



Kansas Statewide
Homeless Coalition

2024 Survey for Kansas Public Leaders and Candidates

Name

Candace Ayars

Office:

Kansas Senate

Party

Democrat

District

20

Home City

Topeka

Ballot City

Topeka

Policy and Strategy:

Kansas Housing Resource Corporation's 2021 Housing Needs Assessment found that "A shortage of quality, affordable housing is an undeniable barrier to economic growth and development in any community, and particularly in rural communities in Kansas." How likely are you to support increasing funding for affordable housing development?

Very Likely

Inadequate access to mental health and substance use treatment programs contributes to homelessness in Kansas. How likely are you to vote to expand mental health and substance abuse treatment programs?

Very Likely

How likely are you to be in favor of limiting annual rental increases?

Unlikely

Comments:

Landlords must be able to maintain their properties. Without reasonable rent increases to keep pace with inflation, landlords are not able to make repairs or upgrades that increase the quality of life for residents and sustain the marketability of the property. Otherwise, there is a risk that the property falls into disrepair and contributes to development of a depressed neighborhood.

Kansas has no statewide plan that comprehensively addresses homelessness. How likely are you to support the implementation of a statewide affordable housing plan to address homelessness?

Very Likely

How likely are you to advocate to allow for more affordable housing developments in urban and suburban areas?

Very Likely

How likely are you to be in favor of establishing a state-funded rental assistance program to stabilize low-income renters and support property owners?

Very Likely

How likely are you to support legislation or programs to provide legal assistance to tenants facing eviction?

Likely

How likely are you to support increasing funding for domestic violence shelters and services to prevent homelessness?

Very Likely

What funding sources will you prioritize or advocate for to support homelessness programs and services? (Check all that apply)

Federal grants and programs (e.g., HUD Continuum of Care, Emergency Solutions Grants)

Private donations and philanthropic foundations

Corporate partnerships and sponsorships

Community fundraising events and campaigns

Social impact bonds and other innovative financing mechanisms

Public-private partnerships

Tax revenue initiatives (e.g., bonds, levies specifically for housing and homeless services)

Housing Solutions

Kansas does not have enough shelter space; nearly two thousand Kansans sleep outside or in their cars in dangerous weather conditions. How important is it to increase funding and capacity for emergency shelters to meet immediate needs?

Very Important

How important is it to develop more transitional housing programs to bridge the gap between homelessness and permanent housing?

Very Important

How important is it to expand permanent supportive housing options with integrated services for long-term stability?

Important

How important is it to implement a low barrier approach that prioritizes permanent housing with support services?

Important

How important is it to collaborate on the local level to ensure a coordinated response that addresses homelessness?

Very Important

How important is it to use data-driven strategies to allocate resources based on current demand and long-term outcomes?

Very Important

Comments:

This is essential to prevent ineffective spending and increase the ability to continue to evaluate the viability of programs.

How important is it to create a flexible funding source that allows communities to address local needs?

Very Important

Comments:

Each community has the best understanding of what is needed in that community.

Collaboration and Partnerships:

Will you establish regular communication channels with local nonprofits to address homelessness?

Yes

Do you plan to participate in a workgroup or advisory council that addresses homelessness that includes representatives from key stakeholders throughout Kansas?

Yes

Comments:

If this were offered to me, I would not hesitate to participate.

How important is it for state entities to collaborate on homelessness initiatives?

Very Important

Comments:

A coordinated effort will increase the likelihood that resources will be used most effectively.

Employment and Education:

How likely are you to be in favor of creating state incentives for businesses that hire individuals experiencing homelessness?

Very Likely

Will you support job training and vocational programs tailored to the needs of homeless individuals?

Yes

Do you support the creation of a statewide initiative to simplify the process of obtaining a state ID for homeless and low-income individuals?

Yes

Comments:

This is critical to ensure persons experiencing homelessness are able to integrate in the economic life of a community and once again become independent. It also allows them to fully participate as a citizen through voting.

Health and Well-being:

Do you advocate for Medicaid expansion to increase healthcare coverage for low-income individuals?

Yes

Comments:

As a public health professional, I have been advocating for Medicaid expansion since the inception of federal health care.

How critical is Medicaid expansion for increasing healthcare coverage for low-income individuals in your view?

Very Critical

Will you support the integration of healthcare services within shelters and housing programs?

Yes