

City of Oakland
Public Ethics Commission



ANNUAL REPORT
2021

Public Ethics Commission
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Item 6 - PEC Annual Report 2021

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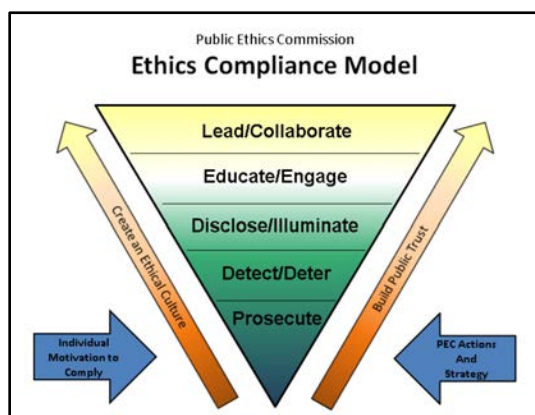
EVOLVING TO ADDRESS SYSTEMIC ISSUES, BUILD ETHICAL CULTURE

In 2021, the Public Ethics Commission (PEC or Commission) demonstrated an expanded capacity to hold Oakland government accountable at multiple levels utilizing a diverse array of tools to accomplish its mission: fairness, openness, honesty, and integrity in City government. This year, the Commission issued record fines for ethics violations by individuals; devised new training programs to address department-specific gaps; collaborated with department leaders to tackle systemic issues exposed by PEC investigations; and conducted a Citywide review of public records system performance resulting in a formal report as well as the development of an ongoing performance monitoring tool to highlight where the need for improvement is most urgent.



2021 HIGHLIGHTS

- **Enforcement Program Issues Record Penalties** – The Commission imposed its two largest ever fines for ethics violations that included serious bribery and conflicts of interest charges: a \$55,000 fine In the Matter of Anthony Harbaugh, and a \$309,600 fine In the Matter of Thomas Espinosa.
- **Accountability for Oakland’s Public Records Performance** – The Commission released the report *Spotlight on Oakland’s Public Records System*, a summary of data from Oakland’s public record request system as well as user input collected via surveys with next steps for the Commission to continue to work to improve department performance in this area.
- **Major Release of Ethics-related Data** – The Commission implemented its largest release of new ethics-related data since 2013 with the publication of eight new datasets and ten interactive data visualizations on OakData, the City’s open data portal.
- **Diversion Training Program Implemented** – The Commission deployed its newly created Diversion program for the first time in two ethics cases where diversion training was the best option for fair and effective enforcement of local ethics rules.
- **Sunshine Training Launched** – Staff launched a new online Sunshine Training covering open meeting rules directed at promoting awareness among Board and Commission members and staff.



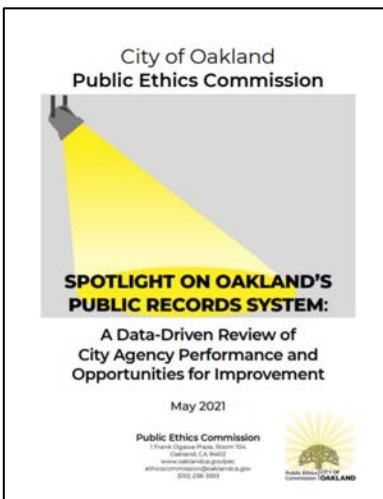
Utilizing its comprehensive approach that aligns education, engagement, disclosure, and enforcement activities to ensure compliance with the City of Oakland’s government ethics, campaign finance, transparency, and lobbyist registration laws, the Commission continued to break new ground in 2021, expanding the reach of its programs, deepening its interventions, and increasing the impact of its enforcement program. This report summarizes the Commission’s accomplishments and activities in 2021.

LEAD AND COLLABORATE

The Commission leads by example and employs collaborative approaches to facilitate changes in City laws, policies, systems, and technology to ensure fairness, openness, integrity, and innovation.

REVIEWING PUBLIC RECORDS PERFORMANCE

In May 2021, the Commission completed the first phase of its project to review Citywide performance in responding to public records requests via the City's online NextRequest system. The PEC's Sunshine Review subcommittee presented a summary of data extracted from the NextRequest online public portal for public records requests and the subcommittee's initial analysis of the information. The Commission adopted the subcommittee's recommendations as outlined in ***Spotlight on Oakland's Public Records System***, which includes next steps to improve public records request



performance and create an online tool to track ongoing progress across City departments.

