

INDIANA MUSLIM ADVOCACY NETWORK

2023 Primary Election Voter Education Guide: Indianapolis



Your Voice Matters. Make an Informed
decision with our Nonpartisan Voter
Education Guide



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Information about Indiana Midterm General Election

Voting in the Indiana General Election:

Indiana's Primary Election is used to narrow the field of candidates for a given elective office or to determine the nominees for political parties before a general election. The Primary Election occurs at local, state, and federal levels. In Indiana, the winners of primary contests are determined via plurality vote. For example, the candidate with the highest number of votes is declared the winner of the primary even if they did not win more than 50 percent of the vote.

Voting Requirements:

You have the right to vote in an Indiana election if:

- You are both a U.S. citizen and a resident of Indiana;
- You will be at least 18 years of age by **THIS** election, May 2, 2023;
- You are not currently in prison after being convicted of a crime;
- You have lived in the precinct where you vote for at least 30 days prior to the election unless you qualify to vote using one of the "Fail Safe" procedures; and
- You are registered to vote.

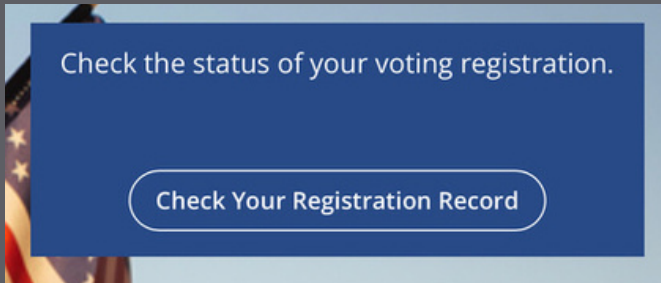
The following Voters' Guide policy was shared with all candidates:

- The Questionnaire is sent to candidates from both parties.
- Candidate replies are printed without editing or verification.
- Candidates are listed alphabetically by party.
- Candidates who do not respond to our questionnaire by the provided deadline are listed with the notation, "No response received."
- Answers to each question should not exceed 200 words.

What to know before going to the polls

Check out indianavoters.in.gov to see your sample ballot.

First, click here.



Next, fill in your first name, last name, date of birth, and select the County you live in, and click submit.

A screenshot of the "Tell us about yourself." form on the Indianavoters.in.gov website. The form includes instructions: "Please enter your information exactly as it appears on your voter registration record. If you registered using your initials you may have trouble finding your record. Please do not include any suffix (e.g. Sr, Jr) in your last name. Please contact your county election administrator if you require assistance." The form fields are: First Name, Last Name, Date of Birth, and County of Current Registration (a dropdown menu currently showing "-- SELECT --"). A yellow "Submit" button is at the bottom right.A screenshot of the "Search Results:" modal. It displays a table titled "Information Entered" with the following data:

First Name	Last Name	Coun
FATIMA	KHAN	Hendr

At the bottom of the modal are two buttons: "CANCEL" and "Continue".

Confirm that is you and click continue.

Scroll down, and you will see:

- Both early voting and Election day locations and their hours
- Who will be on your ballot, including which party they belong to and what position they are running for;
- and information about your districts.




Indianapolis Candidates

This guide covers INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA ONLY. If you live in another city, please check our other Guides.

Indianapolis Mayoral Candidates	
Democrats: Bob Kern - <i>no response received</i> Clif Marsiglio Joe Hogsett (i) Larry Vaughn - <i>no response received</i> Robin Shackelford	Republicans: Abdul-Hakim Shabazz - <i>no response received</i> James Jackson - <i>no response received</i> Jefferson Shreve - <i>no response received</i> John Couch

Questions sent to candidates:



- **Background:** What training, experience, and background qualifies you for this position?
 - **Top issues:** What are the top three issues you would like to address if elected? Why?
 - **Islamophobia:** Do you believe Islamophobia is a concern for Muslims living in this city? How do you perceive your role in tracking Islamophobia in our city?
 - **Gun safety policy** - The national rise in school shootings has parents, school districts, and law enforcement agencies looking for ways to ensure schools are safe. What plans do you have regarding school safety? What policies would you enact and why?
 - **Affordable Housing** - Do you view the lack of affordable housing as a major concern for your city? Why or why? If yes, what are your plans to address this concern?
 - **Education** - According to data from IREAD, nearly one in five students have not mastered foundational reading skills by the end of third grade. ILEARN also reported scores for minority students were lower in math and English than their peers. What will you do if elected as Indianapolis Mayor to help teachers and schools address these issues?
 - **Public Safety** - What are your plans to improve public safety in Indianapolis?
- 



Background: I have worked as an activist for several decades. My educational background is a Master of Community Psychology from Martin University. I am on the boards of Citizen's Alliance for Public Safety, the Near East Side Community Organization (NESCO). I worked closely with the ATF to understand their organization with training to remove guns from violent criminals, while pushing for transparency and anti-racist policies within policing.

