partnering with organizations that provide LGBTQ+-inclusive housing services will be a priority to ensure safe and affirming options are available.

By prioritizing affordable housing initiatives, strengthening anti-discrimination protections, and working with community partners, we can ensure that DeSoto remains a welcoming and inclusive city where all residents feel safe, valued, and supported in securing stable housing.

10. What specific ordinances or policies would you suggest or support to address housing inequality and rental pricing, such as a ban on algorithmic rent control?

To address these concerns, I would support policies that promote fair and transparent rental pricing while ensuring that housing remains accessible for all income levels.

One specific policy I would explore is increased oversight of algorithmic rent pricing. While technology plays a role in modern real estate, unchecked algorithm-driven pricing can artificially inflate rental rates and push housing out of reach for many families. I would advocate for greater transparency in rental pricing models and explore potential restrictions on algorithmic rent control to prevent price manipulation that harms tenants.

Additionally, I support incentivizing affordable housing developments by working with local property owners and developers to ensure a balanced mix of housing options. Implementing renter protection ordinances, such as enhanced notice periods for rent increases and tenant assistance programs, could also help mitigate sudden displacement and housing instability.

Ensuring fair and equitable housing policies is essential to maintaining a thriving, inclusive community in DeSoto. I am committed to working with residents, stakeholders, and city leadership to develop solutions that protect both renters and homeowners.

Public Safety (Includes Fire, 911, School safety, and all safety departments)

This section addresses Public Safety within the LGBTQ+ community

11. On a scale of 1-10, 1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest, please rate your city’s delivery of public safety services to the community and briefly explain your rating. *

I would rate DeSoto’s delivery of public safety services at a 7. Our city has dedicated first responders who work tirelessly to protect and serve our community. However, there is always room for improvement in areas such as community policing, emergency response times, and proactive crime prevention strategies.

To enhance public safety, I support strengthening community engagement between law enforcement and residents, increasing mental health resources for crisis intervention, and ensuring that our police and fire departments have the necessary training and resources to meet the needs of our growing city. A collaborative approach between city leadership, public safety officials, and the community will allow us to build upon our current efforts and create a safer, more secure DeSoto for all residents.

12. Please list one public safety policy you support and why and one public safety policy you oppose and why. *

One public safety policy I support is community-oriented policing. Building stronger relationships between law enforcement and residents fosters trust, improves communication, and encourages proactive crime prevention. I believe in increasing community engagement initiatives, such as neighborhood patrol programs, public safety forums, and youth outreach efforts, to create a safer and more connected DeSoto.

One policy I oppose is over-policing non-violent offenses, which can lead to unnecessary criminalization and strain community relations. Instead, I advocate for diversion programs, mental health crisis response teams, and restorative justice approaches to ensure that resources are directed toward true public safety concerns while providing support for those in need.

13. Please address how you would work with public safety officials across all appropriate levels *
of government to ensure LGBTQ+ people feel safe, secure, and respected within your
respective jurisdiction.

Ensuring that all residents of DeSoto feel safe, secure, and respected is a top priority, and that includes
members of the LGBTQ+ community. I would work with public safety officials at the local, county, and state
levels to promote policies that emphasize fair and equal treatment, non-discrimination, and cultural
competency training for law enforcement and emergency responders.

Specifically, I support:

1. Expanding diversity and inclusion training for public safety officials
2. Strengthening community-police relations
3. Partnering with advocacy organizations to provide resources, crisis support, and legal protections against
discrimination and violence.
4. Ensuring that reporting mechanisms for harassment, discrimination, or hate crimes are accessible,
transparent, and taken seriously.

14. Have there been any recent incidents involving LGBTQ+ hate or violence in your city, if so *
how do you plan to address this? If not, what can other cities learn in order to reduce these
occurrences?

Fortunately, to my knowledge we have not had any reported incidents of LGBTQ+ hate or violence in DeSoto.
However, it is essential to remain proactive in fostering a community where everyone feels safe, respected,
and valued.

Other cities can learn from DeSoto by:

1. Promoting strong community engagement
2. Fostering partnerships with local organizations

While DeSoto has not experienced these issues, I remain committed to upholding a safe and welcoming
environment for all residents. By staying vigilant, informed, and engaged, we can continue to be a model city
for inclusivity and safety.