In November 2021, after noting that six of the PEC's nine mediations completed as of October 2021 were regarding public records requests made to the Department of Planning and Building,

the PEC invited the director to provide an update regarding his department's system of responding to public records requests. The director and his team reported on significant changes that had been made to improve their performance and addressed specific concerns that were brought to their attention during the PEC's mediation of certain public records requests. PEC staff also reviewed NextRequest data for the department and found significant improvements in average response time and closures within the ten-day time period in 2021 compared to the prior three years, despite record requests almost tripling in total number over that four-year time period.

PEC MISSION AND ACTIVITIES

The Public Ethics Commission was created in 1996 to ensure fairness, openness, honesty and integrity in City government. The PEC's work is governed by local ordinances in three main areas: campaign finance, transparency, and ethics. The Commission's authority and ability to do its work is guided by the provisions outlined in the City Charter, as amended in 2014, as well as in each relevant ordinance, listed as follows:

- Government Ethics Act
- Conflict of Interest Code
- Oakland Campaign Reform Act
- Lobbyist Registration Act
- Sunshine Ordinance
- Limited Public Financing Act
- False Endorsement in Campaign Literature Act

The Commission's activities, and the six-person staffing structure are organized by the following ethics compliance framework to ensure a strong, effective, and fair ethics commission:

Lead/Collaborate – Lead by example and facilitate City policy, management, and technological changes to further the Commission's mission.

Educate/Engage – Provide education, advice, technical assistance, and formal legal opinions to promote awareness and understanding of the City's campaign finance, ethics, and transparency laws.

Disclose/Illuminate – Facilitate accurate, effective, and accessible disclosure of government integrity data, such as campaign finance reporting, conflicts of interest/gifts reports, and lobbyist activities, all of which help the public and PEC staff monitor filings, view information, and detect inconsistencies or noncompliance.

Detect/Deter – Conduct investigations and audits to monitor compliance with the laws within the Commission's jurisdiction.

Prosecute – Enforce violations of the laws within the Commission's jurisdiction through administrative or civil remedies.

DEVELOPING PERFORMANCE MONITORING TOOLS

During the second half of 2021, Commission staff began implementing the recommendations of the Commission's **Spotlight on Oakland's Public Records System** report to provide an ongoing monitoring tool for public records request performance by putting into operation the technical requirements to sync real-time data from the NextRequest database to a performance webpage. Staff developed a process to clean and prepare the raw data and calculate department statistics and initial performance metrics to measure compliance with the requirements of the California Public Records Act and Oakland Sunshine Ordinance for timeliness, transparency, quality of service, and best practices.

FACILITATING PROCESS IMPROVEMENTS

In response to systemic issues exposed in the process of investigating recent enforcement cases, Commission staff engaged in consultations with the Human Services Department and the Planning and Building Department to assist with the development and refining of disclosure tools intended to help employees understand and disclose potential conflicts that may arise in grant, contract, and other application processes where employees are participating in the proposal evaluation process.

EDUCATE AND ENGAGE

Prevention activities consist of education, outreach, and online information to facilitate compliance with government integrity laws. The Commission educates and advises candidates for local elective office, elected officials, appointed officials, City staff, lobbyists, people doing business with Oakland, City residents, businesses, and organizations.

ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE

In 2021, Commission staff responded to 260 requests for information, advice or assistance regarding campaign finance, ethics, lobbyist registration or public records issues, fielding an average 22 requests per month. Over half of requests for advice and assistance came from lobbyists, treasurers, candidates, and law firms seeking to comply with lobbying and campaign finance disclosure laws. Other questions came from City staff and officials, as well as members of the public regarding misuse of public resources, gift restrictions, and conflicts of interests rules, to name a few.

