

View results

Respondent

15

Anonymous

133:46

Time to complete

About the Supplemental Questions for the Council on Homelessness Membership Application

The following questions will be used by the Council on Homelessness' Nominating Panel to identify diverse applicants that can contribute unique expertise and perspectives to the Council. Answers to these questions will be evaluated in relation to the experience and qualifications desired for available member seats. Please carefully consider how your personal experiences, professional experiences, and values will contribute meaningfully to the Council on Homelessness' and the Contra Costa County Homeless Continuum of Care's efforts to make homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring.

Please note, there are two required elements of the Council on Homelessness application, these "Supplemental Questions" and the County Application. Once you submit this application, you will get an response that will include the link to the County Application. You must submit the County application by 5 pm Friday, September 30, 2022 to be considered.

REMINDER: To be considered for the Council, you must complete BOTH components of the application.

Please note, this form can be filled out as a Word document and emailed to Council on Homelessness CChomelesscouncil@cchealth.org by the deadline or submitted via this online form.

Supplemental Questions

1. Which vacant Council on Homelessness seat are you applying for? *

- ☐ Affordable Housing Developer Representative
- ☐ Behavioral Health Representative
- ☐ City Government Representative
- ☐ Educational and Vocational Services Representative
- ☐ Emergency Solutions Grant Representative
- ☐ Health Care Representative
- ☐ Homeless Service Provider Representative
- ☒ Lived Experience Advisor (must have lived experience of homelessness)
- ☐ Veterans Administration Representative
- ☐ Workforce Development Representative
- ☐ Youth Representative (must be between the ages of 18-24)

More options for Responses

2. **Please briefly describe any special skills, relationships, or resources you would bring to this specific seat. If applicable, please describe any experiences that demonstrate a past professional or personal commitment to addressing and alleviating homelessness within the topic or field related to the vacant seat. (400 word maximum) ***

I am currently an unhoused resident of Rydin Road, in Richmond, CA. For the past two years I have been running a donation kiosk here, providing food, clothes, blankets, toiletries, first aid, electric power, and emergency telephone use, to other residents of the street I live on, as well as to the homeless community in general. In addition, I have attended countless city council meetings, as well as meetings of different taskforce groups, neighborhood councils, and non-profit organizations, all of which are seeking to find practical ways to address the crisis of homelessness. Since moving onto a renovated transit bus in November of 2020, I have fostered connections/relationships with both members of the homeless community, as well as community leaders throughout Contra Costa and Alameda counties. Over the past six months I have come up with, what's I believe to be a workable plan that could potentially significantly ameliorate homelessness, and at the same time provide significant benefits to everyone else as well. I was able to present this plan to Richmond Vice Mayor Eduardo Martinez, Richmond Housing Director, Jesus Morales, and the CEO of SOS Richmond, and all three agree that what I envision is not only workable, but also better than anything that the city has managed to come up with. With regard to past experience, I have a master's degree in philosophy from the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven in Belgium, and a certificate of advanced language studies in Japanese, from the Monterey Institute of International Studies, in Monterey, CA.

3. **Please identify your personal connections with homelessness by selecting one of the options below: ***

- ☒ I am a person currently experiencing homelessness and living in a shelter or location not meant for human habitation (e.g., in a tent).
- ☐ I am a person who experienced homelessness within the past 5 years but is currently housed.
- ☐ I am a person who experienced homelessness more than 5 years ago but is currently housed.
- ☐ I am a family member of someone who has experienced homelessness
- ☐ I am none of the above but still invested in addressing homelessness in Contra Costa County.
- ☐ I would prefer not to respond

4. **Individuals experiencing homelessness in Contra Costa County come from diverse backgrounds (in terms of abilities, ages, sexual and gender identities, immigration statuses, and racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds). Please describe your approach and experience working with and in diverse populations. (400 words maximum) ***

For approximately 10 years prior to losing my home, I worked in conjunction with a friend (Liz Lubin) under the umbrella of Garden of Peace Ministries, collecting food donations from various retail stores, and distributing these items to homeless individuals throughout the East Bay Area. I have a black belt in Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu (was ranked 'as the #1 Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu Fighter In the World' - female, heavyweight, division; in 2007), and this allows me to interact with people who are socially awkward, mentally ill, hostile, isolated, and/or drug addicted, without feeling afraid/intimidated.

