



# Police Commission

## Application for Position of Commissioner

The purpose of the Police Commission is to oversee the Oakland Police Department in order to make sure that its policies, practices and customs meet national standards of constitutional policing.

A Selection Panel of volunteer community members will select Oakland residents to serve on the Police Commission. Seated Commissioners are volunteers and will not be compensated.

Applicant Information				
Full Name:	<u>FARMER</u>	<u>OMAN</u>	<u>T.</u>	Date: <u>30 MAY 23</u>
	<i>Last</i>	<i>First</i>	<i>M.I.</i>	
Home Address:	[REDACTED]			Apartment/Unit #
	<i>Street Address</i>			
	<u>Oakland</u>	<u>CA</u>	<u>94618</u>	
	<i>City</i>	<i>State</i>	<i>ZIP Code</i>	
Phone:	[REDACTED]	Email:	[REDACTED]	

## Supplemental Questionnaire

The purpose of this supplemental questionnaire is to evaluate your qualifications to serve on the Police Commission. This application, along with your answers to these questions, will be used by the Selection Panel to select the most suitably qualified candidates (Question 1, 2, 3 and 4 below.)

- Applications submitted without a completed supplemental questionnaire will not be considered.
- Please limit your response to each question to one 8.5" x 11" sheet of paper (single or double spaced).

Please respond (in writing) to the following questions:

1. Please describe any life work and significant community volunteer experiences that prepare you to contribute to the work of the Commission.
2. Please describe your contacts or experiences with the Oakland Police Department.
3. Please describe, if applicable, if you or an immediate family member has had significant volunteer or employment experience:
  - a. as a police officer,
  - b. as a criminal prosecutor or defense attorney,
  - c. with a public agency or nonprofit community group serving or advocating for crime victims or persons charged or convicted of crimes.
4. Have you ever served on a board, committee, commission, or other group? (Examples might include church boards or school organizations.) Please describe your experiences. What were the most challenging aspects of your participation?

(1) After being a selection panel finalist in 2020, I've been working with the Oakland Police Commission ("OPC") and other boards and commissions ever since because improving public safety services is something I'm passionate about. I also take pride in being thoughtful, transparent, thorough, and objective in all of my engagements. My experiences combined have sufficiently prepared me to contribute immediately. Overall I have approximately 130+ hrs of public safety oversight experience through the four experiences listed below.

Initially, I served on three OPC ad hocs: Armed and Unresponsive Persons, Dedicated Arrest Teams, and Militarized Equipment. Since no pre-existing policy for Armed and Unresponsive Persons existed, we created one. We were charged with completing all three in six months. This work gave me experience with both creating and revising policies, one of the OPC's core responsibilities. Concurrently, I was invited to be an Advisory Board member of the Reimagining Public Safety Task Force. During this, I joined two Advisory Boards and a total of six working groups. One Legal & Policy work group's focus was on the Negotiated Settlement Agreement and each public safety commission. The research we conducted provided me with additional insight into the OPC as well as their work as it relates to constitutional policing. Participating effectively in six working groups and three ad hocs during the same time frame shows that I have the time and bandwidth required for this role.

The other Advisory Board I joined was titled: OPD Organization & Culture. While there I wrote or co-wrote recommendations on topics such as remedies for misconduct, achieving compliance with the NSA, creating a crowd control ordinance, demilitarization, and renegotiating the union's memorandum of understanding. All passed by a super-majority. This shows my ability to work productively in groups and get buy-in across our city's landscape since the members who voted represented every public safety commission and district. Remedies for Misconduct was recently referenced by the OPC in a letter to Judge Orrick, which shows the sustainability of our work as it relates to some of their current issues: (pg 7)

<https://cao-94612.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/Oakland-Police-Commission-NSA-Memorandum-3.31.23.pdf>

Two recommendations City Council prioritized that I wrote and co-wrote, "Eliminating the BearCat ASAP" and "Demilitarization", both build on work currently being done by the Militarized Equipment ad hoc and OPD's compliance with AB 481. In addition to the BearCat recommendation, I co-created a community-driven petition to sunset the BearCat, which helped influence the OPC and OPD to agree on a Resolution to do so. An achievement for the OPC. From 2021-2022, I was also a part of the Community Policing and Electronic Communication Devices ad hocs where I got the chance to work with the future Director of CPRA. I also worked briefly with a representative from the Office of Inspector General through a Safety and Services Oversight Commission ("SSOC") ad hoc. These opportunities gave me an insider's perspective to many of the members who make up the OPC's staff, so I'm aware of everyone's role and how they fit into the mandates laid out in Measures LL and S1.

