Marlena D. Edwards is a passionate community activist, who is committed to social justice, education, health care and economic development. She is a native Washington, lifelong resident of Ward 4, received a B.S. in Mass Communication from Towson University, and worked in the private sector, highlighted by her work on the Middle East Peace Talks. Marlena then received a Master of Social Work degree from Howard University and has devoted over two decades of service to the residents of the District of Columbia through serving as a member of numerous boards and committees that promote coalition building and community empowerment. Marlena is the most qualified candidate for Ward 4 City Council. She served on the DC Democratic State Committee as their Ward 4 Representative. Marlena won this seat by 7,143 the highest in the history of the position and was voted in by our Ward 4 voters. She has served on transition teams for DC Attorney General Karl A. Racine, Mayor Muriel Bowser and Mayor Vincent C. Gray. Marlena is the founder of Metropolitan Alliance, Incorporated which provides business consultation on issues related to community health, social/economic development and legislative policy.

Platform

EDUCATION, HEALTH CARE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

**PROFESSIONAL AND CIVIC AFFILIATIONS**

**DC DEMOCRATIC STATE COMMITTEE,** Ward 4 Committee Woman

**WARD 4 DEMOCRATS,** Executive Committee Member and Program Chair

**FEDERATION OF DEMOCRATIC WOMEN**, Member

**DC DEMOCRATIC WOMEN’S CLUB,** Vice President

**SHEPHERD PARK CITIZENS ASSOCIATION**

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS, METRO CHAPTER**, Board of Directors

**UNITED PLANNING ORGANIZATION,** Board of Directors

**DEVELOPING FAMILIES CENTER**, Board of Directors

**EMORY BEACON OF LIGHT** Board of Directors

**SERVICE EMPLOYEES INTERNATIONAL UNION,** 1199 - Delegate

**AMERICAN FEDERATION OF STATE, COUNTY & MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES UNION-**Member

**AMERICAN FEDERATION OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES** - Member

**INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF THEATRICAL STAGE EMPLOYEES,** LOCAL 22 & 224 - Member

*Introductory Questions*

1.What office are you seeking, and why did you decide to run for that office? If (re) elected, what are your priority areas of focus?

*Budget*

2. Do you consider the District’s total current budget to be too large, too small, or about right? Please explain.

3. With unemployment, homelessness, and general economic distress at high levels, do you envision increasing safety net spending in future budgets? If so, which areas would you seek to expand?

4. With the COVID-19 outbreak causing an economic downturn and stress on state and local budgets, would you support raising taxes to maintain current spending levels? If so, how should new revenue sources be targeted?

*Transportation, Housing and Infrastructure*

5. More than a third of DC residents do not own cars and automobile traffic significantly contributes to climate change. If elected, how will you work to improve public transportation in the District?

6. Other global cities are working to increase nearby access to amenities for all residents. For example, Paris recently announced a plan to become a “15-minute city” with grocery stores and other destinations located within a short walk of every home. What will you do to eliminate food deserts and improve local options throughout the District?

7. As of 2019, there were 6,500 people in the District experiencing homelessness and the economic impact of COVID-19 will place a strain on thousands more. How do you plan on decreasing homelessness in a sustainable way?

8. If (re) elected, what will you do to create and protect affordable housing for both home-buyers and renters?

9. Revitalization in DC has created an increase in commercial and residential development. Though this revitalization is beneficial to the District, certain areas are not experiencing it at the same rate as other neighborhoods. What are your plans to ensure that all of DC benefits from periods of economic growth?

10. What recently revitalized DC neighborhood would you suggest as the best model for the city as a whole, and why?

*Education*

11. Do you think reform in the DC public schools is headed in the right direction? Explain your answer.

12. How do you suggest that we repurpose school properties that have been closed over the past few years?

13. How will you ensure equitable Special Education allocations across the city?

14. What accountability measures can you put into place to ensure that schools are staffed appropriately? What significant, unique policies would you put into place that would drastically increase the support and retention of teachers and administrators in DCPS?

*Criminal Justice*

15. What items do you think should be included in an effective safety plan that would lower crime rates in DC without infringing on the constitutional rights of DC residents?

*Wages and Labor*

16. What initiatives would you propose to ensure that minority- and woman-owned business enterprises are able to compete for projects, particularly District construction and development?

*Government Accountability*

17. Do you believe that the current DC Council represents the interests of the broad public? If not, what segments of the public are underrepresented?

18. How will you demonstrate accessibility and responsiveness to your constituents?

19. This is the first campaign cycle conducted with the Fair Elections Program, which provides public financing for candidates who adhere to small-dollar contribution limits. Do you believe that a candidate who is not participating in this program can adequately represent the views of all residents of the District?

20. Other suggested campaign reforms include ranked-choice voting and lowering the voting age to 16. What changes would you support to ensure that our elections truly represent the will of the people?

*Ward-Specific Questions*

21. (Ward 2 Candidates Only) Will you commit to supporting the winner of the Democratic primary in the June 16 special election and/or the general election in November? Why or why not?

22. (Ward 4 Candidates Only) Councilmembers often have to strike a balance between supporting the mayor’s priorities and providing independent representation for their constituents. How does your vision for Ward 4 differ from Mayor Bowser?

23. (Ward 7 Candidates Only) Do you support extending the streetcar on H Street east to Benning Road Metro? How would you work to ensure that projects like this provide connections with the rest of the city while limiting displacement among current Ward 7 residents?

24. (Ward 8 Candidates Only) Do you support efforts to improve links between Ward 8 and the rest of the city, such as the 11th Street Bridge Park and the Frederick Douglass bridge replacement? How would you work to ensure that these projects provide opportunities while limiting displacement among current Ward 8 residents?