5. **Please describe your affiliations with organizations or agencies who serve various homeless subpopulations such as: persons with chronic substance abuse issues, persons with serious mental illness, persons experiencing chronic homelessness, persons with HIV/AIDS, veterans, families with children, unaccompanied youth, victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking, and seniors. (400 word maximum) ***

In addition to working with the various non-profit organizations focused on serving homeless individuals (CORE, Collaborizing, Way 2 Love, Housing Consortium of the East Bay), I have also been employed by SOS Richmond (Daniel Barth), and Garden of Peace Ministries (Liz Lubin). I am also currently enrolled in a seven week (just finished week 5) community leadership training program sponsored by Faith in Action. In terms of serving the homeless, the majority of my work over the past two years has centered around the donation kiosk on Rydin Road, which I founded/manage. This role has provided me with the opportunity to interact with all subgroups of the homeless community.

6. **If applicable, please describe your affiliations with any government and community-based organizations that are not currently represented on the Council on Homelessness. For a full list of current Council on Homelessness members, please see here: <https://cchealth.org/h3/coc/council.php#Members> . (400 word maximum) ***

I am not affiliated with any government organization, and as I am filling out this form via my phone, I am afraid to click on a link to the aforementioned list, for fear of losing all of the work that I have done on this form so far. That said - my intention, in terms of seeking a position on this council - would be to serve as a representative of homeless individuals, and to serve their interests, rather than the interests of government or any particular organization.

7. **Using your personal experiences and/or professional experiences, please describe up to three (3) ways you would encourage the Contra Costa Continuum of Care to address or set priorities for addressing homelessness. Feel free to draw from current events and other sources of information. (400 word maximum) ***

I believe that before anything else, county/city governments MUST identify/provide designated locations where homeless people are allowed to legally EXIST, without fear of arrest or harassment by law enforcement. The fact that a person does not have sufficient access to financial resources to be able to pay rent, is not sufficient grounds for criminalization. The habitual persecution/rejection of homeless residents by city governments is unacceptable, unconstitutional, unethical, and has TO END. Once such locations are identified, I believe that resources should be focused on the creation of tiny home communities. However- one of the residency requirements for participation in such a community would be enrollment in a job training program. Furthermore - these training programs would be focused around industries and technologies that cities would like to attract to their area to support future economic growth (alternative energy, biotech, software/computer engineering, agricultural cultivation/research, etc).

8. Please state how many Continuum of Care (CoC), Council on Homelessness (CoH), or Youth Advisory Council (YAC) meetings you have previously attended. *

- ☒ 3 or more meetings
- ☐ 1-2 meetings
- ☐ 0 meetings

9. Please provide up to three (3) recommendations or thoughts you had from CoC, CoH, or YAC meetings. If you have not attended a CoC, CoH, or YAC meetings, please briefly describe any recent relevant participation in similar meetings and your recommendations or thoughts. (400 word maximum) *

I believe that the biggest hurdle to fixing the many issues surrounding homelessness in Contra Costa county, has to do with the lack of a standardized communication protocol between the various government entities, business groups, non-profit organizations, and community stakeholders. My recommendation would be for Contra Costa county to partner up with city governments, to develop a website for the purpose of fostering transparency/communication between different government entities, and between these entities and communities. Furthermore, the titles, roles and responsibilities, of those who actually hold the power to make decisions relating to policy, should be clearly defined, and this information should accessible to the public. There are currently far too many meetings, that accomplish far too little, because as it now stands, there is little transparency, and no means of accountability. Because of this, there is nothing to compel the people who actually hold the reigns of power, and are responsible for creating policy, to pay any attention whatsoever to the conclusions or recommendations of taskforce committees.

