



# The Caribbean-American Political Action Committee

1015 18th Street, N.W., Suite 200, Washington, D.C., 20036 | 202-349-1498  
| [www.CaribbeanPac.org](http://www.CaribbeanPac.org)

## Caribbean-American Political Action Committee (C-PAC) Prince George’s County, Maryland – 2018 Candidate Questionnaire

Please return the completed form via email to [cpac.dmv@gmail.com](mailto:cpac.dmv@gmail.com) by Friday, April 13, 2018.  
Responses will be shared with C-PAC’s membership.

**Office Sought:** Prince George’s County Executive  
**Candidate’s Name:** Donna Edwards  
**Current Occupation:** Fellow at the Brennan Center for Justice  
**Party:** Democratic  
**Campaign Contact Information (address, phone, fax, email, website)**  
**Campaign Office:** 8700 Central Avenue, Suite 201 | Capitol Heights, MD 20785  
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**Website:** [www.donnaforprincegeorges.org](http://www.donnaforprincegeorges.org)

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### 1. Please explain your plan or approach to improve agency responsiveness, outreach, and the quality of the Prince George’s County’s constituent services.

Our neighbors in the Caribbean-American community, like so many other immigrant communities across the County, play a critical role in making Prince George's a vibrant place to live, work, and raise a family -- and with more than 1 out of every 5 of our neighbors being foreign-born, it is long past time for the experiences of immigrant communities to be lifted up and celebrated by all of our neighbors.

That's why I invite everyone from your community to join our movement to bring change, reform, and leadership that listens to Prince George's County Government and why I plan to consult C-PAC and other immigrant advocacy groups as I put together my transition team, choose agency directors and other senior members of my Administration.

### 2. Are there any legislative or policy proposals, which you support that would strengthen the opportunities and rights of Caribbean immigrants in Prince George’s County?

As County Executive, I would like to lift up and celebrate our County's rich diversity by directing the Office of Community Relations to establish a set of boards and commissions that are dedicated to promoting public awareness of multicultural education and the wide spectrum of



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ethnic minority communities that make Prince George's special -- including the Caribbean-American immigrants and families here in the County.

### **3. What do you intend to do to strengthen small business access to government contracts?**

As County Executive, I will ensure that our contracting is competitive and transparent, that we level the playing field for businesses located in Prince George's County, and hire our local workforce.

That's why I've pledged to hold the private sector accountable for improving our community's quality of life by passing legislation to raise the minimum wage as well as negotiating project labor agreements and community benefits agreements for large-scale development projects. When workers make livable wages, they buy homes, goods, and services in our County, strengthening our economic base.

### **4. What policies will you support to address the challenges facing DREAMers, the administration's suspension of temporary protective status for many County residents, and the threats facing sanctuary communities?**

As a citizen activist, non-profit executive, and member of Congress, I have been steadfast in my support of immigration reform, rights and protections for all undocumented immigrants (including the ability to go college through the Maryland DREAM Act), and advocating for all underrepresented communities to see the common threads in our struggle for justice, opportunity, and progress -- which includes supporting the TRUST Act and other related legislation that creates regulations barring local police from holding immigrants under U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detainer request and separating the functions of local public safety from immigration enforcement.

### **5. How will you support the viability and competitiveness of the Maryland's small, minority, veteran, women, and especially Caribbean-owned business?**

I want to use public investment to reward positive economic development to create good jobs, community amenities, and benefits, and capitalizes on our tremendous transportation infrastructure.

Our County has been plagued for years by big companies and special interests who convinced government officials to turn over as much developable land as possible to whoever could build anything the cheapest and quickest. It's time for taxpayers and residents to get the benefit of



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the bargain. We are going to create a government in Prince George's County that is open, transparent, accessible, and where the world competes to do business with our communities and our residents on our terms.

For the Caribbean-American business community and immigrant entrepreneurs all over Prince George's, I know that the process of seeking out where to get assistance with growing your business can be confusing at best -- that's why I am committed to creating a consolidated front door for businesses to ask for help from County Government with everything from finding space to hang their shingle, navigating the permitting process, recruiting employees, and learn more about the government contracting process.

But beyond simply improving the customer service that businesses receive when asking for help from County Government, there is much more that our Economic Development Corporation and Financial Services Corporation can do to expand the training and technical assistance -- with the preparation of business plans, financial statements, and other due diligence paperwork -- it provides to the many businesses that come to their doorstep with a great ideas, moxie, and maybe even paying customers but not the paperwork that is required to receive a conventional loan (for small, minority, veteran, women, and Caribbean-owned businesses).

### **6. The Caribbean is a strong trading partner with the U.S., and there are opportunities to create economic benefits for both Maryland and Caribbean residents. How do you support strengthening business, social and cultural relations and exchanges between County residents and the Caribbean?**

The Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation (PGCEDC) should have a responsibility to ensure that the County maintains strong and prosperous trading relationships with all nations that are connected to major sources of foreign-born citizens. This is why I worked so hard to create the Africa Trade Office at PGCEDC and, as County Executive, will work to ensure our trade missions and foreign direct investment outreach reflects the diversity of the diaspora communities that make Prince George's County home.

### **7. What specific actions have you taken or will you take to support the Caribbean-American community in the Prince George's County?**

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ethnic minority communities that make Prince George's special -- including the Caribbean-American immigrants and families here in the County.