In late 2021, I was appointed to the SSOC, one of the three public safety commissions in Oakland. We're tasked with overseeing strategies that (1) reduce homicides, robberies, burglaries, and gun-related violence, (2) improve police and fire emergency 911 response times, and (3) invest in violence intervention and prevention initiatives. Through the SSOC I've implemented recommendations that are in line with our mission. One of those is to update the burglary ordinance to reflect a verified response requirement. In 2022, a city council staff member reached out to me to hear more about it. Currently they're considering sponsoring an update to the burglary ordinance to reflect a verified response requirement. A significant achievement for the SSOC. I'm also working with members of the California Alarm Association, who are helping us evaluate our verified response initiative among other things that could assist with improving 911 response times. This displays my ability to work well with outside groups or consultants and create recommendations that City Council may be interested in.

Last year I was appointed by the BART Board of Directors to be a member of the Transit Security Advisory Committee ("TSAC"), which oversees BART PD's authority to issue prohibition orders to people who are cited or arrested for certain offenses. The program aims to reduce the number of crime-related disruptions throughout the BART transit system. Our meetings are organized similarly to the OPC in that we review monthly crime statistics and interface with BART PD. Being a member of this board provides me with another lens that enhances my overall knowledge of law enforcement operations. It's also provided me with more hours to practice and prepare how to conduct detail oriented law enforcement oversight.

(2) In addition to working with OPD police officers during the five aforementioned OPC ad hoc committees while creating and revising policies. I also had a rare opportunity to be assigned to work with the President of the Police Union and a Command Staff officer while co-leading a working group in the OPD Organization and Culture Advisory Board of the Reimagining Public Safety Task Force titled "Interfacing with the Union." This workgroup gave me a unique experience to discuss and evaluate OPD's memorandum of understanding ("MOU") and ask questions regarding barriers to officer discipline and other aspects of the Oakland Police Officer Association MOU.

Currently, as an SSOC commissioner I also interface with our OPD liaison and other police officers while evaluating and assessing geographical policing strategies through our monthly meetings. Those strategies include operations for Community Resource Officers, Crime Reduction Teams, Ceasefire, Special Victim Section personnel, and the Violent Crime Operations Center. We're also charged with evaluating OPD's annual hiring plan and its mandate to maintain a minimum of 678 officers.

Evaluating OPD through three different lenses has expanded my knowledge and understanding of how many of their strategies are incorporated. During SSOC meetings we also discuss how OPD works jointly with the Department of Violence Prevention and the Oakland Fire Department so I've also learned about those aspects of their work as well.

(3) N/A. If you'd like to learn more about my employment experience or social justice work feel free to check out these links:

#### Work history

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/omar-farmer-he-him-6519b01b/>

#### Work recommendations

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/omar-farmer-he-him-6519b01b/details/recommendations/?detailScreenTabIndex=0>

#### Pet Care business

[https://instagram.com/pack\\_leader?igshid=MjEwN2lyYWYwYWw==](https://instagram.com/pack_leader?igshid=MjEwN2lyYWYwYWw==)

The inspiration for my pet care business. A heartwarming story!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xm7wekZzyrM>

Co-founder of Oakland Neighbors Inspiring Trust ("ONiT")

[https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story\\_fbid=2727820350677311&id=725413654251334](https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=2727820350677311&id=725413654251334)

ONiT Cracking the Codes event

<https://www.mercurynews.com/2016/02/24/oakland-neighborhood-group-hosting-film-discussion-about-race/>

Preventing Racial Profiling Video credit from Nextdoor

[https://help.nextdoor.com/s/article/Video-resources?language=en\\_US](https://help.nextdoor.com/s/article/Video-resources?language=en_US)

(4) Since 2021 I've gained municipal, county, and intercounty board and commission experience. After being appointed to the Alameda County Veteran Affairs Commission ("ACVAC") for a year I'm now serving as their Chairperson. County staff recently selected me to be in their new board and commissioner recruiting video:

<https://vimeo.com/817402106/618f891c0f>. I also worked with the Alameda County, Area Agency on Aging, Social Services Agency steering committee to help develop their countywide survey for senior citizens. Throughout these experiences as well as in my professional and personal life, the most challenging and rewarding aspects of working in groups has been: putting one's group in a position to drive better results, managing group dynamics, and conducting constructive outreach to the public.

