



Unite 25 – 2018 Cook County Commissioner Candidate Questionnaire

Unite 25 is an independent community organization building grassroots political power in and around Chicago's 25th Ward. We are dedicated to supporting local leaders who are committed to ensuring that government puts people before profit. To this end, we are committed to fully supporting those candidates who we believe will best support our communities. In order to be favorably considered for the Unite 25 endorsement, follow the below instructions carefully.

Instructions:

- From within your Word processor, please answer all questions in Part I (Instructions and Candidate Details) and Part II (Issue Questions). In the Essay section, please answer the questions at the level you deem sufficient.
 - Y/N questions may also include a short answer if you deem it necessary. Please use as much space as necessary when answering each question. Please also feel free to include supporting documents as necessary.
- **Please email your completed Unite 25 questionnaire to info@unite25.org no later than 11:59 p.m. Tuesday, January 16th. Candidates who fail to meet this deadline will not be able to be considered for endorsement.**
- All responding candidates will be invited to appear before an interviewing committee on Saturday, January 20. Unite 25 will then endorse candidates following a majority vote of its members. For each office, Unite 25 will endorse only one candidate or make no endorsement.
- Completed Unite 25 questionnaires will be posted on our website after the submission deadline has passed. For privacy purposes, your home address will be redacted from the questionnaire prior to posting.
- All candidates who submit their questionnaires by the deadline will be notified by email of the endorsement decision.
- **If you have any further questions, please contact us at info@unite25.org.**

CANDIDATE DETAILS	
DATE	January 15, 2018
NAME & PARTY	Alma Anaya, Democrat
AFFILIATION	
EMAIL	alma@almaanaya.com
CAMPAIGN MANAGER	Dion miller-Perez
NUMBER OF PETITION SIGNATURES FILED	661
E-MAIL	alma@almaanaya.com
WEBSITE	www.almaforcookcounty.com

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A) Elective or Appointive Offices Held (including dates)	none
B) Other elective offices for which you have been a candidate	None
C) Current occupation	Administrative Director for Cook County Commissioner Chuy Garcia
D) Briefly list your civic activities over the past ten years	Local School Council at Orozco Community Academy. current; She is deeply involved in Mujeres Latinas enAcción's Young Professional Advisory Council, and is a member of the Coordination Committee of St. George Church; she was recently selected as a Racial Equity Fellow in the inaugural cohort of Chicagoans United for Equity, an organization which analyzes and recommends policies designed to improve and equalize opportunity for all Chicagoans
E) What experience will be most helpful to you in fulfilling the responsibilities of the office you seek?	I have for worked the County Board for the past 6 years in both addressing constituent concerns and in developing legislation, budget proposals and other initiatives. I am familiar with the County structure and staff. Also my experience on the Local School Council has helped me understand how policies impact local communities. As the County Board makes decisions, such a perspective is critically important.
F) Please list any candidates you have supported in the past and roles in past campaigns	Commissioner Jesus "Chuy" Garcia - volunteer; State Representative Theresa Mah - volunteer
G) Please list all endorsements you have received	Jesus "Chuy" Garcia, Alderman Danny Solis, Alderman George Cardenas, State Representative Theresa Mah
H) Please concisely state why you feel you should be endorsed above other candidates (a) and why holding this office is important to you personally (b)	I am the most qualified candidate with 6 years of experience working with Commissioner Jesus "Chuy" Garcia. I understand the policy and legislative issues with the County's criminal justice system, Health and Hospitals the two main concerns of County business. I plan to build on the work of Commisioner Garcia and work to find reliable and predictable funding sources that do not negatively impact working families in Cook County, continue with reforms of Cook County criminal justice system with an enhanced focus on juvenile detention and finally improving services in Cook County Health and Hospital system and ensure multilingual services.
I) What is your campaign budget	\$125,000 (total budget) \$16,000 (raised to date)

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and how much have you raised to date?	
J) (a) How many paid staffers and (b) how many volunteers do you have on your campaign?	(a) 4 paid staff; (b) 5 volunteers



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Long Answer Questions

1. Why do you want to become the Cook County Commissioner for the 7th District? I'm running to become the Cook County Commissioner for the 7th District because it is a diverse area that is more than 60% Latino and needs representation who understands the community and who will fight for it. In the last 6 years I have worked with churches, community stakeholders and grassroots organizations to provide resources to all the constituents of the 7th District.

I was born in Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico and came to the U.S. as a 6-year-old. I grew up in Southeast Side of Chicago and attended Gwendolyn Brooks College Prep and I now live in Pilsen. I have had to work my entire life and I am the first person in my family to attend college. I now have a Bachelor's degree in Communications from UIC. While working full-time, I continued my studies and expect to receive my Master's degree in Public Administration this spring.