- 8. Over 3,000 children of immigrants enter Maryland schools every year. Many of them are children of color with cultural idiosyncrasies and language accents or differences, which earn them labels such as "troublesome" or as having ADHD or other disorders. Still others end up in the juvenile justice system. What are your plans to ensure that we have a cadre of well-trained, culturally competent and sensitive teachers who understand and are willing to help these children succeed in school?**

In order to address the challenges faced by all students (be it those with special needs or any student with different learning styles), we must make direct investments in education – paying and retaining educators, investing in capital improvements, community-based schools, lowering student-teacher ratios, making our elected and appointed leadership functioning and accountable. Our education system can not be a “one-off” in which some things go well for some students. The hallmark of a strong system is when most things are going well for most students—stability and predictability. Our system requires a transformation, not a tweak. From re-structuring the budget to changing the leadership to making a more accountable leadership structure, I believe that we can make systemic success if we face these problems head on and prepare to make tough decisions.

- 9. What initiatives will you champion or support to strengthen services and programs for Prince George’s County senior citizens?**

Helping our seniors age-in-place and receive long-term, end-of-life care at home is an approach that is win-win for everyone concerned -- as research has shown that home-based health care helps ensure that our loved ones spend their golden years surrounded by those that care about them most, which not only improves their health outcomes but also can be less expensive than nursing homes and other institutional care settings.

- 10. What issues are you most concerned about in your run for political office?**

I seek the office of County Executive of Prince George’s County because it’s time to jumpstart the next era of opportunity for Prince George’s County residents through key investments in education, innovation, and job creation.

With all of the craziness brewing next door in our nation’s capital, I believe that we -- the people of Prince George’s County -- must take control of our destiny into our own hands. While we must be mindful of the impact of the federal government -- we have a lot of federal assets and



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workers--our future must be built on a new 21st Century knowledge and innovation economy. I believe we are poised to do just that.

We have the land, the tools, and the entrepreneurial spirit to bring unlimited opportunity to the County. But we need a leader who is willing to take on special interests to modernize our aging infrastructure, move more money into classrooms, and ensure that small and local businesses have the resources they need to bring jobs and opportunity back home.

In this vibrant region, Prince George's County has the most untapped land for development, state-of-the-art transit and transportation systems, and a diverse and rich culture to help employers recruit and retain top talent. Now we need our government to be accountable to the needs of all its residents, use innovation to drive our economy forward, and focus our school system on producing a workforce that is ready to succeed in the 21st Century economy.

### Innovation:

In my first year in office, **I will convene an Innovation Summit to signal to the science and technology community that Prince George's welcomes you as an economic partner.**

I'll work to leverage our County's "tech corridor" of the [University of Maryland](#), Bowie State University, Prince George's Community College, [Goddard Space Flight Center](#), and [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration](#) to grow an innovation economy here in Prince George's that can serve as a hub for a whole new generation of start-up businesses across the Washington, DC, metropolitan area, from **aerospace, to earth science to cybersecurity.**

### Development:

We need a County Executive who will stand up to special interests and put the people of Prince George's County first when it comes to job creation and economic development. I'm refusing to take money from big developers for my campaign so that residents and taxpayers are in the driver's seat. We have had too many instances (even in this last year) of elected officials investigated, indicted and convicted of taking money under the table. That is not who we are. It's time to cut the cord of developer money so that we can do economic development in the right way.

**We will reward positive economic development to create good jobs, community amenities and benefits, and capitalize on our tremendous transportation infrastructure.**

As your County Executive, I will work to increase procurement access -- at every level of



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government -- for small, local, minority, veteran and women-owned businesses as one of my top priorities. Prince George's County will be open for business for anyone who wants to play by the rules, compete fairly, and operate with transparency and accountability.

### Education:

As County Executive, I'll work to attract and hire top talent to modernize our schools by cutting administrative waste so we can move more money back into our classrooms and raise pay for our teachers and those who interact directly with students so that we can compete in the region.

I will also work with our school system to leverage other County assets to support our children -- including restoring millions of dollars of lost Head Start funding, concentrating on early learning for all students, access to quality, affordable childcare, building a strong summer jobs program, making investments in training programs at our community college, and demanding increased accountability from all government agencies for our children's success and progress into adulthood. We will restructure our budget and bring our practices in line with other systems in the state and in the region. And, we will tell the truth about what is working and how we are achieving our goals to ensure that Prince George's County students get the education they deserve.

### Accountability:

Our County has been plagued for years by big companies and special interests who convinced government officials to turn over as much developable land as possible to whomever could build anything the cheapest and quickest. It's time for taxpayers and residents to get the benefit of the bargain.

We are going create a government in Prince George's County that is open, transparent, accessible, and where the world competes to do business with our communities and our residents on our terms. **I will ensure that our contracting is competitive and transparent, that we level the playing field for businesses located in Prince George's County, and for those who hire our local workforce.**

That's why I've pledged to hold the private sector accountable for improving our community's quality of life by **passing legislation to raise the minimum wage so our workers can meet their responsibilities, as well as negotiating project labor agreements and community benefits agreements for large-scale development projects.** When workers make livable wages, they buy homes, goods and services in our County, strengthening our economic base.



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And my commitment to ensure that County Government is accountable to our fellow neighbors and taxpayers also means holding County agencies responsible for delivering top-notch services with the highest standards of integrity -- from cleaning our roads and communities, to aggressive code enforcement to compassion for victims of sexual harassment and domestic violence.