

Application

REVIEWED
By City Clerk's Office at 9:20 am, Mar 08, 2021

Which Boards would you like to apply for?

Public Safety Reform and Oversight Commission : Submitted

Please read the following before completing an application:

The Oaks Initiative, also known as the "Taxpayer Protection Act," was adopted by Santa Monica voters in November 2000 and amended in November 2016. Its requirements affect all City-elected and appointed officials, including Council-appointed board and commission members. Additional information is available on the City's website in City Charter Article XXII – Taxpayer Protection.

All persons are invited to apply for membership on City Boards and Commissions regardless of race, age, sex, religion, marital status, national origin, ancestry, sexual preference, or disability. Applicants shall not, however, be under 18 years of age or serve on more than one Board, Commission or Corporation. Some Boards and Commissions do require special qualifications and requirements. Appointment of members will be made by Councilmembers at an open City Council meeting. Upon appointment, designated members will be required to file a Conflict of Interest disclosure statement. Please answer all questions on this application. This application will become a public record and will be available for public inspection or duplication.

[Additional Conflict of Interest Information for applicants](#)

Profile

Prefix: _____ First Name: Houman Middle Initial: D Last Name: Hemmati Suffix: _____

Email Address: [Redacted]

Street Address: [Redacted]

Suite or Apt: [Redacted]

City: [Redacted]

State: [Redacted]

Postal Code: [Redacted]

Primary Phone: [Redacted]

Alternate Phone: [Redacted]

Question applies to multiple boards
Reside in Santa Monica?

Yes No

Question applies to multiple boards
If yes, number of years residence in Santa Monica:

Question applies to Public Safety Reform and Oversight Commission

Are you applying for the seats reserved for those ages 18-22 years old?

Yes No

Question applies to Public Safety Reform and Oversight Commission

What is your occupation?

Volunteer Physician and Biomedical Research Scientist

Written Request to Serve Additional Term/s

Interests & Experience

Question applies to multiple boards

Specify current or prior service on City Boards/Commissions:

Although I have not yet had the privilege of serving on any City Boards/Commissions, I am extremely active as a parent with the SMMUSD, working with other parents, teachers, and the School Board to guarantee that SMMUSD public schools can safely and quickly reopen to benefit all children, particularly the members of the BIPOC community, special needs children, ESL children, and children from disadvantaged backgrounds who have been disproportionately impacted by one year of school closures. I have worked closely with the President of the School Board to address medical and other concerns regarding safe reopening of schools.

Question applies to multiple boards

List community activities in which you are involved:

For several months, I have been a leader of the movement to safely and equitably reopen public schools for children of all backgrounds on a local, state, and national level, organizing meetings and rallies, speaking to the LA County Department of Public Health on behalf of parents and students, and speaking on local and national television regarding the health and educational impacts of school closures, particularly among at-risk communities. For many nearly 20 years, I have been a Board member of the AJC, the nation's oldest human rights organization, working to guarantee that every person is treated equally, regardless of their background. Through AJC, I have recently resumed working with the Urban League, to help young Black adults in Los Angeles County advance socioeconomically. I am also active with my daughter's preschool in Santa Monica.

Personal qualities identified in the criteria include leadership, creativity, and innovation as well as the ability to work effectively in a group setting and an ability to balance competing needs. Provide examples of how you have demonstrated those qualities:

Throughout both my education, training, and career as a physician and scientist, and my longstanding career as a social justice advocate on a local, national, and global level, I have worked within and led diverse, cross-functional, interprofessional groups made up of key stakeholders with numerous different experiences and backgrounds. In doing so, I have contributed to meaningful social justice programs that have had broad impact both here and abroad, while contributing to key scientific and medical advances that have had the promise to save millions of lives and prevent and treat blindness in many millions and advocating for policies that address and dismantle socioeconomic, health, and educational disparities along racial lines. I began my leadership experiences during my time in college at Stanford, where I was elected to the Student Conduct Legislative Council, a body that was tasked with adjudicating instances of student misbehavior and determining whether punishment or restorative justice would be most effective and appropriate. We handled issues ranging from free speech to hunger strikes to grape boycotts to sexual assault on campus. For 15 years, I have been on the boards of the Los Angeles, San Francisco, Washington DC and Boston chapters of the AJC, the nation's oldest human rights organization. Through my extensive involvement, I have met with numerous heads of state and foreign ministers of nations including Germany, Bahrain, Egypt, and Peru, advocating for religious freedom, women's rights, freedom of speech, and release of political prisoners, as well as a continued commitment to freedom and equality for all. My work on these issues has resulted in broad changes across many nations as well as long-term partnerships to continue addressing these issues. Moreover, I have used this position to fight for responsible law enforcement. As a person of color, minority, and immigrant from a Middle Eastern nation, I have met with the Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security in Washington DC to successfully demand an end to racial profiling that targets dark-skinned, Arab, Muslim, and other individuals, treating them as suspicious based solely on appearance. And on a local level, I have used this position to work with the National Urban League in DC and currently in Los Angeles County to work toward achieving socioeconomic and educational equality for young BIPOC residents, including Black adolescents and young adults who have often been under assault in many ways in our communities. Throughout my medical career, I have worked in team setting caring, most often without any pay, for the most medically underserved and vulnerable patients and communities, including homeless, mentally ill and substance-abusing veterans at both the West Los Angeles VA and Palo Alto VA Medical Centers, BIPOC and homeless community members at the Venice Family Clinic, members of the inner-city Black community of Baltimore at Johns Hopkins Hospital, residents of a remote rural community in Vermont at Central Vermont Medical Center, and for the last several years, undocumented immigrants, prisoners, working poor, and homeless residents as a volunteer physician at Los Angeles County USC Medical Center. And in my career as a biomedical research scientist, I have made innovative scientific discoveries in the areas of pediatric brain tumors, macular degeneration, and Muscular Dystrophy that promise to improve the lives of millions of people, both young and old. I have led numerous teams to help take new medicines from invention into the lab and into humans.