Top issues: Public Safety, Mental and Community Health, Infrastructure. Public safety because it is the item people most demand. We need to focus on preventative means in most ways.

We need a systems level approach, which is why fixing mental health, including substance abuse is paramount. Fixing this without criminalizing these issues. Not criminalizing homelessness and drug use. This does not mean condoning drug use, it means approaching it as a medical or mental issue not one police need to be a part of.

And finally infrastructure. Our streets and public transportation system focus on the most affluent and hurt those less 'worthy' in the eyes of the gov't. This is shown in where the best streets are, and the easiest to use public transportation is.

Islamophobia: Absolutely. During the 'Gulf War' a friend's husband was murdered as he was Sikh. He was confused for a Muslim. My brother-in-law escaped Bosnia in the '90s because he was Muslim and while not in Indianapolis, still faces issues in the US. Talking to friend and colleagues, they see it up-close. Beyond this, a lot of my friends that are Muslim are also Black, which adds yet another layer of racism. Some may measure our city against how the rest of the state treats others, but I want our city to be a truly anti-racist city that celebrates differences and welcomes people in not just words, but in deeds.

We need to be active in our usage of hate crimes. We need to let it be known that this is not welcome here and that we will do everything possible to stop Islamophobia.

Gun Safety Policy: Sadly, most common sense rules are already in place. At this point, our students now feel as if they are in a prison more than they are in school with a lot of the policies.

I will push for more red flag laws and encourage folks to speak up. Almost all

school shooters would have been caught by red flag laws if overworked prosecutors could keep up with the demands of the job. We will open a hotline for Red Flag violations and we will work to ensure this is not used maliciously. Folks with severe mental health issues, those that are known bullies that have injured others while not prosecuted, those with abusive backgrounds to spouses SHOULD NOT HAVE GUNS. And we will ensure they do not.

Affordable Housing: Absolutely. The city does what it can to promote gentrification as it moves crime from one area to another. It improves crime statistics for the affluent while moving crimes to other areas.

Speaking to orgs like the Kheprw Institute and SEND, there are initiatives to build more equitable and community driven housing. We need communities that interact, communities that work together. We need to stop allowing out-of-state landlords from owning properties they will never see. We need a way to ensure that community members can have affordable homes without feeling the pressure to sell to the highest bidder — while still being able to build equity in a way that rent does not.

Education

I worked in assessment for more than a decade. One of the biggest challenges was building a fair instrument. I worked with the commissioner of higher education for the ISTEP project. One of the biggest problems is that 'Knowledge Content' writers often write in ways that focus on a target population. Often with more fair assessments, we find that Black and Brown students do far better than with the current state testing tools.

I work for the biggest university system in Indiana, though as a state employee I am not supposed to name it -- It is easily found online though. We find that students that have been reported doing worse than 'white students', our first-year testing of these same students at the university level show they are not nearly at the disadvantage the state would say they are.

The biggest different between K12 and University? We support our students and mentor them in the university. This makes all the difference. In the end, pairing students with upper class members that look like them, or any number of other likeminded communities they can select to be a part of — makes the difference.

Public Safety: Gun safety is paramount to be addressed. I have already spoken with the ATF about project safe neighborhoods.

However, police aren't the only answer. It should be the LAST answer. I hear on the streets, people are afraid of both police and their own neighbors. I am

proposing a radical solution of 200 unarmed civilian respondents. IMPD is down 250 officers, 250 officers that we will not find in the next 5 years according to national trends no matter what anyone thinks.

And we have a Use It Or Lose It system...if they do not use the money for these officers, it goes into a system that the mayor can do what he or she wants without oversight. I find this wrong. With oversight, I want to have unarmed respondents that no one will ever have to worry about getting shot for being asleep in a car, or for a mental health breakdown. They will not have to worry about being hurt for having a substance abuse disorder or suffering from homelessness.

