



CITY OF CHICAGO

COMMUNITY COMMISSION FOR
PUBLIC SAFETY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

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MEDIA CONTACT:

Nicole Garcia

Nicole.Garcia@cityofchicago.org

DISTRICT COUNCIL NOMINATING COMMITTEE NOMINATES FIFTEEN CANDIDATES FOR THE PERMANENT COMMUNITY COMMISSION FOR PUBLIC SAFETY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Today, the District Council Nominating Committee announced the nomination of fifteen candidates to serve on the permanent Community Commission for Public Safety and Accountability. They are, in alphabetical order: Jose Abonce, Anthony Driver Jr., Bernardo Gomez, Aaron Gottlieb, Nakiyah Matthews, Art Mitchell, Abierre Minor, Angel Rubi Navarijo, Kelly Presley, Deondre Rutues, Remel Terry, Nyshana Sumner, Sandra Wortham, La'Mont Williams, and Edward Washington II. Brief biographies of the nominees are included.

"The fifteen nominees represent a cross-section of Chicago's vibrant and diverse communities, each bringing their unique perspectives, professional, and lived experiences to the table. These candidates have each demonstrated a commitment to public safety and police accountability and embody the values necessary to contribute to the critical work of the Commission," said Angelica Green, 25th District Councilor.

The Nominating Committee is made up of one member from each of the city's 22 District Councils. By law, whenever there is a vacancy on the Community Commission for Public Safety and Accountability, the Nominating Committee must conduct a search and nominate at least two candidates to fill each vacancy. The Mayor must select Commissioners from the Nominating Committee's list of candidates. Selected candidates must then be confirmed by the City Council.

This is a historic milestone—the first time that members of Chicago's powerful new police oversight body will be selected through a community-driven process. An interim Commission was created in 2022, before the first District Council elections. Members of the interim Commission were nominated by the City Council and selected by the Mayor.

Throughout the sixty-day nomination process, the Nominating Committee followed a comprehensive and community-driven approach. Key highlights of the nomination process include:

- **Citywide Search:** The Nominating Committee launched a request for applications on February 7, 2024 to attract a diverse pool of applicants with a strong reputation for



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integrity, leadership, and community involvement. One hundred and twenty people applied.

- **Robust and Intentional Community Engagement:** The Nominating Committee, dedicated to community engagement, crafted a survey and conducted twenty-two public meetings to capture residents' preferences for the next Commission. The Committee also hosted three webinars and held informational sessions with various stakeholders, including youth, legal organizations, community activists, non-profits, economic development institutions, and affinity groups.
- **Community-Informed Rubric:** Based on the Commissioner qualifications that are laid out in the ordinance and input Nominating Committee members received throughout the community engagement process, the Committee developed a community-informed rubric to assess candidates based on their commitment to and history of community engagement; commitment to police accountability; fairness, open-mindedness, and equity; transparency-focused; creativity and vision; subject-matter expertise and competency; capacity; collaboration and understanding of others; and credibility and professionalism.
- **Comprehensive Assessment:** The Committee anonymized all applications to ensure an unbiased review. Collaborating with data experts, the Committee employed both qualitative and quantitative methods and randomization techniques to ensure a fair evaluation process. Utilizing scores and a consensus-building approach, thirty-three candidates were invited to interview. The Committee prepared for application reviews and interviews by engaging in simulated exercises on mock applicants to practice reviewing and scoring applicants. The Committee selected fifteen candidates for nomination to the mayor.

"The Nominating Committee, with all of our diverse perspectives, has united around a common goal- to identify the best candidates who can represent all Chicagoans in matters of public safety and accountability. I am confident that the mayor has access to a candidate pool of the brightest minds and most dedicated individuals Chicago has to offer," said Anthony D. Bryant, 3rd District Councillor.

The ordinance sets out qualifications for Commissioners. At least two Commissioners must have at least ten years of experience as a practicing attorney. At least one Commissioner must have at least ten years of experience in community organizing. At least two Commissioners must be between the ages of 18-24 at the time they are appointed. Except for the two Commissioners between the ages of 18-24, Commissioners must have at least five years of experience in law, public policy, social work, psychology, mental health, public safety, community



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organizing, civil rights, or advocacy on behalf of marginalized communities. At least two Commissioners must live on the South Side, at least two must live on the West Side, and at least two must live on the North Side. The nominated candidates bring diverse backgrounds and valuable experience to the table. For each of the seven vacancies on the Commission, there are at least two nominees who meet each of the requirements.

Jose Abonce is a South Side resident and a community organizer. He currently serves as a Senior Program Manager for the Policing Project's Chicago Neighborhood Policing Initiative. Previously, as an organizer for Austin Coming Together, he worked to develop the Austin neighborhood's quality of life plan. He worked at the University of Illinois Chicago's Center for Public Safety and Justice, where he developed community-generated action plans with individuals directly impacted by the criminal justice system.

Anthony Driver is a South Side resident and a community organizer. He is the President of the interim Community Commission for Public Safety and Accountability, a post he has held since the interim Commission was established in 2022. He has a background in community activism and public affairs. He currently works as the Executive Director for SEIU IL. He played a key role in the coalition that advocated for the creation of the Commission and helped draft the Commission's founding ordinance.