Please share any knowledge of or experience with law enforcement, public safety policies and issues, or social services policies and issues.

My experiences with law enforcement and social service policies began as a child growing up in Iran, where during the revolution I watched in fear as religious police beat women for showing their hair or faces in public and police violently attacked and dragged away protestors opposed to the revolution of 1979. Later in my childhood, I rode the bus to Walter Reed Middle School, and then North Hollywood High School, both located in North Hollywood and consisting of nearly 100% BIPOC students who were in the federal school lunch program. When I entered my school campuses, I wasn't greeted by smiling teachers but rather by law enforcement officers armed with metal detectors who searched our bags for weapons or drugs, assuming many of us were criminals because of our backgrounds or appearance. These searches did not stop at the front door, as we have to suffer through daily "random" checks of bags even without our classrooms, where students (most often BIPOC students who were profiled) were asked to leave class to have their belongings searched yet again. Through my medical work at two VA Medical Centers, including our neighboring West Los Angeles VA, as well as several other hospitals in urban areas throughout the nation, I have worked closely with law enforcement who have brought in patients on "5150" psychiatric holds for being a danger to themselves or others. As a trauma surgeon living and working in the inner city of Baltimore for three years, I met law enforcement on a daily basis. At work, I would operate on patients who were often still in handcuffs after they had been brought in by police with unexplained facial injuries. And in my community, I watched police selectively enforcing the law against my Black neighbors while ignoring far worse crimes committed by their neighbors. As a volunteer ophthalmologist at LA County USC Medical Center, where about 10% of my patients have been prisoners, I have worked side by side with prison guards to offer compassion and dignity to individuals who are otherwise living challenging lives. Finally, having been the victim of both physical and property crime very recently, I have realized when we need police the most and deeply respect how they put their own lives at risk when they do their jobs to protect our residents.

Why you are interested in serving on the Public Safety Reform and Oversight Commission?

I strongly believe that public safety, of all residents, is the number one duty of government and I feel a moral obligation to help our city achieve this important goal at such a critical time in our history. As I mentioned above, I very much believe that we need strong protections for the public. At the same time, having repeatedly witnessed and experienced law enforcement overstep its powers along racial or socioeconomic lines, both here and in my birth country, I also believe that the public must have full trust in the police and justice system. For much of my life, as a person of color, I have been profiled by law enforcement, both in airports and in the community, because of my appearance or name. In my high school, I witnessed that happening to BIPOC kids every day, where adults around them treated them with suspicion, for no reason whatsoever. That behavior has eroded trust and confidence in law enforcement which, in turn, has eroded the ability of law enforcement to effectively carry out their duties. I know that so many others feel that way every day here in Santa Monica. Moreover, when I moved to Santa Monica with my family, I was outraged to see how the many homeless members of our population are treated as criminals, rather than with compassion and humanity. Having cared for homeless individuals for many years, I have personally seen how individualized attention and addressing their unique root causes of homelessness are the only way to solve their problems and allow them to return to independent, dignified life off the streets. For this reason, I have been a very outspoken advocate of achieving social justice for the homeless here in Santa Monica not through prisons but through a combination of much-needed services (including mental and health care, drug rehabilitation, education and job training/placement) and temporary housing that can actually help rather than worsen their situations. Additionally, like all of us, on May 31 2020, I witnessed much of our city's beloved core looted and destroyed while our police attacked peaceful and legitimate protestors just blocks away while we and the world watched in shock. In no world is that right, and I cannot allow that to ever occur here in my lifetime or at any time in our future. Finally, as a parent of two young children, I want them to grow up in a community where justice, equality, and safety all coexist, rather than being mutually exclusive, and where they can learn from their community how to live as responsible, ethical, and compassionate citizens. And I want them to see their father set an example for them by respecting the different backgrounds, experiences and viewpoints of others, listening to them, and advocating for policies that benefit us all and contribute to a safe and harmonious Santa Monica for all.

Question applies to multiple boards

Participation on the board requires a significant commitment over the length of the term including attendance at approximately two scheduled meetings per month, and possibly other tasks and meetings outside of board meetings. Will you be able to commit the necessary time to perform your duties if appointed to the board?

Yes No

Question applies to multiple boards

How did you learn about the vacancy in this board or commission? (select all that apply) *

- On the City's website (smgov.net or santamonica.gov)
- Social Media- Facebook, Twitter, NextDoor, Youtube
- Word of Mouth- Council or Board/Commission member, City Staff, neighborhood groups, etc.

Business Information (Public)

Occupation:

Volunteer Physician and Biomedical research scientist

Business name:

Business Address

Business Phone



Notes

ALL INFORMATION, EXCEPT PERSONAL DATA ENTERED IN THE PROFILE SECTION, IS PUBLIC AND AVAILABLE FOR VIEWING AT THE CITY CLERK'S OFFICE AND ON THE CITY'S WEB PAGE.

DISABILITY RELATED ASSISTANCE AND ALTERNATE FORMATS OF THIS DOCUMENT ARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST BY CALLING (310) 458-8211.

After an application has been submitted, a confirmation page will be displayed. If an email address has been provided, an email confirmation will be sent. IF A CONFIRMATION IS NOT DISPLAYED, PLEASE RESUBMIT OR CONTACT THE CITY CLERK'S OFFICE AT (310) 458-8211.