



Action for Opportunity and Hunger Free America

2020 Presidential Candidate Questionnaire

1. What are the top five specific ways that you, as President, would increase economic opportunity for low-income Americans and decrease poverty, hunger, and homelessness?

In my mom and dad's generation, nine out of every ten kids did better than their parents. But for Americans in my generation, the odds are no better than a coin flip. Incomes for working families have stagnated almost my entire life. Meanwhile, most of our economic growth goes to a smaller and smaller slice of the wealthiest Americans. This dangerous level of inequality not only threatens our economic security, but tears at the very fabric of our democracy and our society. We need an economy that delivers more. Families across the country need to see higher incomes, lower costs, and a brighter future for our children. This means attacking poverty, hunger, and homelessness with bold policies such as those I describe in my [Economic Agenda for Working Families](#).

First, I will invest \$430 billion to unlock access to affordable housing for over seven million families. I'll dramatically increase the supply of affordable housing; launch the Community Homestead Act to foster wealth accumulation through homeownership for low-income families from formerly redlined neighborhoods; and invest \$170 billion to ensure that all eligible families with children have access to housing choice vouchers, mobility counseling, and wrap-around services.

Second, I will decrease health care costs, which too often devastate American families. My [Medicare for All Who Want It Plan](#) gives everyone a low-cost, high-quality choice when it comes to their health care. In addition, my [Affordable Medicine For All](#) plan dramatically reduces drug costs and forces pharmaceutical companies to price responsibly and pay their fair share.

Third, I will grow workers' incomes by expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit. This \$400 billion tax cut will increase incomes by an average of \$1,000 per year for 35 million American families.

My administration will also break barriers that stop workers' incomes from growing and ensure that all workers are earning their fair share through my [labor policy](#). This will include raising the minimum wage to \$15 per hour, closing the gender wage gap, and ensuring that all workers—including gig economy, farm, and domestic workers—have the right to unionize and bargain for higher pay and benefits.

To address hunger, I will work to preserve SNAP benefits, which will include rolling back new rules from the current administration that tighten work requirements for SNAP, putting 700,000 adults at risk of losing critical benefits. As described in my [Rural Health](#) plan, I will support school-based healthy food distribution models, and augment the Department of Agriculture's funding for food hubs and mobile markets.



2. What is your single greatest concrete career accomplishment to date that has increased economic opportunity for low-income Americans and/or decreased poverty, hunger, and homelessness?

In the decade before I took office, our population had shrunk more than 10%, and the unemployment rate was over 15%. In my term as Mayor of South Bend, our city's median income has risen 28 percent, poverty has fallen by 28 percent, and unemployment has fallen by 55 percent--all better than the national average for cities during my tenure. Between 2012 and 2017, our population grew every year, reversing a decades-long trend of decline. Working with city leaders and community members, we have restored South Bend's economic stability and increased the agency of families all across our city.

3. As President, how would you staff and structure the development, leadership, and daily management of your economic opportunity, poverty, hunger, and homelessness initiatives in your White House, Cabinet, and Administration?

In addition to reinstating the Interagency Council on Homelessness, I will establish an interagency council on poverty and economic opportunity, drawing together Cabinet secretaries and deputy secretaries from the Departments of Housing and Urban Development, Health and Human Services, Education, and Labor, to ensure that all our departments are well coordinated in their efforts to ensure a brighter future for all Americans. I will receive regular briefings from those Cabinet secretaries and task the Council to engage with nonprofit, advocacy, and other organizations leading work to reduce poverty.