Bernardo Gomez is a North Side resident and one of the four candidates for the two youth representatives on the Commission. He currently works as the Community Engagement Manager at the Mayor's Office of Community Engagement and serves as the Chair of the City's Disability Resource Group. At the Community Safety Coordination Center, Bernardo has developed experience in working with multiple agencies to holistically reduce and prevent crime.

Aaron Gottlieb is a North Side resident and Assistant Professor at the University of Chicago Crown Family School of Social Work, Policy, and Practice. He is a member of the Consent Decree Use of Force Working Group, which functions to review use of force policies of the Chicago Police Department. He played a key role in the coalition that advocated for the creation of the Commission and helped draft the Commission's founding ordinance.

Nakiyah Matthews is a West Side resident and one of four candidates for the two youth representatives on the Commission. As an Academic Advisor for Introspect Youth Services, she provides mentorship to many Chicago Public School students. She is an artist and an educator with leadership experience from Columbia College's Black Student Union. She is a member of the NAACP West Side Branch, where she serves on the Political Action, Housing, and Criminal Justice Committees.



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Art Mitchell is a North Side resident and the Deputy Director of Litigation and Policy for the National Democratic Redistricting Committee. He is a member of the Black Lawyers' Association. He has a background in community organizing and previously served as a policy and budget staffer for the Illinois State Senate. He played a key role in training and educating candidates for the inaugural class of elected District Council members.

Abierre Minor is a South Side resident and one of the four candidates for the two youth representatives on the Commission. In addition to working as the Chief Fiscal Officer of the Progressive Minds Show, Abierre is a Consultant for Our Hands Our Work, which supports youth in contact with the criminal justice system. She previously worked as Chief of Staff for State Senator Mattie Hunter.

Angel Rubi Navarajo is a North Side resident and one of the four candidates for the two youth representatives on the Commission. He currently works as Director of Constituent Services for Alderwoman Leni Manaa-Hoppenworth. He also serves on the Non-Citizen Advisory Council for the CCPSA, which provides input to the Commission from the perspectives of immigrants and non-citizen Chicagoans. He is a member of the Board of Directors for Serving People with a Mission, a youth-led organization focused on developing future servant leaders.

Kelly Pressley is a West Side resident and a long-time practicing attorney. She currently serves as the Associate General Counsel for Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago, the largest human service provider in the Chicago metropolitan region. She previously worked as an attorney for the Illinois Department of Corrections, the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, and the Office of the Public Guardian.

Deondre Rutues is a West Side resident and a Research Scholar and Community Engagement Specialist working for the Policing Project on the Neighborhood Policing Initiative in Chicago. He is also a Board member for the Bobby E. Wright Behavioral Health Center. He has a strong background in community organizing and volunteer service. In May 2023, he was elected to serve as a member of the 15th District Council.

Nyshana Sumner is a South Side resident and a long-time practicing attorney. She has worked in the Cook County State's Attorney's Office as an Assistant State's Attorney for 20 years, and currently serves in one of the State's Attorney's Community Justice Centers. She has direct experience working with the Chicago Police Department and the Civilian Office for Police Accountability (COPA). She has exercised strong community engagement through her role at the Mark United Methodist Church in Chatham.

Remel Terry is a West Side resident and community organizer. Since 2022, she has been a member of the interim Community Commission for Public Safety and Accountability and



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currently serves as Vice President. She is the Director of Programs at Equiticity, a racial equity movement that programs and advocates for racial equity, increased mobility, and racial justice. She is the First Vice President of Chicago's West Side NAACP, Vice Chair of the Make A Wish Targeted Community Engagement Council and served on an advisory council for COPA.

Sandra Wortham is a South Side resident and long-time practicing attorney with a focus on civil litigation. She also serves as an administrative law judge for the City of Chicago and as a hearing officer for the State of Illinois. She previously worked as a civilian for the Chicago Police Department, including as Deputy Director of Patrol. She is the President of the Nat King Cole Park Advisory Council and the Executive Board President of the Chicago Police Memorial Foundation.

La'Mont Williams is a South Side resident and the Chief of Staff for Cook County Commissioner Bill Lowry. His extensive legislative experience includes a focus on anti-violence efforts. He is on the Board of Directors for Minority Legal Resources, Inc, which provides mentorship for minority law students. He previously served as the Assistant Program Director of Just the Beginning – A Pipeline Organization, an organization dedicated to assisting students of color and those from underrepresented communities on the path to law school.

Hon. Edward Washington II is a South Side resident and a retired trial judge of the Circuit Court of Cook County. He previously served as the national chair of the U.S. Justice Department Violent Juvenile Offenders Program, which developed and implemented community-based initiatives focusing on the social and educational challenges of reducing juvenile crime. He also previously worked as the Chief of the Public Interest Division of the Office of the Illinois Attorney General. He currently works as a mediator in alternate dispute resolution.

The Nominating Committee will submit the names of the fifteen nominated candidates to Mayor Brandon Johnson for his consideration. By ordinance, the mayor has 30 days to review the candidates and select seven nominees provided by the Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee will continue to provide updates via the CCPSA website.

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