ETHICS TRAINING

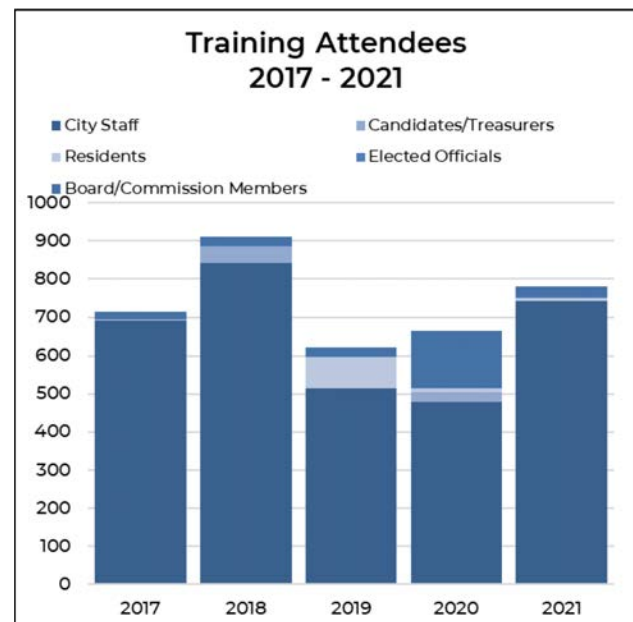
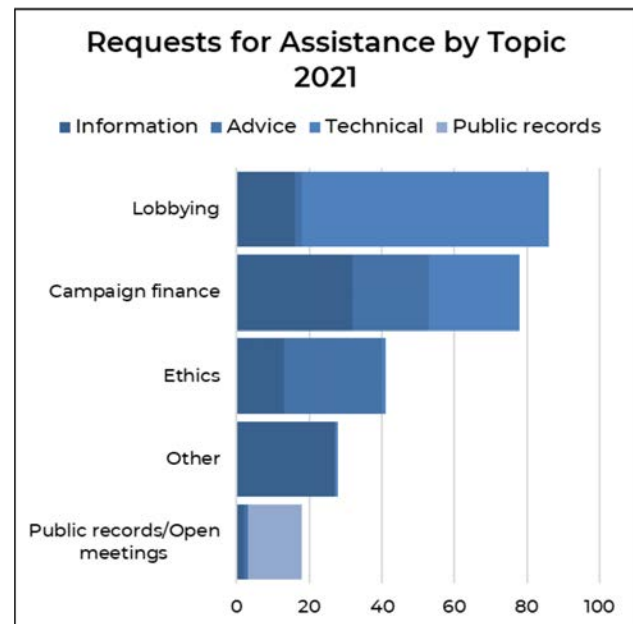
Commission staff provided ethics training through various avenues reaching 781 participants, a three-year high, including the following target audiences:

- Elected officials (2) and their staff participated in ethics check-ins with PEC staff;
- New employees (290) attending the City’s monthly orientation sessions received an introductory ethics presentation, and additionally, staff conducted a live ethics training at the Oakland Parks, Recreation, and Youth Development Department’s Summer Orientation reaching over 65 new employees;
- One hundred and twenty-nine City employees completed the PEC’s comprehensive Government Ethics

260 requests for information, advice or technical assistance

781 training participants

16 public records request mediations completed



Training for Form 700 Filers, 59 through the City’s online learning management system and another 70 attended four live trainings conducted by PEC staff via the Zoom platform; and

- City staff supervisors (100 in total) received a higher-level ethics training at the City’s Supervisor Academy;
- Board and Commission members and staff received introductory ethics trainings, for a total of three Commissions and 150 board members and staff;
- The Commission’s YouTube channel reached 945 viewers in 2021: 807 viewers watched the PEC’s ten-minute ethics introductory video; another 54 viewers watched the one-hour Ethics Training for Form 700 Filers video; and 84 viewers watched ethics training segments on specific topics such as gift rules, conflicts of interests, misuse of City resources, and post-employment restrictions.

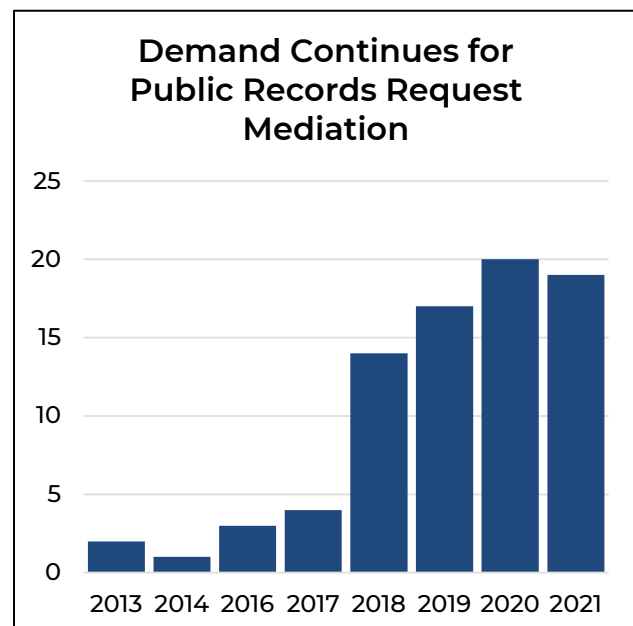
NEW DIVERSION AND SUNSHINE TRAINING PROGRAMS DEPLOYED

In July, Staff conducted the first training for the Commission’s new enforcement diversion program. Two diversion participants successfully completed the required trainings including the Government Ethics Training for Form 700 Filers, a Conflicts of Interests training, and a one-on-one session with staff.