These are radical solutions. And we may have to employ traditional solutions while these ramp up. But the goal is to transition quickly to a system that we can all feel safe. We need to still protect those of you that are suffering because of others, but prevention goes far further than punishment.

Website: <https://clifmars.com/>

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Joe Hogsett (i)
Democrat

Background: As the Mayor of Indianapolis, I've had the privilege of serving our great city for the past seven years. During my time as Mayor, I have focused on investing in public safety, improving our infrastructure, and building a stronger future for our children.

Throughout the pandemic, I have worked tirelessly to steer Indianapolis through this challenging time while promoting equity for all residents. Now, as I seek a third term as Mayor, I

am committed to delivering on the promises that were delayed by the pandemic. I will continue to prioritize public safety, expand affordable housing options, champion high-impact programs for our young people, and invest in critical infrastructure projects that will improve the quality of life for all Indianapolis residents.

My experience, training, and background have prepared me to lead our city through any challenge that may arise. I am dedicated to serving the people of Indianapolis and ensuring that our city remains a great place to live, work, and raise a family.

Top issues: In my next term, my top focuses are prioritizing public safety and safer neighborhoods, investing in our infrastructure, and building a better future for our children. I will work to continue reducing crime with my \$150

million violence reduction strategy, implement a \$1.1 billion infrastructure plan without raising taxes, and expand high-impact programs for our young people such as Indy Achieves, Circle City Readers, and Project Indy. These are programs aimed at promoting education, workforce development, and youth employment opportunities in the Indianapolis community.

Islamophobia: Throughout my time as Mayor, I've made it clear that hate has no home in Indianapolis. Indianapolis welcomes all. Ultimately, it is only by working together and standing up against hate and discrimination that we can build a more inclusive and welcoming city for all.

Unfortunately, Islamophobia remains a concern for many Muslims living in Indianapolis and across the country. It is unacceptable for anyone to be targeted or discriminated against because of their religion, and I believe that it is our collective responsibility to address and combat Islamophobia in our city. That is why I have worked closely with faith leaders and community groups to promote tolerance and understanding, and to ensure that all residents are treated with respect and dignity.

Gun Safety Policy: In 2021, we took aggressive action to combat the pandemic-fueled rise in violence through a \$150 million violence reduction strategy. Our three-year strategy includes hiring 100 new police officers, investing in modern policing technology, supporting grassroots organizations, hiring peacemakers to prevent violence, and investing in mental health. One year later, Indianapolis had the largest single-year decrease in criminal homicides in IMPD's history and saw a reduction in overall crime. Additionally, we know we must provide our children with something to do - whether it's offering pathways to employment or opportunities to find a new hobby or passion. That's why I started Project Indy, which has connected over 15,000 young people with job opportunities.

Affordable Housing: From day one, we have prioritized investing in our neighborhoods to ensure that as Indianapolis grows, it remains affordable for all price points. We're working on rapidly increasing the supply of affordable housing while also implementing measures to ensure that renters and homeowners are able to remain in their homes. From 2020 to 2022, we subsidized over 3,100 affordable units across Marion County, and we're just getting started. With American Rescue Plan funds, my administration continues to expand our affordable housing toolbox and programs to spur the creation of multi-family housing, homeownership opportunities, rental assistance, and homeowner repairs.

This January, we launched Vacant to Vibrant, our administration's new affordable housing program created to develop affordable homeownership and rental

opportunities with city-owned properties in the Near Northwest, Martindale-Brightwood, and Near Eastside neighborhoods. We also worked with the Indianapolis City-County Council to pass property tax relief for homeowners to reduce the impact of higher assessed property values. Because of this, 90% of Marion County homeowners will receive a credit on their May 2023 property tax bill.

Education: The pandemic negatively impacted student learning for every child in our community. Our public schools are investing their federal resources from the American Rescue Plan to address these issues with intensive tutoring during the school day and free summer learning opportunities over the next several years.

During the pandemic, we saw significant declines in literacy proficiency on assessments like IREAD, especially among Black and Latino students. We know students must learn to read so they can read to learn. The City's Circle City Readers program will invest in literacy tutors, train them in a science-based reading curriculum, and support them as they spend an intensive amount of time teaching K-3 students struggling to read.

We've also invested in City Connects, a program that supports the non-academic needs of students. We're supporting this research-backed programming in schools on the Far Eastside, who serve predominantly Black students and a growing number of immigrant students as well.