Many of our residents rely on the essential services provided by the County including access to health care, housing assistance, job training and transportation. The County now faces a crisis on what services to provide and how to pay for them. Some on the County Board say we have to choose between health care and public safety and other services. I know firsthand that we need both. We cannot keep cutting essential services.

As a child and now a resident of the City I have seen and work with people every day who depend on the County health system, including Medicaid. I will make it a top priority to fully fund the Hospital system and Medicaid programs that help so many of our residents.

My opponent doesn't understand what the County does and how important it is. This campaign is not about simple solutions but building the political support and getting new resources for developing our communities.

2. What are your top 3 legislative priorities as Cook County Commissioner?

- a) Maintaining level of services at Cook County Hospital and expand multi-lingual services,
- (b) Continuing Reform of Cook County Justice System including bail bond reform, addressing mental health issues at jail and youth interaction with the justice system.
- (c) Cook County Budget will face major funding crises over the next few years as a consequence of repeal of the sweetened beverage tax. The County does need stable and predictable funding. The County also needs to find ways to improve delivery of services.

3. How would you propose funding those priorities? (Please specify possible alternative forms of revenue) The recently passed County budget was very tight but it is also highly dependent on the "required" actions" contained in the budget (one-time revenues, layoffs, furloughs, elimination of funded vacancies, consolidations, federal payments, increased fee revenue, etc.) It will be necessary to carefully monitor the budget and the actions required in it. The absence of enough vacancies could lead to tighter enforcement of budgets and potential for hiring



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“slowdowns” which could affect many departments but especially the Chief Judge, Sheriff and CCHHS. Thus the budget did not eliminate the structural deficit at the County and we are likely to see more difficult budgets in the future.

I had worked with Commissioner Garcia to develop an alternative budget proposal that had some new revenue as any solutions will entail new revenues and new operational efficiencies. In the future, the County will need stable and predictable revenue to maintain critical services in Health Care, Public Safety and community and economic development. The new revenues proposed in the Commissioner Garcia's budget amendment included indexing the Aggregate Property tax level to inflation, increasing the gasoline/diesel tax, increasing the video gaming tax, creating a few on property tax appeals and, when appropriate a fee on marijuana sales. I believe we have to start looking for operational efficiencies by combining administrative functions across departments and agencies. This last budget started to do that with some procurement and HR functions but we will need to look more closely at how we all work together. The key is to insure that we have enough staff to deliver services.

A. Health and Human Services

Do You Support:

	Y	N	
1.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The expansion of services provided by CCHHS to include regular home visits to Medicare patients?
2.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The expansion of prenatal and elderly care at CCHHS?
3.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Funding an outreach and education campaign to increase understanding of the importance and availability of preventative care?
4.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The expansion of the role of Nurse Practitioners at ambulatory clinics to maintain a high-level of service despite a growing physician shortage?
5.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The recognition of community violence as a public health crisis?

Health and Human Services (Long Answer)

6. Should Cook County Hospital be required to operate with a balanced budget? Please explain why or why not. No. There are services provided by CCHHS that are essential to the County included Cermak Health Services for jail detainees and public health services that are not revenue producing or adequately supported by federal and state funds. The County should continue to provide operating support for those services. In addition, the County Hospital System is part of the responsibility of the County so that the County should help cover certain planning and asset development/management costs as well as pension costs.

7. What opportunities does the Affordable Care Act (ACA) provide to improve health care at CCHHS?

The ACA provided a critical expansion of Medicaid funding and coverage which has resulted in hundreds of thousands of people gaining health care coverage which has reduced the amount of uncompensated care absorbed by CCHHS. It is now possible for patients to get needed medicines and tests and preventive care which improves their long-term health.



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8. In your view, what is the most critical mission of CCHHS? It should provide broad-based quality health care to low income residents in the county. It is the essential safety net and emergency care provider in the region.
9. What would you do as commissioner to maintain a high-standard of medical care at CCHHS in the context of a growing shortage of medical professionals and skyrocketing costs for pharmaceuticals and medical devices? I would work to ensure adequate funding for the hospital and expansion of the Medicaid funded services.
10. How would you ensure CCHHS receives the full funding it needs to provide quality healthcare to all? I would vote to maintain the county's essential operating support for Cermak, Public Health services and outpatient clinics.
11. What is the role of CCHHS in addressing the opioid epidemic? CCHHS should work with local clinics and organizations to expand affordable treatment options for people with opioid addictions.

B. Criminal Justice			
Do You Support:			
	Y	N	
1.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Providing full mental health services at the Cook County Department of Corrections?
2.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Working with the relevant authorities to eliminate cash bail?
3.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Federal oversight of the Cook County Courts and criminal justice system?

