

Boards and Commissions Application

Profile

Helen

First Name

Kassa

Last Name

Email Address

Please note, applications are continuously accepted to the City of San Jose Boards and Commissions. The Board or Commission you select may or may not indicate there is a vacancy. Your application will remain on file for one year from the date of submission. During the year, your application may be considered for unanticipated vacancies.

Which Boards would you like to apply for?

Neighborhoods Commission: Submitted

Redistricting Advisory Commission: Submitted

Are you a resident of San Jose?

☒ Yes ☐ No**Length of Residency**

☒ 6 or more years

What district do you live in? To verify, please click here: <https://eservices.sccgov.org/rov/?tab=dt> *

☒ District 1

Street Address

Suite or Apt

San Jose

City

CA

State

95117

Postal Code

Primary Phone

Alternate Phone

African American Community
Service Agency

Employer

Policy & Advocacy Coordinator

Job Title

Current Employer Address

Current Employer of Spouse

N/A

Address of Current Employer of Spouse

[REDACTED]

Spouse's Job Title

N/A

If you or your spouse is retired and receiving a pension, please state source of pension.

Demographics (Optional)

The demographic information you choose to provide is **VOLUNTARY** and **OPTIONAL**. This information will be kept separate from your application and will not be used for evaluating applications or making appointments. The City of San José will use this information to solely conduct research and compile statistical reports regarding the composition of its Board and Commission applicants.

Question applies to multiple boards

Ethnicity

Question applies to multiple boards

To which gender identity do you most identify?

[REDACTED]

Interests & Experiences

High School, College, Professional, Vocational, or Other Schools Attended. Please include Major or Field of Study, Dates Attended, Degree and Date of Degree.

Santa Clara University - Political Science/International Relations with a Minor in Religious Studies Sept 2016-June 2020 Prospect High School August 2012-June 2016

List any position or office held in any governmental agency, civic, or charitable organization including the dates

President- San Jose NAACP Youth Council Oct 2013-Oct 2015 Regional Education Chair - CA-HI Youth & College NAACP Oct 2014-Dec 2016 Board of Directors - African American Community Services Agency Aug 2017-Aug 2020 Board of Directors - Ethiopian Community Services - Oct 2020- present Class Senator - Santa Clara University 2016-2020

Languages Spoken

Amharic & English

Special Awards or Recognitions Received

Princeton Prize in Race Relations 2015 & 2016 Congressional Award from Congressman Mike Honda's Office Congressional Award from Congresswoman Barbara Lee's Office Drum Major of Justice Award from Nancy Pelosi's Office Humanitarian and Community Services Award from Fiona Ma California Board of Equalization

Please state why you want to become a member of this Board or Commission including specific objectives which you would work toward as a member. If you are applying for the Board of Fair Campaign and Political Practices, please indicate any familiarity or experience you may have with campaign laws.

I am interested in becoming a member of the Redistricting Advisory Commission as well as the Neighborhoods Commission because I am passionate about amplifying the voices of the community. Both of these commissions are challenged with the goal of ensuring the needs of the people are received and met by their representatives. My main objectives would be to ensure the needs and priorities of our most marginalized communities are at the forefront of the discussion when making any decisions or recommendations. I am interested in ensuring such needs are considered when reviewing outcomes and impacts.

Please state any other information which you feel would be useful in reviewing your application

Do you own property in the City of San José?

☐ Yes ☒ No

If yes, please list the addresses here.

Do you rent property in the City of San José?

☐ Yes ☒ No

If yes, is it a month-to-month lease?

☐ Yes ☐ No

State and local law require that you abstain from participation in decisions that may affect your financial interests, including sources of income, interest in real property, personal finances or investments. In addition, if appointed, you may be required to fill out a disclosure statement which indentifies certain of your financial interest beginning with the immediate twelve-month period prior to your appointment. Please review the scopr of your board/commission in Municipal Code Chapter 2.08. Based on your best judgment, does this Board or Commission make decisions that may affect sources of income, interests in real property, personal finances or investments of you or your spouse?

☐ Yes ☒ No

If yes, please explain. Please identify any organizations, associations, corporations, or entities by which you are employed or associated that might be affected by decisions of this Board or Commission, and the positions you hold in these entities.

Reference 1 Name

Milan Balinton

Reference 1 Address

Reference 1 Phone

Reference 2 Name

Dan Daniels

Reference 2 Address

Reference 2 Phone

Supplemental Questions

If applicable, have you ever attended a meeting of the Commission(s) to which you are applying?

☐ Yes ☒ No

Would you be available to attend meetings at the scheduled time?

☒ Yes ☐ No

Please describe your experience in serving on a Commission or Board.

During my undergrad, I served as an elected Student Senator for 3 of my 4 years on campus. In my role, I fully engaged with my campus community, launched various successful surveys and polls in order to define my policy priorities for the academic year. I was able to successfully carry out various initiatives on campus based on community and student demands in the areas of equity, social justice, environmental justice, religious inclusion and more. While on the board of the AACSA, the Ethiopian Community Services, NAACP (state and local) as well as, as mentioned, Santa Clara University's Associated Student government, I learned the fundamentals of process and procedure (via Roberts rules of order), how to work in teams to define a mission, objective and measurements of success and so on. I believe my leadership experience with these various organizations have equipped me to serve with the City of San Jose's commission.

Considering your experience and activities in business, labor, professional, social, or other organizations, indicate the experience, training, knowledge and/or skills which qualify you for appointment to the selected commission(s).

Santa Clara University's Associated Student Government, Silicon Valley Chapter of The National Coalition of 100 Black Women, the NAACP, the African American Community Services Agency (AACSA), and even my 3-month internship with the United Nations Development Program based in Ethiopia have all uniquely contributed to my growing expertise in governance and representation. As a political science major, I was always interested in bringing my education to real life and that was what I did with every organization I participated in. In Ethiopia, I learned how poor grievance intake procedures/infrastructure and overall governance infrastructure could lead to not just the obvious of civil unrest and corruption, but larger opportunity costs of services and support to those that need it the most. With Santa Clara University's Associated Student Government I learned the importance of strong bylaws, processes, and terms in leadership to ensure proper representation, checks, and balances. In the Coalition of 100 Black Women, I learned how to truly measure impact rather than gauging success by output. In the NAACP, I learned the power of community partnerships to reach common goals and interests, and so on. Collectively, all my experiences have trained me and provided me with the necessary perspective, vision, leadership ability, foresight, and confidence to serve.

What is your understanding of the purpose of the Commission?

The Neighborhood Commission - To engage and represent the needs and interests of the various neighborhood communities to the city council and redevelopment staff. Redistricting Advisory Commission - To make recommendations on fair, equitable and just district lines to be used by the council and the city overall for future elections and so on.

Please list three issues facing the City that you feel the Commission should address.

1. Diversity 2. Equity 3. Inclusion/Representation

I would like to say . . .

It would be an honor to serve on either or both of these commissions. My role with the AACSA positions me well to represent the Black, brown, and immigrant community due to the nature of my role as Policy & Advocacy Coordinator.

(Optional) Please upload a resume.

Retirement Board Questions Only

Verification

By checking the box below, you agree with the following statement.

I agree that all of the information contained in my responses to the questions on this application are true and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I further agree that, by checking the box below and submitting this application, online or otherwise, I am affixing my digital signature to this form as of the date submitted.

☒ **I Agree ***