15. If you are not a member of a historically marginalized group, what is your understanding of the needs of these groups with respect to public safety? *

As a woman of color, I understand firsthand the importance of equity, fairness, and safety in our communities. Historically marginalized groups often face systemic barriers that affect their safety, economic stability, and overall well-being. Their needs can vary, but some of the most pressing concerns include: Public Safety and Justice, Economic Opportunity and Stability, Healthcare and Wellbeing, Education and Youth support, Civic Engagement and Representation

Environmental

This section addresses Environmental protections within marginalized communities.

16. Please list a specific policy/ordinance that you would suggest or support to advance making your city more climate resilient. *

To make DeSoto more climate resilient, I would advocate for policies that enhance sustainable infrastructure and energy efficiency while addressing the unique environmental challenges our city faces.

One key initiative would be implementing an eco-friendly building ordinance that encourages both new developments and existing properties to adopt energy-efficient construction practices, solar energy incentives, and water conservation measures. This would help homeowners and businesses lower utility costs while reducing the city's overall carbon footprint.

17. What are your plans to address environmental injustices for marginalized communities within your city? *

Addressing environmental injustices in marginalized communities requires intentional policy changes, community engagement, and equitable resource allocation. In DeSoto, I would advocate for:

1. Improving Air and Water Quality – I support stricter monitoring of industrial pollution and air quality standards, particularly in areas disproportionately impacted by environmental hazards. Partnering with state and federal agencies can help reduce exposure to pollutants that negatively affect public health.
2. Community-Led Environmental Planning – Residents must have a voice in city planning decisions that affect their neighborhoods. I would advocate for transparent public forums and advisory committees that allow marginalized communities to express concerns and help shape solutions.

Communications

This section addresses Communication Methods between elected officials and marginalized communities.

18. How do you plan to work with allies and organizations across all appropriate levels of government to present a cohesive message of unified support for the LGBTQ+ community? *

I believe that fostering inclusivity and unity within our community requires collaboration, advocacy, and open dialogue. To ensure that DeSoto remains a welcoming and supportive city for all, including the LGBTQ+ community, I will:

1. Engage with Local and State Organizations
2. Support Inclusive Policies
3. Encourage Community Education and Awareness
4. Maintain Open Communication

By working across all levels of government and with key stakeholders, we can present a unified message of support and inclusivity, ensuring that DeSoto remains a safe, welcoming, and equitable community for all.

19. How do you plan to work with allies and organizations across all appropriate levels of government to present a cohesive message of unified support for the LGBTQ+ community? *

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20. Will you commit to being an active partner and supporter of Stonewall Democrats of Dallas? *

- Yes
- No

Local Governance

This section addresses the attack on Local Governance from the State Legislature.

21. Do you believe the State Legislature has engaged or will engage in government overreach? *
Briefly explain your answer.

Yes, I believe the State Legislature has engaged in government overreach at times, particularly when local governance is restricted from making decisions that best serve their communities. Local leaders understand the unique needs of their residents, and I support policies that protect local control and decision-making.

22. Please list one specific policy/ordinance that you feel would best advance LGBTQ+ rights on a local level *

support implementing a local nondiscrimination ordinance that ensures equal protections for LGBTQ+ individuals in housing, employment, and public accommodations, reinforcing inclusivity and fairness in our community.

23. What is your opinion of local police department cooperating with ICE? *

I believe local law enforcement should prioritize community safety and trust-building rather than acting as an extension of federal immigration enforcement. When local police cooperate with ICE, it can create fear among immigrant communities, discouraging individuals—regardless of legal status—from reporting crimes, serving as witnesses, or seeking assistance when needed. This breakdown in trust can make entire communities less safe.

Additionally, diverting local law enforcement resources to federal immigration matters can strain budgets and take away from addressing critical public safety concerns such as violent crime, neighborhood policing, and emergency response. Instead, I support policies that allow law enforcement to focus on protecting and serving all residents, ensuring that everyone—regardless of immigration status—feels safe engaging with local authorities.

All Candidates

All candidates will need to answer the following questions.

24. Is there anything in your past or background that has not been covered by the previous questions that might – without careful explanation - cause our organization to reconsider or withdraw our endorsement of you?

No

25. I'm seeking an endorsement from the Stonewall Democrats of Dallas for the 2025 Municipal election. (Please type name) *

A'Londa L. Barber-Kusimo

Google Forms