As Mayor, I will continue to work closely with all of our public schools to ensure that every child in our city has access to great educational opportunities.

Public Safety: As Mayor of Indianapolis, I am committed to improving public safety in our city. The pandemic has increased factors that drive violence while hampering tools to reduce it. In response, I implemented a \$150 million violence reduction strategy which included adding 100 new police officer positions, investing \$9 million in modern policing technology to enhance crime prevention, empowering grassroots community organizations through our \$45 million Elevation Grant program and creating a team of non-law enforcement "Peacemakers" to stop the cycle of violence and prevent conflicts from erupting into gunfire. These efforts resulted in the largest single-year decrease in murders in IMPD history, as well as reductions in non-fatal shootings and robberies. While the progress is encouraging, more work remains. I am dedicated to working with our community, law enforcement, and grassroots organizations to create a safer and brighter future for all of Indianapolis.

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John Couch
Republican

Background: IUPUI education, Many years of Work Experience, Many years of Head Soccer Coach Experience,.

Top Issues: Public Safety, Education, and Animal Safety. Become a Crime Free Community, Students that focus on a positive future, and a No Kill Policy for our Animal Family Members.

Islamophobia: Nobody should be Discriminated against in the City of Indianapolis and Marion County Indiana. We are All human first

Gun Safety Policy: Student Safety is a must. Security at All Schools is the Responsibility of Everyone. Making sure All doors are closed and secured. Possibly a security card system as the Airport has. Question anyone that does not have proper issued identification displayed

Affordable Housing: Everything is a concern. Funding needs to be common sense. Homes that the City of Indianapolis or Marion County Indiana that are built for people needing housing should resemble existing neighborhood homes. Creating a simple plan for anyone needing housing in the City of Indianapolis and Marion County. Furthermore, we need to approach private landlords to consider a section 8 or low income opportunity for people to have a home

Education: Create a curriculum that includes Safety, Listening Skills, Anger Management and Critical Thinking. Focus- Student and Family involvement in the Student future plans.

Public Safety: Implement a GPS 911system that assist Law Enforcement Agencies to apprehend suspects leaving the scene of a crime. A plan in place to fund Law Enforcement Agencies, Crime Scene Units and Forensic Science with the tools needed to proform their job efficiently



Robin Shackelford
Democrat

Background: I am an Indianapolis native with extensive experience in government, community and diversity affairs coupled with a strong background in project management, supervision, training and budgeting. I have represented Indiana House District 98 for more than 10 years and worked to bridge both sides of the aisle to get legislation passed including Indiana's first telemedicine pilot program which allowed patients to meet with their doctors through the internet, improving the state's overall health

and lowering the cost of care. I also co-authored a bill that passed unanimously in 2021 that defines the use of chokeholds during arrests as lethal force and penalized officers for intentionally turning off body and vehicle cameras. I have worked in the private, nonprofit and government sectors and will bring a variety of different experiences and perspectives to the position of mayor. I am a graduate of Indiana University and IUPUI, having earned my bachelor's and master's degrees in public affairs.

Top Issues: My priorities are to improve public safety, address infrastructure needs and increase affordable housing.

More than 200 people have been murdered in our city every year for the past three years. It has to stop.

I unveiled a Public Safety Plan which includes releasing body camera video of officer-involved shootings within 48 hours and reestablishing the Public Safety Director.

Public safety also includes safety on our roads, trails and sidewalks for pedestrians and bicyclists. We have an average of two shootings a day in Indianapolis. In 2021, there were 7.5 serious or fatal traffic crashes a day – 1.9 involving bicycles or pedestrians. Many of these deaths can be addressed through infrastructure improvements.

I plan to build additional neighborhood sidewalks, ensure potholes are fixed within 48 hours and establish motorist Trail Speed Zones of 20 mph. I will also eliminate the housing gap by building 34,000 affordable housing units.

Finally, safe and affordable housing should be a right for all Indianapolis residents. I will invest in all housing types and address homelessness in a humane manner. Additionally, I will advocate for non-denominational and more family-based homeless shelters.

Islamophobia: Sadly, I believe Islamophobia is a concern for Muslims across the nation, and Indianapolis is no exception. It's not just an obstacle. It's an outrage, it's an embarrassment. It's unAmerican.

Our city is diverse, and everyone deserves to have their voices heard. I have committed my life to ensuring the policies I create have diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility built in at every stage. My vision for Indianapolis is being an inclusive and welcoming city for everyone.

