

MainPAC Candidate Survey

2021 Kansas Elections

Q1-5.

Candidate Name: Stacie Gram
Candidate Email: StacieGram4OP@gmail.com
Candidate Phone: 913-558-0584
Office Sought: City Councilmember
Office County: Johnson
Office City: Overland Park
Office District: 4

Candidate Rating: 76%

Q6. Political discourse in Kansas could be characterized as siloed and divisive. How do you intend to engage citizens and colleagues in potentially difficult conversations? (Available points: 1)

- A. If elected I will seek to find compromises when it is clear my constituents are divided. (1)
- B. If elected I will be loyal to the ideology associated with my party affiliation.

Candidate Answer: If elected I will seek to find compromises when it is clear my constituents are divided.

Candidate Comment: For years, my career has involved bringing adversaries to the table to resolve complex disputes. While differences of opinion are unavoidable, I have found success in clarifying the data and the facts, identifying common ground and areas of compromise. Progress involves being willing to talk, being open to different views and approaching others with positivity. As a Council member I have actively sought input from residents, listened to divergent views and made thoughtful, considered decisions.

Q7. Which of the following statements best aligns with your stance on local elected officials making decisions for their communities, particularly local tax and revenue decisions? For information about Home Rule please see https://www.lkm.org/page/Home_Rule. (Available points: 2)

- A. Local elected officials should have ultimate authority in decision making for their communities, consistent with Home Rule. (2)
- B. Local elected officials should have limited authority in decision making for their communities. (1)
- C. Local elected officials should not have authority in decision making for their communities. Decisions should be made by the state.

Candidate Answer: Local elected officials should have ultimate authority in decision making for their communities, consistent with Home Rule.

Candidate Comment: City government impacts our daily lives and shapes the character of our community. Local control allows voters to elect their representatives to make key decisions on public safety, city services like streets, sidewalks, and snow removal, and amenities like parks and pools. Residents should have a voice in the future of our city, the types of business we attract, housing and retail development. Overland Park has a proven track record in governance and we should continue to support Home Rule.

Q8. Do you support allocating additional resources specifically for implementing/expanding mental health programs?

(Available points: 1)

- A. Yes (1)
- B. No

Candidate Answer: Yes

Candidate Comment: I am proud to have advocated for the recommendations of the Mental Health Task Force including the addition of a behavioral health unit, crisis trained officers and mental health co-responders to the Overland Park Police Department to provide 24/7 coverage to respond to mental health service calls. I also support the recommendation to create a mental health crisis center. As a board member of ForwardOP, we will be focusing on mental health as part of the Well-being initiative.

Q9. Which of the following statements best aligns with your opinion about transparency in local government?

(Available points: 1)

- A. Local government should be as transparent as is legally possible in all circumstances. (1)
- B. Transparency is important, but should be secondary to efficiency.
- C. There are some times when transparency is important, but there are other issues the public doesn't have the capacity to understand and transparency becomes less important.
- D. The people vote for a candidate because they trust them, so transparency is not as important for elected officials as for other public leaders.

Candidate Answer: Local government should be as transparent as is legally possible in all circumstances.

Candidate Comment: Since joining the Council, I have advocated for transparency on various issues including the release of the police investigation into the John Albers shooting. I support the addition of public comment to Council meetings and livestreaming and recording all meetings. I have asked that meetings of the new Infrastructure Advisory Group be livestreamed to maximize public input. I have held virtual and in-person meetings for constituents, am active on social media, and am responsive to all messages.

Q10. Which of the following statements best aligns with your opinion about access to health care? (Available points: 2)

- A. Local government has a responsibility to support access to health care. (2)
- B. Local government in my area is currently meeting the community's access needs. (1)
- C. Local government has no role in health care.

Candidate Answer: Local government has a responsibility to support access to health care.

Candidate Comment: While city government has a lesser role in direct access to health care than state or federal governments, it has a role to play. City residents supported this view in our ForwardOP visioning process when they asked the city to focus on mental and physical well-being, including creating a center for wellness that provides access to mental health resources, particularly for youth. Focus areas should also include substance abuse treatment, suicide prevention and counseling services.

Q11. To what degree do you believe that diversity in representation at all levels of government is critical to effective governing? (Available points: 1)

- A. Extremely Important (1)
- B. Neutral
- C. Not important

Candidate Answer: Extremely Important

Candidate Comment: Government should represent the community it serves and diversity should be visible on the Council, on boards and committees and within all city departments. Diversity is critical to governing with equity and credibility and we should constantly examine our efforts in recruiting and promotion. I am launching an LGBTQ+ affinity group at work and have participated in racial equity training at work and on the Council. As one of only two women on the Council, this is of particular importance to me.