During my first term on the SSOC, I created a strategic planning ad hoc committee which led to implementing our first-ever Strategic Plan: <https://www.oaklandca.gov/documents/ssoc-2022-2024-strategic-plan-2>. Last November, I presented it to the City Council at our joint public safety meeting. To date, it's been transformational in organizing our oversight of the public safety strategies we oversee. Instead of reacting to reports, we're now being proactive and putting ourselves in a position to create more informed oversight, that we hope will provide better deliverables to Oakland residents. It also created a framework that put everyone on the same page, working towards a common goal, which has been excellent for our group dynamics. Moreover, it provides more transparency to the public, which builds

trust in our capabilities. Part three of the plan is focused on outreach to the public. We created this portion because we felt it was our civic duty to reach out to communities all across Oakland so folks can see how their taxpayer dollars generated through Measure Z are being spent. While time management for the community outreach portion has been challenging at times, our discussions have been productive and empowering for commissioners and members of the public. For me they're an opportunity to bond with the public and your fellow commissioner/s.

That said, as chairperson of the ACVAC, I created a schedule where we go to different county areas where there are high concentrations of veterans and conduct our monthly meetings to get feedback from those communities. Starting in June we're headed to the Swords to Plowshares auditorium in Jack London Square. My feeling is that going to various locations and working together on topics we're all passionate about will make more veterans feel included and the respective commissioners from those areas feel more appreciated with their role on the commission. Doing activities like this together will continue to build our rapport and make us a more functional and productive commission. Measure LL also states that the OPC is mandated to conduct meetings at public venues every year. This will provide me with experience at doing that.

Before becoming Chairperson I created a street renaming committee where we drafted a letter of support for the National Coalition of Black Veteran Organizations ("NCBVO") to use to campaign for three streets on the old Oakland Army base to be renamed after local Black veterans. After getting this letter approved for release by the Board of Supervisors, we're now working jointly with the NCBVO, and the daughter of one of those veterans, to make the renaming effort a reality. Our hope is that this will not only give these vets the recognition they deserve but that it will empower others in the Oakland community. All of the veterans highlighted attained new heights regarding rank, role, or achievement despite being members of a historically disenfranchised group. They include Sgt Morrie Turner, Major Howard Jackson, and Major General John Stanford. Working on this initiative together has been great for our group camaraderie.

As a member of the TSAC, I created a community engagement ad hoc where we'll soon be touring BART stations throughout the Bay Area to generate feedback from station agents and customers. We'll also be doing train ride-alongs with members of BART PD and our Crisis Outreach teams to see how prior recommendations are being implemented and determine their effectiveness. This is another way for us to move off of the dias and see each other in a different environment which I believe will be a good team building exercise.

Other boards I currently serve on are, the Military Officers Association of America, Alameda chapter and the Community Advisory Board for the Urban Strategies Council. I'm also a member of the Bay Area Racial Justice Network where I work alongside other folks who combat racial profiling and discrimination online. Those groups include Neighbors for Racial Justice and San Francisco Interrupting Racial Profiling. Last year we had a convention that included several groups from across the Bay Area. While it can be challenging to discuss this type of topic constructively, having a group where you can vent and compare ideas is essential for making everyone feel valued and respected.

## Application Considerations

Check all that apply:

I would like to be considered as a Selection Panel appointee?

YES

NO

I would like to be considered as a Mayoral Appointee?

YES

NO

## References

Please list three professional or personal references who are familiar with your background, experience and qualifications, and who can answer questions about your ability to serve as a Commissioner.