Staff launched a new online Sunshine Training covering open meeting rules. Twenty-eight board and commission members completed the training in 2021. Commission staff also expanded access to online training by offering on-demand training videos covering campaign finance basics and ethics, in addition to the new open meeting requirements training. On-demand training options are now featured prominently on the Commission’s home page.

MEDIATION PROGRAM

Pursuant to the Oakland Sunshine Ordinance, the Commission conducts mediation of public records requests made by members of the public to City departments for records within the department’s control. In March 2021, the Mediation Program was moved from the Enforcement team to the Education and Engagement team to address the increase in workload from both mediations and enforcement cases, facilitate staff ability to enhance education and engagement through the mediation process itself, and integrate this work with the PEC’s broader Sunshine Review project to assess department performance Citywide as discussed above.



The Commission received 19 new requests for mediation in 2021, continuing the high demand for mediations since 2018. Sixteen mediations were completed in 2021.

DISCLOSE AND ILLUMINATE

The Commission's Disclosure Program aims to help candidates, lobbyists and City officials submit required disclosure reports and ensure Oaklanders can easily access campaign finance, lobbyist, and ethics-related data and information that is accurate, user-friendly, and understandable. The goal is for the public and the PEC to be able to monitor filings, view information, and detect inconsistencies or noncompliance. This program utilizes a collaborative transparency approach, which reaches beyond the traditional minimum of providing copies of filings; the Commission proactively shares data in user-centered formats, invites participation and feedback, and facilitates shared discussion around community needs.



500+ campaign and lobbyist disclosure reports reviewed



8 datasets and 10 visualizations published



12,000+ views of ethics data and visualizations

DIGITAL TOOLS AND OPEN DATA EXPANDED

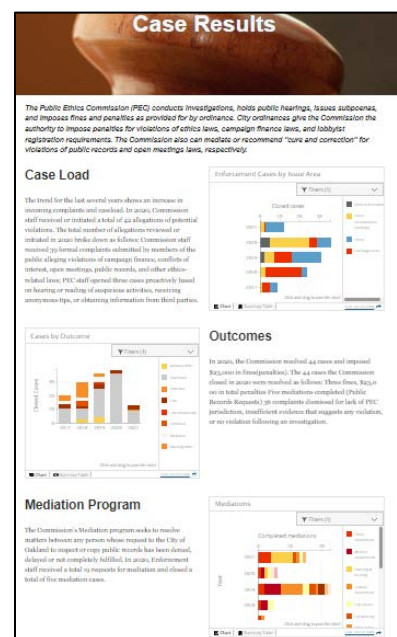
The Commission collects, reviews, and provides public access to ethics-related data. As part of this responsibility, Commission staff works to put the information into formats that can be searched and displayed in easy-to-use data visualizations made available for public viewing.

New features added to the Commission's Lobbyist Dashboard and Data Portal in 2021 enabled users to sort and filter the Lobbyist Directory as well as search lobbyist activity reports based on the client name.

Commission staff implemented its largest release of new data since 2013 with the publication of eight new ethics-related datasets and ten interactive data visualizations on OakData, the City's open data portal, including:

- Three datasets containing lobbyist disclosure data including client information, client payments, contacts with Oakland officials, and campaign contributions solicited by lobbyists.
- Two datasets containing data from Oakland's NextRequest public records request system, with information such as the department assignments, request status, and closure date.
- A dataset with information from disclosure reports submitted when an Oakland elected official solicits a payment over \$5,000 from a third party for a legislative, governmental, or charitable purpose.
- Two datasets summarizing PEC enforcement and mediation cases.

The new datasets garnered over 800 visits and 29 downloads in 2021. The Commission's open datasets have received 32,134 visits and 11,754 downloads to date.



ONLINE ENGAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS ENFORCEMENT DATA

Commission staff added three new pages of interactive charts and tables displaying PEC enforcement and mediation outcomes to the Commission website in September. The interactive tables allow website users to search, sort and download summaries of closed enforcement cases and completed mediations. In addition, staff published a Case Results webpage to provide an up-to-date and easy to access overview of enforcement activities.