10. The Council is committed to the Housing First approach (meaning no barriers or requirements as a prerequisite to housing, including sobriety, religious affiliation, or other structure not required for housing) and has established this Guiding Principle: *Homelessness is first a housing issue, and necessary supports and services are critical to help people remain housed. Our system must be nimble and flexible enough to respond through the shared responsibility, accountability, and transparency of the community.* Are you in support of the Housing First approach and Guiding Principle described above? *

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No

11. Please identify the level of commitment you can provide to the Council on Homelessness by selecting one of the options below: *

- ☒ I can be available for **2 or more meetings per month**, including the standing monthly COH meeting the first Thursday of every month from 1pm to 3pm.
- ☐ I can be available **only for the standing monthly COH meeting** the first Thursday of every month from 1pm to 3pm.
- ☐ I am **not available** for the standing monthly COH meeting, **but can make other meetings 2 or more times** per month.
- ☐ I am **not available** for the standing monthly COH meeting and **may not be able to make other meetings** more than once per month.

12. Which of the following geographic areas do you spend the most time in? *

- ☐ Far East Contra Costa County (for example: Discovery Bay, Bethel Island)
- ☐ East Contra Costa County (for example: Bay Point, Pittsburg, Antioch, Brentwood)
- ☐ Central Contra Costa County (for example: Martinez, Pleasant Hill, Concord, Walnut Creek)
- ☐ South Contra Costa County (for example: Alamo, Danville, San Ramon)
- ☒ West Contra Costa County (for example: El Cerrito, San Pablo, Richmond, Pinole, Hercules, Rodeo)
- ☐ I spend an equal amount of time in all five geographic areas listed above.

Demographic Information (Optional)

The Council aims to engage as broad a representation as possible of abilities, ages, sexual and gender identities, immigration statuses, and racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds, and geographical representation within the County. Responses to the following questions are optional and will be considered in aggregate to ensure that we have recruited a diverse pool of applicants. The Nominating Panel will not review applicants' responses to the following questions.

13. What are your pronouns (for example: she/him/they/ze, etc.)?

14. What is your gender identity (*for example: female/male/transgender/non-binary/gender non-conforming, etc.*)?

15. What is your sexual orientation (*for example: bisexual/straight/gay/pansexual, etc*)?

16. What best describes your age? (Check one)

Transition aged youth (18-24)

Adult (25-61)

Older adult (62+)

17. What best describes your race/ethnicity? (Pick as many as apply)

African American/Black

Arab/Middle Eastern

Asian

Caucasian/White

East Indian/South Asian

Latine/a/o/x

Mixed Race

Native American

Pacific Islander

South/Central American

Choose not to answer

Jewish

18. Is there any other information you would like to share, including anything that would help us understand how you would contribute to the diverse representation of people and experiences on the Council (for example: lived experience of homelessness, abilities, immigration status, ethnic background, or cultural background)?

I have been diagnosed as having high functioning autism. I am physically disabled (nerve root injury). My parents were both homeowners, AND high functioning drug addicts, so I have a lot of compassion for those suffering with addiction issues. Although the government defines me as 'homeless', that is NOT how I see myself. I actually see myself as a HOME OWNER. Consider the following: The bus I live on has electricity, heat, air conditioning, water, a shower, a refrigerator, toilet facilities, as well as a bed for me, my partner, and two dogs. The fact that my house is built around a frame that includes four wheels and an engine, does not mean that it cannot be a home as well. I LIKE living on my bus. I do not believe that the government should seek to punish/alienate/criminalize me simply because I want to live within my financial means, without having to rely on government aid. The only thing that I lack is land/space to put my residence on.

Contact Information

19. Name *

Jessi Taran

20. Email *

21. Phone Number



Application Form

Profile

Jessi

First Name

Middle Initial

Taran

Last Name

N/A

Home Address

Suite or Apt

Richmond

City

CA

State

94801

Postal Code

Primary Phone

Email Address

[District Locator Tool](#)

Resident of Supervisorial District:

☒ District 1

Employer

Job Title

Length of Employment

Do you work in Contra Costa County?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If Yes, in which District do you work?

