

CITY OF OAKLAND



CITY HALL • ONE CITY HALL PLAZA • OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA 94612

Office of the Mayor  
Honorable Sheng Thao

(510) 238-3141  
FAX (510) 238-4731  
TDD (510) 238-3254

Letter of Appointment

December 3, 2024

Dear President Bas and members of the City Council:

Pursuant to City Charter Section 601, the Mayor has appointed the following persons as members of the following board or commission, subject to City Council confirmation:

**Commission on Persons with Disabilities**

**James Carter**, to serve a three-year term beginning on September 3, 2024 and ending September 2, 2027, filling a vacant seat previously held by Noah Smith.

**Benjamin Bartu**, to serve a three-year term beginning on September 3, 2024 and ending September 2, 2027, filling a vacant seat previously held by himself.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sheng Thao", written in a cursive style.

Mayor Sheng Thao

## Profile

Benjamin

First Name

Bartu

Last Name

## Pronouns

Email Address

Street Address

Suite or Apt

City

State

Postal Code

## What City Council district do you live in?

 District 3

Primary Phone

Alternate Phone

University of California,  
Berkeley

Employer

Disabled Ecologies Lab  
Manager

Job Title

## Which Boards would you like to apply for?

Commission on Persons with Disabilities: Appointed  
Affordable Housing & Infrastructure Bond Public Oversight Committee : Submitted

## Interests & Experiences

### Please tell us how your qualifications and participation will relate to the requested board and/or commission's mission.

My current position at UC Berkeley, and my graduate studies, focus(ed) in particular on the Environmental Justice and its relationship to human rights. This is imbricated with housing, which has become a top concern in Oakland. I feel I have experience in this arena, as well; I have been housing insecure as a child and as an adult, and through the national fair housing fundraiser I have run for the past three years through Palette Poetry, I have had the chance to familiarize myself with state and national fair housing policies, and believe I could bring this knowledge to bear on the Affordable Housing & Infrastructure Oversight Committee, especially if more Environmental Justice experience or Fair Housing policy experience is needed in the room. Regarding the commission on persons with disabilities, my current work is heavily tied to disability, from an academic perspective, but also one of praxis. How do we make more space for disabled people in the world? How do we create welcoming environments for us, as well as encourage the creation of policies that do the same? And how to hold ourselves accountable? Though my research is quantitative and qualitative, and requires a certain remove from my own lived condition at times, my own experience is bound up with disability also -- I am myself a disabled person, having been diagnosed with Epilepsy as a child. The mission of the commission on Persons with Disabilities is to increase the integration of disabled persons into the community; I feel poised, through studies and experience, to contribute to doing this as well. Thank you for your consideration, B

***Please submit your resume or curriculum vitae. You may upload a document. (A Word format is preferred.) Alternatively, you may paste the text of your resume in the field provided below.***

[Bartu\\_Resume.docx](#)

Upload a Resume

**Please paste the text of your resume or curriculum vitae below.**

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**Please click the acknowledgement below.**

**Service on City of Oakland boards, commissions, and committees may require filings of the FPPC's Statements of Economic Interest (Form 700). Upon appointment and determination of filing status, I will comply with all filing obligations.**

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I Agree \*

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Benjamin Bartu, Disability Studies Researcher & Poetry Editor

**EDUCATION**

**Columbia  
University —  
M.A in Human  
Rights & Public  
Policy**



**Linfield  
University —  
Bachelor's in  
Political  
Science &  
Writing**

References available upon request.

**WORK  
EXPERIENCE**

**Disabled  
Ecologies Lab  
Manager, UC  
Berkeley —  
11/22 - Present**

Design \*  
Graduate  
Courses on  
Disability  
.studies

Lead in-depth \*  
quantitative  
and qualitative  
research on the  
impacts of  
pollution upon  
disabled  
communities  
.and tenants

Edited and \*  
performed  
research for the  
Othering and  
Belonging  
Institute's  
fellow Associate  
Professor Dr.

.Sunaura Taylor's forthcoming *Disabled Ecologies*

**Interim Editor-in-Chief, Palette Poetry — 03/19-Present**

- \*Read over 2,000 submissions of poetry every year in a fast-paced digital office and answer email inquiries.
- \*Coordinate digital events with attendances of up to 100 people.
- \*Spearhead Palette's Annual National Fair Housing Month Fundraiser, which I created three years ago. Oversaw project growth of over 200% in our 3rd year. The fundraiser is dedicated to generating donations for housing-insecure people and unsheltered persons. I run it via our social media channels and website.

**Teacher & Administrator, Mentoring Academy, Berkeley — 08/20-07/22**

- \* Driven to action by Covid-19's negative impacts on our education system, I spent two years making a positive difference upon the lives of young people in my community. I taught 4 diverse classes of 15 students for 2 years in Oakland, with subjects ranging from Methods of Critical Thinking in English to Political Theory.
- \* Researched the development of Covid-19 legislation and policy at a state and federal level in collaboration with staff members to implement policies that kept our community safe. We oversaw the implementation of 7 changes to school policy, and I personally saw to the Covid testing of more than 110 students.

**Research Assistant, Columbia University — 03/20-07/21**

- \* Performed intensive research into US political history, legislation, and policy about land use and civil rights over the course of the last 200 years. During my tenure I drafted a dozen literature reviews, acquired rare international archival files, & wrote over 40 pages of analytical research contributions.
- \*Edited & copyedited Dr. Mamdani's NYT bestseller "Neither Settler Nor Native".
- \* Drafted more than 30 weekly memos for Dr. Mamdani, coordinated over 20 digital events, & tracked & logged almost 100 invoices in sums of over \$4,000.