Commission staff continued highlighting specific PEC policy areas, activities, and client-groups via social media, gaining 205 new followers for a total of 1,667 at the end of 2021. Social media posts generated more than 800 user engagements (likes, shares, retweets, clicks on links, and new followers).

DISCLOSURE COMPLIANCE AND DATA

As Filing Officer, the Commission collects, reviews, and provides public access to ethics-related data.

Campaign Finance data includes candidate and ballot-measure campaign committee information, including contributions to and expenditures made by the committee during the election cycle. Oakland had 77 active political committees as of December 2021. In a non-election year, all active campaign committees must file two semi-annual campaign statements. In all, staff processed and reviewed over 300 campaign-related filings during 2021.

Political Contributions Solicited by City Officials (OCRA Form 303) – Effective July 1, 2019, any Oakland public servant required to file a Statement of Economic Interests (Form 700) who successfully solicits a political contribution of \$5,000 or more from any person or entity that contracts or proposes to contract with the official's department must disclose the solicitation to the Public Ethics Commission within 30 days. No solicited contributions were reported in 2021.

Lobbying activity reports identify who is lobbying City officials and for what purpose. In 2021, 83 lobbyists registered with the City of Oakland representing over 100 clients. Oakland lobbyists reported \$1,131,998* in payments from clients and a total of 900 contacts with City officials during the first three quarters of 2021. PEC staff provides outreach and assistance to lobbyists to ensure compliance with registration and reporting requirements. Staff processed 205 quarterly lobbyist activity reports in 2021.

Behested Payments reports (Form 803) show who is donating to a nonprofit organization at the request or solicitation of an elected official. Elected officials who solicit such payments are required to file a Form 803 to report these payments if they amount to \$5,000 or more. In 2021, the Commission received 33 filings reporting \$4,859,000 in total contributions at the behest of Oakland officials.

Statements of Economic Interests (Form 700) are filed with the City Clerk's office but are of high interest to the PEC in ensuring compliance with ethics laws that require reporting of personal financial information by City officials. Commission staff checks for elected official compliance with filing deadlines and provides education and advice regarding Form 700 filing.

*This figure includes voluntary disclosure of client payments to lobbyists. Total actual payments to lobbyists may be greater.

ENFORCEMENT

The Commission conducts investigations, holds public hearings, issues subpoenas, and imposes fines and penalties as provided for by ordinance. City ordinances give the Commission the authority to impose penalties for violations of ethics laws, campaign finance laws, and lobbyist registration requirements. The Commission also can mediate or recommend “cure and correction” for violations of public records and open meetings laws, respectively.



47 active investigations



14 cases resolved



\$365,600 in monetary penalties imposed

INCOMING CASES

Commission staff received a total of nine allegations of potential violations of campaign finance, conflicts of interest, open meetings, public records, and other ethics-related laws in 2021, ending the year with 44 open investigations.

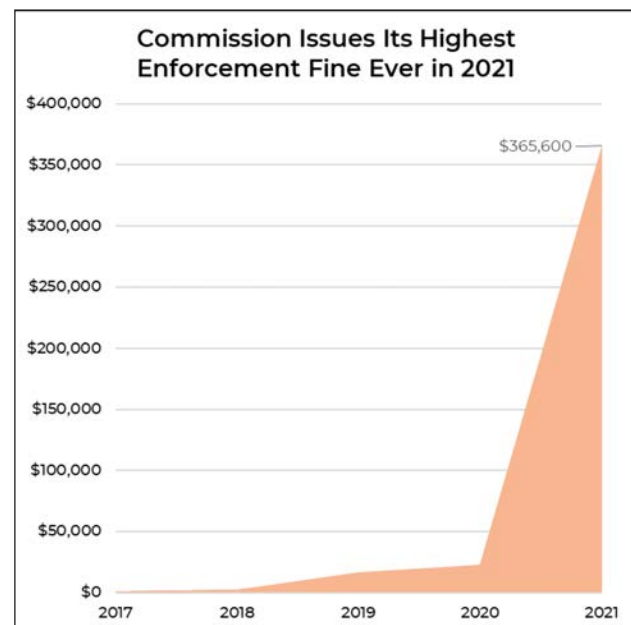
ENFORCEMENT OUTCOMES

By year end, the Commission resolved 14 cases as follows:

- Three fines, \$365,600 in total penalties;
- Two diversion agreements;
- Nine complaints dismissed (6 for lack of jurisdiction, 1 referred to another agency, 2 withdrawn by complainants).