Full Name: David Muhammad Relationship: Collaborator

E-Mail: [REDACTED] Phone: [REDACTED]

Full Name: Charles Blatcher III Relationship: Collaborator

E-Mail: [REDACTED] Phone: [REDACTED]

Full Name: Nikki Fortunato Bas Relationship: Councilperson

E-Mail: [REDACTED] Phone: [REDACTED]

## Voluntary Self-Identification Questionnaire

1. With which race and/or ethnicity do you identify? (Check all that apply.)

- White
- Black or African American
- Latino
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- Asian
- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- I do not wish to Self-Identify

2. What is your gender?

Male  I do not wish to self-identify

3. You are considered to have a disability if you have a physical or mental impairment or medical condition that substantially limits a major life activity, or if you have a history of such an impairment or medical conditions.

Please check one of the boxes below:

- Yes, I have a disability (or previously had a disability)
- No, I do not have a disability
- I do not wish to answer

**Required Questionnaire**

4. How long have you lived in Oakland?

15 years

5. How many meetings of the Police Commission have you attended, on Zoom or in person? (You can find a link to the next meeting on the agenda for that meeting, which can be found at [www.oaklandca.gov/policecommission](http://www.oaklandca.gov/policecommission). You can also find video recordings of past meetings there.)

<input type="checkbox"/>	0
<input type="checkbox"/>	1-2
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3 or more

6. How did you hear about applying to be on the Police Commission?

Previously applied in 2020.

**Disclaimer and Signature**

*The City Charter requires background checks for all Police Commission members and alternates. Prior convictions will not eliminate you from consideration. The Selection Panel strongly encourages formerly incarcerated individuals to apply.*

***I certify that I am over eighteen years of age and that my answers are true and complete to the best of my knowledge.***

***My signature below also indicates my acknowledgement that, by applying for the position of Commissioner, I will be subject to a background check.***

***Once submitted, your application form, along with all attachments, becomes a public record.***

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



Date: 30 MAY 23

Completed applications must be received by **May 31, 2023**, by mail, hand-delivery, or email as follows:

Mail or Hand-Delivery (Monday-Friday, 8:30 am – 5:00 pm)	<b>Selection Panel for Police Commission c/o City Administrator's Office 1 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Oakland, CA 94612</b>
Email	<b>Address: <a href="mailto:CityAdministratorsOffice@oaklandca.gov">CityAdministratorsOffice@oaklandca.gov</a> Subject: <b>Police Commission Application</b></b>
For assistance or additional information contact	<b>City Administrator's Office <a href="mailto:CityAdministratorsOffice@oaklandca.gov">CityAdministratorsOffice@oaklandca.gov</a> (510) 238-3301</b>

To: Oakland Police Commission Selection Panel

Re: Recommendation for Omar Farmer

Dear Police Commission Selection Panel,

I have watched as the Police Commission has become less & less effective, which I think is in part due to not having the right people on the Commission. I am currently the chair of the Public Safety and Services Commission (SSOC) and I have a member of our Commission, Omar Farmer, who I think would be outstanding on the Police Commission. I am recommending him to you hoping Omar can continue with SSOC in addition to being on the Police Commission, but even if he can't stay with us I am recommending him to you. I do this because, although I am committed to the SSOC's role of overseeing the spending of Measure Z revenues, we all know that is hardly important at all compared to the enormously important task of holding OPD accountable.

I am a Gun Violence Prevention advocate. There is a clear, well documented correlation between community gun violence and a lack of trust in the police. For Oakland's terrible homicide rate to come down we must increase the community's trust in OPD by putting in place policies that both will hold OPD accountable and that the community trusts will hold them accountable. I have worked with Omar on the SSOC for two years and I have found him to be both detail-oriented, so he reads and understands proposed policies, and strategically oriented, so he looks at the overall effect of the proposed policies. But most importantly, Omar is a good leader within the Commission. When the League of Women Voters analyzed some of Oakland's commissions and noted that SSOC did not have a strategic plan, Omar organized commissioners to devise a plan, all along working with the other commissioners. He saw that the work of the SSOC was not well known, and with another commissioner has been giving talks on the SSOC to various groups. He is patient at meetings, focused, cooperative, and always does what he commits to do.

Part of the SSOC duties is to oversee the Measure Z funding of OPD, including Community Policing. Omar is the one commissioner who always has insightful questions. Seeing him ask these questions is what made me say: I think the Police Commission needs someone like him.

If you have questions, please contact me.

Paula Hawthorn

