



The League of Women Voters - where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement

January 20, 2020

Oakland City Council
Council President Rebecca Kaplan
Vice Mayor Larry Reid
President Pro Tempore Dan Kalb
Council Member Nikki Fortunato Bas
Council Member Lynnette Gibson McElhaney
Council Member Sheng Thao
Council Member Noel Gallo
Council Member Loren Taylor
Oakland City Hall
1 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza
Oakland, CA 94612

Dear Oakland City Council Members:

As you know, beginning in 2020, a 15-member independent Redistricting Commission made up entirely of community members will re-establish boundaries for Oakland's City Council and School Board of Directors Districts. On behalf of the League of Women Voter of Oakland, we request that you actively support the solicitation of Commission applicants from your respective Districts. The application period is now open and extends until April 1, 2020.

The applicant pool must contain a minimum of 40 applicants, with at least three candidates from each existing City Council/School Board District. In August a Screening Panel will narrow the list to 30 applicants that it recommends serve on the Redistricting Commission. Their list must contain at least two candidates from each District. The 15-member Commission itself must contain at least one Commissioner from each of the seven current Districts.

The application process requires considerable effort and many people will not meet the strict application criteria. In addition to District representation, applicants should reflect the geographic, racial, ethnic and economic diversity of Oakland, and have the relevant analytical skills, ability to be impartial and apparent ability to work together well with other potential commissioners. There are specific [requirements](#) that can be expected further to limit the qualified pool. Applicants must:

- Have been an Oakland resident for at least the past three years.
- Not be registered to vote in a polling place outside of Oakland city limits.
- Not be a current City of Oakland or Oakland Unified School District employee, or sit on a current Board or Commission of either entity.
- Have not been, within the five years immediately preceding the date of application, a paid employee of any redistricting contractor or consultant.
- Not have a conflict of interest, as defined in the Political Reform Act, commencing at Section 81000 of the Government Code.
- Have not contributed 50% or more of the allowable amount to candidates for City of Oakland and Oakland Unified School District elective office in the election preceding the application date. In 2019, the 50%

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contribution amount that cannot be exceeded was \$400 for individuals.

In addition, all Commission members, their spouses, parents, children, or registered domestic partners, shall not, within 10 years immediately preceding the date of application, be:

- Elected to, or a candidate for office for the City of Oakland or the Oakland School Board;
- An employee, or paid consultant or contractor to a campaign for local office;
- Registered or required to be registered as a local lobbyist;
- A paid employee of, a consultant to, or under contract with any elected City of Oakland Official or Oakland Unified School Board Member;
- A principal officer of an active campaign committee domiciled in Alameda County that has made an expenditure on local Oakland candidate elections.

We are concerned that without the energetic support of influential community leaders, including elected officials, it will be challenging to attract a qualified pool of applicants. For example, more than 20,000 Californians initially applied to be part of the 2020 California Redistricting Commission. The next step required applicants to answer supplemental questions, prepare several essay questions and obtain three letters of recommendation. Even after a deadline extension, only about [2,000 applicants](#), less than 10 percent, completed the process.

Thank you for reaching out to community based organizations and others to make sure Oakland residents get the impartial, well qualified Redistricting Commission they expect and deserve. The League will be doing its part and welcomes your engagement.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Deborah Shefler".

Deborah Shefler
President, League of Women Voters of Oakland

CC: Mayor Libby Schaaf