Most notably in 2021, the Commission imposed its two largest ever fines for ethics cases involving significant bribery and conflicts of interest charges: a \$55,000 fine in the matter of Anthony Harbaugh, and a \$309,600 fine in the matter of Thomas Espinosa. The large monetary penalties assessed by the Commission reflect the number and seriousness of violations and the amount of money involved in the unlawful activity. Both cases required substantial staff resources due to both the complexity and volume of evidence as well as the lack of cooperation by respondents in each case – from evidence gathering to an administrative hearing.

In addition, the Commission employed its newly created Diversion program for the first time to resolve two ethics cases in which diversion was the best option for fair and effective enforcement of local ethics rules. These important actions highlight the PEC Enforcement Unit’s ability to employ effective tools to address ethics matters of any level of complexity in a manner that is commensurate to the seriousness of each violation.



2021 ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS SUMMARY

In the Matter of Thomas Espinosa (Case No. 16-14) After opening a proactive investigation in 2016, Commission staff found that between January 1, 2015, and September 15, 2016, Espinosa committed 47 violations of the Oakland Government Ethics Act, including: soliciting and receiving bribes; making, and seeking to use his official position to influence, governmental decisions in which he had a disqualifying financial interest; misusing City resources for personal financial gain; misusing his City position to induce/coerce others to provide him with economic gain; and failing to report significant income from individuals with matters before him as a City building inspector. The Commission found probable cause that Espinosa violated the Government Ethics Act and set the matter to an administrative hearing, which was held in April 2021. Following the hearing, the Commission imposed a fine of \$308,600 at its September 2021 special meeting.

In the Matter of Anthony Harbaugh (Case No. 18-11). In November 2020, PEC staff brought to an administrative hearing evidence of a bribery and misuse of position scheme that involved Harbaugh, a City building inspector. Between January 2015 and December 2016, Harbaugh committed, participated in, or aided and abetted a fellow building inspector in committing multiple violations of the Oakland Government Ethics Act, including soliciting and receiving bribes; making, and seeking to use his official position to influence, governmental decisions in which he had a disqualifying financial interest; misusing City resources for personal financial gain; and misusing his City position to induce/coerce others to provide him with and failing to report significant income from individuals with matters before him as a City building inspector. Following the administrative hearing held in November 2020, the Commission imposed a fine of \$55,000 at its January 2021 meeting.

In the Matter of Annie Campbell Washington for Oakland City Council 2018 (Case No. 19-06). In 2019, the Commission's filing officer for campaign statements referred former City Council member Annie Campbell Washington and her Annie Campbell Washington for Oakland City Council 2018 committee to the PEC Enforcement Unit for failing to file campaign statements for the period of July 1, 2018 through December 31, 2018. Enforcement staff found that Campbell Washington and her campaign committee, despite multiple warnings, did not electronically submit the required campaign information pursuant to section 3.12.340 (A) of the Oakland Campaign Reform Act for multiple periods between July 1, 2018, and December 31, 2020. The Commission adopted staff's recommendation to approve a stipulation imposing an enforcement penalty of \$1,000, in addition to \$1,171 in late fees assessed by the filing officer, at its December 2021 meeting.

In the Matter of Everett Cleveland Jr. (Case No. 20-03 (a)). In January 2020, PEC staff received information alleging that Cleveland may have violated the Government Ethics Act while participating in deciding the award of funds by the City of Oakland Housing Community Development agency to a nonprofit housing developer under the 2019 Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) program. Staff determined Cleveland had taken part in the decision-making process, and in April 2021 the Commission approved staff's recommendation of a Diversion Agreement to resolve the violation.

In the Matter of Norma Thompson (Case No. 20-03(b)). PEC staff received information alleging that Norma Thompson, a City of Oakland Housing Community Development (CHDC) staff member, was working as a paid consultant for the Community Housing Development Corporation at the time that she took part in the decision-making process regarding CHDC's 2019 Notice of Funding Availability applications. An investigation determined that Thompson failed to file a Form 700 when she rejoined the City in 2019, that she failed to file a Form 700 upon leaving office, and that she violated the City of Oakland revolving-door provisions of the Government Ethics Act through her consulting work with CHDC, and in April 2021 the Commission approved staff's recommendation of a Diversion Agreement to resolve the violation.