The simple truth is, if we ever want to be ONE INDIANAPOLIS, then we need real change. I plan to build a culture of inclusion from the top down. I believe in Indy for All and, as mayor, I will:

- Create an Office of Diversity and Inclusion charged with developing and overseeing new inclusion initiatives as well as reviewing existing city policies and practices in order to identify diversity issues, particularly within Human Resources.
- Mandate that all city vendors adopt and enforce clear equal pay and non-discrimination policies.
- Work to eliminate redlining and other discriminatory housing practices across the city and Marion County.

I also will encourage those who have experienced Islamophobia to report it to IMPD and the FBI for investigation of hate crimes.

Gun Safety Policy: We need to address the root causes of crime, including mental illness, poverty and trauma, by dedicating additional resources to these problems. However, we also must take common-sense steps to protect our children and school employees such as banning "ghost guns" and promoting firearm safety and responsibility by mandating that every lost and stolen firearm must be immediately reported to law enforcement. I also would invest in violence-intervention groups with a proven track record who have field organizers on the front lines of violence.

I would create a partnership between the City and Indianapolis Public Schools to create and implement a shared vision and plan that leverages our combined resources to improve education and help our youth overcome the challenges they face, including supporting alternative dispute resolution and de-escalation training.

As Mayor, I will instruct the Marion County Health Department to allocate funding and to seek Mental Health Grants to service youth and families that traditionally would not qualify for mental health services in effort to address underlying issues while reducing negative behavioral expressions.

Affordable Housing: Nearly two out of every three renters in Indianapolis can't afford rent...and things are getting worse. In fact, rental costs increased around 30% last year and 70% since 2020. The City of Indianapolis received \$175 million in federal dollars for emergency rental assistance for local families in housing crisis. But that money was distributed with very little oversight and often handed over to the most negligent and exploitative landlords in our community, with no permanent program left behind when the dollars stopped flowing last November.

We need 33,600 new affordable housing units right now just to break even. Instead of closing that gap, we actually lost units in Marion County between 2018 and 2021

I will unveil a plan which includes building 34,000 affordable housing units, creating a coalition to call on the Governor to remove the Rent Control Ban that lets greedy landlords raise rents as high as they want, and making construction of or funding for new affordable housing units a condition for receiving development incentives by the City and County.

I would also set a goal to house 100 homeless vets in 100 days and reduce homelessness by half in 10 years.

Education: We, as a city, need to support all of our students more effectively. However, Black and Latino students with scores below those of their white peers need a little extra help. I would establish a "Mayor's Mentorship Initiative" to provide mentors and tutors to at-risk youth. My goal is to ensure that community centers have a qualified tutor on staff so disadvantaged and at-risk students across Indianapolis have access to quality academic assistance based on need and not income.

Accountability is the most important thing for any school, but particularly public charter schools authorized by the mayor's office. We have had incidents where charters have closed unexpectedly due to issues and left families in the lurch. The Shackleford Administration will keep the lines of communication open with all charters and have staff dedicated to monitoring academic outcomes in charters. We also will require detailed financial reports from authorized charters and work with any who may be struggling to ensure they get on the right track so that students and their families don't suffer.

Public Safety: I have unveiled a plan with more than 30 effective solutions to improve public safety in Indianapolis. It will work to rebuild the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department (IMPD), restore trust and accountability, address root causes of crime and secure families.

I will reestablish the Public Safety Director, prioritize rightsizing IMPD to give the people of Indianapolis the safety and security we've been waiting for and ensure

IMPD salaries are competitive by increasing the base pay to \$65,000 a year to recruit and retain the quality officers we need. I also will decrease Indianapolis' 65 percent unsolved homicide rate (2022) by increasing the number of available detectives and building streamlined communication channels with other police agencies.

I will implement a targeted plan to reduce gun violence and violent crime. I will also invest in violence-intervention groups with a proven track record. The city will invest in public safety infrastructure by installing security cameras across the city, specifically in areas with poor street lighting and high crime.

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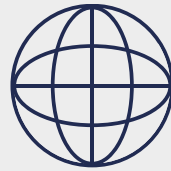
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Indiana Muslim Advocacy Network urges all Muslim registered voters to vote early or on Tuesday, May 2nd, 2023.

Indiana Muslim Advocacy Network strives to provide an organized, educated, and amplified Muslim political voice, advocating for positive civic and political changes in the state of Indiana.



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