How long have you lived or worked in Contra Costa County?

Are you a veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces?

☐ Yes ☒ No

Board and Interest

Which Boards would you like to apply for?

Contra Costa Council on Homelessness: Submitted

Seat Name

Lived Experience Advisor

Have you ever attended a meeting of the advisory board for which you are applying?

☒ Yes ☐ No

If Yes, how many meetings have you attended?

1

Education

Select the option that applies to your high school education *

☒ G.E.D. Certificate

College/ University A

Name of College Attended

Degree Type / Course of Study / Major

Degree Awarded?

☐ Yes ☐ No

College/ University B

Name of College Attended

Degree Type / Course of Study / Major

Degree Awarded?

☐ Yes ☐ No

College/ University C

Name of College Attended

Degree Type / Course of Study / Major

Degree Awarded?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Other Trainings & Occupational Licenses

Other Training A

Certificate Awarded for Training?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Other Training B

Certificate Awarded for Training?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Occupational Licenses Completed:

Qualifications and Volunteer Experience

Please explain why you would like to serve on this particular board, committee, or commission.

See supplemental

Describe your qualifications for this appointment. (NOTE: you may also include a copy of your resume with this application)

See supplemental

Upload a Resume

Would you like to be considered for appointment to other advisory bodies for which you may be qualified?

☐ Yes ☒ No

Do you have any obligations that might affect your attendance at scheduled meetings?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If Yes, please explain:

Are you currently or have you ever been appointed to a Contra Costa County advisory board?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If Yes, please list the Contra Costa County advisory board(s) on which you are currently serving:

If Yes, please also list the Contra Costa County advisory board(s) on which you have previously served:

List any volunteer or community experience, including any advisory boards on which you have served.

Conflict of Interest and Certification

Do you have a familial or financial relationship with a member of the Board of Supervisors? (Please refer to the relationships listed under the "Important Information" section below or Resolution No. 2021/234)

☐ Yes ☒ No

If Yes, please identify the nature of the relationship:

Do you have any financial relationships with the County such as grants, contracts, or other economic relationships?

☐ Yes ☒ No

If Yes, please identify the nature of the relationship:

Please Agree with the Following Statement

I CERTIFY that the statements made by me in this application are true, complete, and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief, and are made in good faith. I acknowledge and undersand that all information in this application is publicly accessible. I understand that misstatements and/or omissions of material fact may cause forfeiture of my rights to serve on a board, committee, or commission in Contra Costa County.

☒ I Agree

Important Information

1. This application and any attachments you provide to it is a public document and is subject to the California Public Records Act (CA Government Code §6250-6270).
2. All members of appointed bodies are required to take the advisory body training provided by Contra Costa County.
3. Members of certain boards, commissions, and committees may be required to: (1) file a Statement of Economic Interest Form also known as a Form 700, and (2) complete the State Ethics Training Course as required by AB 1234.
4. Meetings may be held in various locations and some locations may not be accessible by public transportation.
5. Meeting dates and times are subject to change and may occur up to two (2) days per month.
6. Some boards, committees, or commissions may assign members to subcommittees or work groups which may require an additional commitment of time.
7. As indicated in Board Resolution 2021/234, a person will not be eligible for appointment if he/she is related to a Board of Supervisors' member in any of the following relationships:
 - (1) Mother, father, son, and daughter;
 - (2) Brother, sister, grandmother, grandfather, grandson, and granddaughter;
 - (3) Husband, wife, father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, stepson, and stepdaughter;
 - (4) Registered domestic partner, pursuant to California Family Code section 297;
 - (5) The relatives, as defined in 1 and 2 above, for a registered domestic partner;
 - (6) Any person with whom a Board Member shares a financial interest as defined in the Political Reform Act (Gov't Code §87103, Financial Interest), such as a business partner or business associate.