ADMINISTRATION

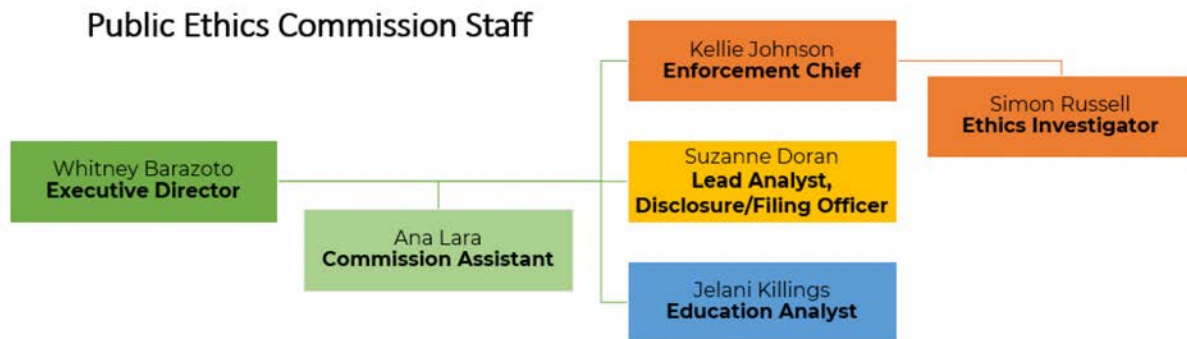
STAFFING

Commission staff are responsible for the Commission’s day-to-day operations, including investigations and enforcement casework, education and advice, data collection and illumination activities, and law and policy projects. Throughout 2021, Commission staff worked remotely and adapted program activities to provide services without in-person contact. Staff continue to participate in ongoing professional development, covering topics such as reducing bias, inclusive engagement, continuing education in legal subjects, filing officer duties, and advanced data analysis and visualization.

7 volunteer Commissioners

6 fulltime staff

\$1,411,407 2021-2022 budget



BUDGET

The adopted budget for the Commission was \$1,206,539 for Fiscal Year 2020-21 and \$1,411,407 for Fiscal Year 2021-22. In June 2021, the City Council approved a budget that includes the addition of one new position for the PEC to begin in July 2022. The new position will provide administrative support to the Enforcement Team, including complaint intake, communications, complaint database management, case tracking, agenda and hearing preparation for enforcement cases, and other related tasks.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

The Commission’s public meetings in 2021 continued to be held online and accessible to the public via the Zoom platform. On September 16, 2021, the Governor signed AB 361 which amended provisions of the Brown Act to allow local legislative bodies to continue to meet by teleconference so long as the body adopts certain findings in compliance with the new law. Since then and ongoing, the Commission must adopt a resolution with findings that a public health emergency still exists, warranting the PEC to meet via teleconference.

2021 COMMISSIONERS

Michael B. MacDonald, Chair **Commission Appointee 1/22/2020 - 1/21/2023**

Michael MacDonald is an Assistant City Clerk for the City of Berkeley. In that role, he supervises a variety of functions within the department with a focus on municipal elections, campaign filings, conflict of interests requirements, and regulations for City advisory commissions.



Prior to serving in municipal government, Michael spent three years as a District Representative under two California State Senators serving as lead representative for K-12 education, transportation, housing, and homelessness issue areas by working closely with the Senator, constituents, district organizations, local governments, and state agencies. Before moving to Oakland in 2018, Michael co-founded the Diversity Collective Ventura County Community Resource Center, a non-profit LGBTQ community center that strives to build a community in which LGBTQ people can be healthy, equal, and complete members of the community.

Michael is a CSU graduate with a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science. He lives in downtown Oakland with his partner.

Jerett Yan, Vice-chair **City Auditor Appointee 1/22/2019 - 1/21/2022**

Jerett Yan is an attorney with Hanson Bridgett LLP in San Francisco where he provides litigation and advisory services to public entities. In that capacity, he currently serves as a deputy city attorney to the City of Millbrae and an investigator for the San Jose Board of Fair Campaign and Political Practices, where he advises on matter relating to public ethics, transparency, elections, and campaign practices. He also has particular expertise in public works contracting, public ethics, and civil rights compliance.



Jerett previously served as an attorney adviser to the US Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Civil Rights, where he investigated claims of discrimination in environmental permitting practices, a law clerk with the Superior Court of California, County of Los Angeles, and at Americorp VISTA in Chicago as a tenant organizer with the Metropolitan Tenants Organization.