# CITY OF OAKLAND

## BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS APPLICATION



Name: James ("Jamie") H. Carter Jr. Home Phone: [REDACTED]

Address: [REDACTED]

Type of Employment: Unemployed (for now - Im currently looking for Software Engineering positions)

Employer: Side Note: I have a B. S. in Computer Science from Millsaps College

Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Board or Commission you wish to serve on: Mayor's Commision for Persons With Disabilities (MCPD)

Why do you wish to serve as a member of the Board/Commission? As a low vision member of the community, I would like the opportunity to advocate for other people living with disabilities. I am a Software Engineer who understands the challenges of working and managing life while interacting with Public Transit on a daily basis.

What experience do you have in this topic area? I grew up my whole life being visually impaired. I don't see well enough to drive. I have lived in a variety of settings from smalltown Mississippi, to NYC. I understand there are unique approaches one has to take based on the community they reside in.

Experience serving on Boards and/or Commissions: None

Approximate hours available per month to spend on Board/Commission activities: 10-20hrs

Organizational Memberships: None

Volunteer Activities: AIDS Lifecycle Fundraisers.

While not a part of any major community service efforts, I have spent a lot of time advocating for the LGBT community.

While living in Mississippi i helped with the Mississippi Safe Schools Coalition. to reduce bullying

Please list two references with telephone numbers: \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant's Signature: [Signature] Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Note: Personal information submitted (including home address and telephone number) is kept confidential



1. What is your experience with disability (personal or professional)?  
The MCPD's goal is to achieve equal representation of the diversity of disability experiences, including but not limited to:

- Physical
- Sensory
- Deafness
- Blindness
- Psychiatric
- Learning
- Intellectual

I have grown up with glaucoma my whole life. I am unable to drive or play a lot of sports. I'm limited in some activities and forms of employment.

I use public transportation all the time. (BART, Muni, Ferry, CalTrain, AC Transit)

2. Do you have knowledge in one or more of the following areas?  
Please describe.

- Housing rights
- Employment rights
- Education rights
- Transportation rights
- Physical access requirements (California Building Code and Federal Standards & Guidelines)
- Assistive technology
- Self-Advocacy
- Community organizing

I did some community organizing work with MSSC. I would love to learn and better advocate for transit rights. I do use assistive technologies to help me better read.



3. Do you have knowledge of how municipal government organizations work and the budget process? Please describe.

Not in full detail, besides there is probably a FY budget and that lays out what departments can spend based on the projected receipts via tax revenue.  
(Sales, property, fees, etc)

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4. Do you have professional expertise in one or more of the following areas? Please describe.

- Architecture
- Urban planning
- Civil engineering
- Law
- Public administration
- Fiscal policy
- Legislation
- Construction Management
- Project Management
- Event Planning

I do have professional experience in Software Development and Engineering

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5. MCPD seeks representation that reflects the diversity of Oakland including but not limited to ethnicity, race, religion, sex, language, and district of residence. How would you contribute to the diversity of the MCPD?

I am a gay man who is happily married. I love to be able to help LGBT people living with disabilities be able to live their best life.

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6. To be eligible candidates should be residents or work in Oakland. Exceptions may apply for individuals with unique expertise on a case by case basis so anyone interested is encouraged to apply. Do you live and/or work in Oakland? If not, what motivates you to join the MCPD?  
I live in Oakland

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CITY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

## OAKLAND CITY COUNCIL

RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_ C.M.S.

INTRODUCED BY  
MAYOR SHENG THAO

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### A RESOLUTION CONFIRMING THE MAYOR'S REAPPOINTMENT OF BENJAMIN BARTU AND APPOINTMENT OF JAMES CARTER TO THE COMMISSION ON PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

**WHEREAS**, Section 601 of the City Charter provides that members of City boards and commissions shall be appointed by the Mayor subject to confirmation by the affirmative vote of five members of the City Council; and

**WHEREAS**, Ordinance No. 9968 C.M.S., adopted August 5, 1980, and amended by Ordinance No. 11864 C.M.S., adopted March 12, 1996 and then by Ordinance No. 13334 C.M.S., adopted October 20, 2015, created the Commission on Persons with Disabilities to address issues germane to accessibility, services and civil rights for persons with disabilities; and

**WHEREAS**, the Commission on Persons with Disabilities consists of eleven (11) members, serving three-year staggered terms with no more than two consecutive terms; and

**WHEREAS**, at least a majority of the Commission members appointed must be persons with disabilities; and

**WHEREAS**, the Honorable Mayor Sheng Thao has reappointed Benjamin Bartu and appointed James Carter to the Commission on Persons with Disabilities, subject to confirmation by the City Council; now, therefore, be it



**RESOLVED:** That pursuant to City Charter Section 601, the City Council hereby confirms the Mayor’s appointments to the Commission on Persons with Disabilities:

**James Carter**, to serve a three-year term beginning on September 3, 2024 and ending September 2, 2027, filling a vacant seat previously held by Noah Smith.

**Benjamin Bartu**, to serve a three-year term beginning on September 3, 2024 and ending September 2, 2027, filling a vacant seat previously held by himself.

IN COUNCIL, OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA,

PASSED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES - FIFE, GALLO, JENKINS, KALB, KAPLAN, RAMACHANDRAN, REID AND  
PRESIDENT FORTUNATO BAS

NOES –

ABSENT –

ABSTENTION –

3385730v1/MJM

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_

ASHA REED  
City Clerk and Clerk of the Council of the  
City of Oakland, California