Criminal Justice (Long Answer)
4. What would you do to ensure that the public defender's case load remains within reasonable limits? I would vote to ensure adequate funding for the Public Defender's office. In the last budget discussion, the Public Defender's office was spared any additional cuts but it needs additional funding.
5. Unnecessary incarceration continues to tear many Chicago and Cook County communities apart. What would you do as Commissioner to continue reducing the prison population in Cook County? I worked closely with Commissioner Garcia in reforming the cash bond system which resulted in a 40% reduction in the jail population. The savings will help the overall County budget but should also be used to fund the counseling, physical and mental health needs of detainees, whether they are in the jail or on I-Bond.

C. Taxes
1. The county is currently undergoing a prolonged budget crisis that is affecting its ability to provide critical services, especially in light of the recent soda tax repeal. What steps would you take to raise revenue to fund these critical services? I had worked with Commissioner Garcia to develop an alternative budget proposal that had some new revenue as any solutions will entail new revenues and new operational efficiencies. In the future, the County will need stable and predictable revenue to maintain critical services in Health Care, Public Safety and community and economic development. The new revenues proposed in Commissioner Garcia's budget amendment included indexing the aggregate property tax level to inflation, increasing the gasoline/diesel tax, increasing the video gaming tax, creating a few on property tax appeals and, when appropriate, a fee on marijuana sales.



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<p>I believe we have to start looking for operational efficiencies by combining administrative functions across departments and agencies. This last budget started to do that with some procurement and HR functions but we will need to look more closely at how we all work together. The key is to insure that we have enough staff to deliver services</p>
<p>2. Should it become necessary, which county taxes would you prioritize for an increase? Likewise, should it become possible, which would you prioritize to decrease? Regarding increases see answer above. In the long run, we need to reduce regressive sales and property taxes in favor of increases in progressive state funding including a graduated income tax, a financial transactions tax and expanded taxes on business and financial services.</p>
<p>3. What can be done to ensure the county accurately estimates the value of commercial and industrial properties for taxation purposes? The property assessment system should be made more transparent and accountable to the taxpayers. The recent Tribune articles identify real problems in the assessment system which must be corrected so that property tax payments equitably reflect the value of the property. I had supported the graduated fee proposed by Commissioner Garcia on property tax appeals to make sure we have a fair and equitable system. I would be interested in reviewing proposals for a combined office of tax administration if it would result in better assessments and more efficient operations but, as with many proposals, the devil is in the details.</p>
<p>4. What can be done to reduce the tax burden on working families and make the system of taxation more equitable? In the long run, we need to reduce regressive sales and property taxes in favor of increases in progressive state funding including a graduated income tax, a financial transactions tax and expanded taxes on business and financial services.</p>
<p>5. What can be done to improve the property tax appeals process to make it fair and accessible for working class people? As discussed above, making the assessment process fair and transparent is essential. It will also minimize the need for appeals (which are already biased against low income residents).</p>

D. Worker Rights			
Do You Support:			
	Y	N	
1.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	A living wage calculated at \$15/hr and pegged to inflation?
2.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	An ordinance allowing workers to earn up to nine days of paid sick time?
3.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	An ordinance requiring employee notice of schedule changes and a minimum of four hours of pay when an employee reports to work and is sent home during the first four hours of his/her shift.

Worker Rights (Long Answer)
<p>4. What are the greatest opportunities at the county level to improve quality of life for working class people? At the County level, the greatest opportunities involve increasing the minimum wage to \$15 indexed to inflation and insuring workers have access to paid sick leave. The County should also insure there are adequate resources for enforcement of these and other ordinances.</p>
<p>5. What actions, if any, would you take in response to municipalities opting out of county ordinances, such as the \$13 dollar minimum wage and paid sick time. If we cannot force those municipalities to be part of the county ordinances then we should consider withholding county transportation projects in and around those municipalities.</p>



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E. Roads and Environment

As commissioner, what would you do to:

1. Help improve air quality? Improve enforcement of air pollution ordinances and increase funding for and access to public transit throughout the county.
2. Ensure County roads are well maintained without major construction disruptions throughout the year? Require the County Department of Transportation and Highways to continue producing multi-year construction plans and expand its Long Range Plan to include plans to insure that underserved communities.
3. Ensure Cook County is working with surrounding counties, State and Municipal authorities in the maintenance of roads? Require the County Department of Transportation and Highways to produce regular updates to its Long Range Plan that includes results of planning and priorities produced in conjunction with surrounding counties and authorities.
4. Ensure that all Cook County residents understand and can access the benefits provided to them by the Forest Preserve system? Require the CCFPD to increase funding for outreach to low income and minority communities and especially multi-lingual services and notices.