Jerett holds degrees from UC Berkeley School of Law and Northwestern University.

Avi Klein **Commission Appointee 11/19/2020 - 1/21/2022**

Avi Klein is a licensed private investigator based in Oakland, California. He previously served as managing investigator at The Mintz Group, one of the world's premier international investigations and due diligence firms; and managed private equity-related research for a winning presidential campaign. Earlier in his career, he was an investigative journalist in Washington, DC, where he focused on the finance, defense, and national security industries.

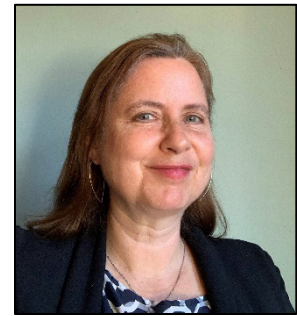


Avi has a BA from UC Davis and a law degree from the University of Southern California.

Jessica Leavitt

City Attorney Appointee 9/15/2021 - 1/21/2024

Jessica Leavitt is Senior Corporate Counsel with NetScout Systems, Inc., where she focuses on compliance issues. She previously worked at the City of Oakland as both a Deputy City Attorney and as an investigator for the Citizens' Police Review Board. She also worked as a Special Assistant to the Chief Trial Counsel of the State Bar of California and served on a number of local and state boards.



Jessica is a native Oaklander and holds a BA from Claremont McKenna College, a JD from UC Hastings, and a Master's degree in Information Science from the University of Michigan.

Ryan Micik

Commission Appointee 6/11/2021 - 1/21/2023

Ryan Micik operates a political research and communications consulting practice. His clients have included government reform advocacy organizations and other nonprofits, private companies, and candidates for all levels of government office, from school board to president. Among other services, he assists clients with mastering complex issues; navigating local, state and federal public records laws; and developing messaging and strategy.



He formerly served as deputy director of Maryland StateStat, a government performance management and accountability initiative. In that role, he engaged with state agencies to improve service delivery, increase government efficiency and responsiveness, and reduce waste.

Ryan earned a BA in Political Science from UC Berkeley, where he was active in progressive and AAPI organizations and won awards for radio journalism. He is a former member of the Alameda County Democratic Central Committee. He resides in Grand Lake.

Arvon J. Perteet

Commission Appointee 1/22/2021 - 1/21/2024

Arvon J. Perteet is the Global Legal Response and Fraud Investigations Manager at Square, Inc. Arvon's teams are responsible for conducting investigations related to external fraud against Square and Square's merchants and responding to legal requests, both civil and criminal in nature. Prior to working at Square, Arvon was an Assistant District Attorney in the Independent Investigations Bureau at the San Francisco District Attorney's Office investigating and prosecuting cases involving officer involved shootings, use of excessive force, and in-custody deaths. Arvon was an Assistant United States Attorney in the Northern District of California in the Asset Forfeiture Unit for eight years, and he was a Deputy District Attorney in the Contra Costa County District Attorney's office for two years. His legal career also included time at a small insurance defense firm in the Bay Area. Arvon is a graduate of



Golden Gate University School of Law, and a graduate of Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia. Arvon is an Oakland native.

Joseph Tuman

Mayoral Appointee 1/22/2020 – 1/21/2023

Joseph Tuman is a full-time university professor at San Francisco State University in First Amendment law, public speaking, critical thinking and argumentation, and debate. He has also taught at St. Mary's College, the New School for Social Research in New York, and Paris II Law School in France.



Joseph received his BA in Political Science from UC Berkeley with Great Distinction and Highest Honors and his JD from Boalt Law. His law work included comprehensive evidence review and sorting of internal documents produced by tobacco companies related to advertising and marketing campaigns targeting children for class-action lawsuits filed by different states. His law work also included being the primary drafter of a successful Amicus Curiae brief to US Supreme Court in *Reno v. ACLU* in 1997. He currently serves as an academic advisor to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) regarding terrorist use of social media, symbolism and counter-messaging as counter-terrorism. He has also served as a political analyst for major television networks and newspapers, and is an author and senior editor of numerous books and academic journals, including "Political Communication in American Campaigns" (2004) and "Communicating Terror: The Rhetorical Dimensions of Terrorism" (2003 and 2011).

Joseph was born in Dallas, Texas, and raised in the San Joaquin Valley. He has lived in Oakland since 1984 and ran twice for Mayor of Oakland.

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