Q12. Professional public entity staff are expected to bring expertise, research, and accuracy to assist elected officials in their work. These may include health professionals, legal experts, research librarians, school administrators and the like. Regarding these professionals, which of the following is generally most true?

(Available points: 1)

- A. It is the role of locally elected leaders to **support** the professionals who work in public service (1)
- B. It is the role of locally elected leaders to **scrutinize** the professionals who work in public service
- C. It is the role of locally elected leaders to **stay distant** from the professionals who work in public spaces
- D. It is the role of elected leaders to **closely manage** the professionals who work in public service

Candidate Answer: It is the role of locally elected leaders to support the professionals who work in public service

Candidate Comment: Since joining the Council, I have been impressed by the professionalism and dedication of our city staff. The role of the Council is to hire the best qualified City Manager to in turn hire and retain top talent to conduct the daily operations of the city. The role of elected officials should be to provide direction on policy priorities, future development needs, strategic vision and planning in accordance with their constituents' views and to determine methods of funding those priorities.

Q13. Which of the following most closely aligns with your view of the role of local government in each of these policy issues? (Available points: 6)

- A. Very Relevant (2)
- B. Somewhat Relevant (1)
- C. Irrelevant
- D. Not Applicable

Issue: Climate Change

Candidate Answer: Very Relevant

Candidate Comment: The city should incorporate climate change issues and sustainability efforts in its decision making. Recent positive examples include our move to LED bulbs in city streetlamps and at the soccer complex and solar panels on a new justice building.

Issue: Gun Safety

Candidate Answer: Irrelevant

Candidate Comment: I believe gun safety is very important but best regulated at the state or federal levels to ensure consistent application and enforceability of the law.

Issue: Voting Access

Candidate Answer: Irrelevant

Candidate Comment: I believe voting access is another very important issue, in that it is government's role to ensure all eligible voters have flexible and open means and methods to vote in state and local elections. However, our elections are well run at the county and state levels in Kansas.

Q14. Which of the following statements best aligns with your opinion about K - 12 schools? (Available points: 1)

- A. Public money should only be used to support public schools. (1)
- B. Public money should be used to support all schools, regardless of their public or private status.

Candidate Answer: Public money should only be used to support public schools.

Candidate Comment: I graduated from the Shawnee Mission district and my children attended Blue Valley schools, both consistently top ranked. Public funding is critical to ensuring high quality education for all students. Diverting taxpayer dollars away from public schools would risk lowering their quality, which would lower home values and make Overland Park a less attractive area for families and businesses. Our private schools offer valuable choice to residents but should not be supported by public funds.

Q15. In light of the current political landscape, what is your stance on the role your personal religious beliefs should play in policy decisions? (Available points: 1)

- A. If I have personal religious beliefs that are important to me, I know they might differ from other's beliefs; therefore I will strive to respect the separation of church and state in policy decisions and my votes. (1)
- B. My personal religious beliefs are important to me therefore my religious beliefs will be the driving factor in policy decisions and my votes.

Candidate Answer: If I have personal religious beliefs that are important to me, I know they might differ from other's beliefs; therefore I will strive to respect the separation of church and state in policy decisions and my votes.

Candidate Comment: My faith has always been an important part of my life and I hope has helped form my character. I value honesty, fairness, and compassion. I also appreciate openness and critical thinking and the value of different viewpoints. My legal background has given me an appreciation for the country's doctrine of the separation of church and state and I believe it is a sound basis for governing.

Q16. How do you understand the role (the duties, responsibilities, and scope) of the position you are seeking?

Candidate Answer: Having spent the past year on the Council, I have a good understanding of the responsibilities of the role. I draw on my skills, experience, and knowledge of the community to make the best decisions possible for

Ward 4 and the city. I review reports, make site visits, talk to concerned residents, do my own research and meet with staff members to understand issues, then attend meetings to discuss and vote, taking time to explain my reasoning. I am the city's cheerleader, critic and biggest fan!

Q17. You will have to publicly account for your political contributions. To date, how much money have you collected or has been pledged to your campaign?

Candidate Answer: \$7550

Q18. How many donors does your answer above reflect?

Candidate Answer: 48

Q19. From which other organizations have you received endorsements? (Enter "n/a" if none).

Candidate Answer: N/A

Q20. From which other organizations are you seeking endorsements? (Enter "n/a" if none).

Candidate Answer: N/A

Q21. Is there anything else you'd like to add to this survey? Please do that here.

Candidate Answer: I am uniquely qualified for the Council as a life-long OP resident with a commitment to public service. I was active in the Chamber of Commerce, ForwardOP, Leadership Overland Park, and served on advisory committees to the Blue Valley School District and

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