

Form Name: Boards and Commissions Application
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By: MH

Applicant Information

Name Elaina N Babayan

Are you a Sunnyvale resident? Yes

How long have you lived in Sunnyvale? 9 years

Description Area Residence Notice:Unless otherwise noted, your principal place of residence must be in Sunnyvale. You must live in Sunnyvale at the time of appointment and at all times during service on a board or commission.

Current Main Residence

[REDACTED]

Email

[REDACTED]

Phone

[REDACTED]

Description Area Employment NoticeCity of Sunnyvale employees may not serve on a board or commission.

I am a current City of Sunnyvale employee. No

Have you ever served on a City of Sunnyvale board or commission? No

Have you attended a meeting of the City Council, or a board or commission? Yes

Briefly describe what you learned by watching or attending a meeting of the City Council, board or commission. What improvements would you suggest? I attended the Housing and Human Services Commission (HHSC) meeting in person on 2/25/26. I really appreciated the discussion of the first amendment to the 2025/2026 HUD action plan. It helped me to calibrate to the appropriate level of scrutiny for budget and performance assessments.

I do not have suggestions for improvements. I found the meeting to be well-organized and generally efficient.

Have you attended meetings of the board(s) or commission(s) for which you are applying? Yes

How many meetings have you attended?

I have attended one meeting, but I have reviewed annual plans as well as funding recommendations from previous years to ensure I understand the role.

Board or Commission Selection

First Choice

Housing and Human Services Commission

Applicant Qualifications

What motivated you to apply for this board or commission?

Sunnyvale is home.

When I moved to Sunnyvale for work 9 years ago I didn't expect to stay. Now, with two young children and a sense of community I hadn't felt since college, I can't imagine leaving. This drives me to get involved.

I am applying for the Housing and Human Services Commission (HHSC) because I believe the entire community benefits from stable, affordable housing and services to support our most vulnerable. As a member of the HHSC I can advocate for funding and advise on policy in support of this goal.

What skills or attributes can you bring to this board or commission?

I have worked as an engineer solving problems in the Semiconductor industry for more than 16 years. For the last 8 years I have been in management roles. As a manager, my job is to balance cost, risk, and schedule.

I am a logical and data-driven decision maker. I have experience solving complex, multi-variable problems and allocating large budgets. Resources are always finite, and I am able to methodically compare alternatives, discuss the options with an open mind, and collaboratively identify the best use of funds based on the mission of the team.

I believe this is the same skillset needed to evaluate plans and funding requests as a member of the HHSC.

The primary role of a board or commission member is to provide advice to City Council on policy issues that are within the scope of the board or commission. What steps would you take to effectively exercise this specific board or commission role?

I will prepare for the monthly HHSC meetings by reviewing the meeting agenda, staff reports, program proposals, and relevant federal and local funding requirements. As part of my preparation, I will evaluate programs based on return-on-investment (impact vs. funding amount), alignment with HHSC mission, implementation plan, and previous performance. I will bring questions to the commission meetings and listen to questions and responses from city staff, nonprofit partners, community members, and fellow commissioners to ensure I have considered a range of perspectives so I can provide informed and balanced recommendations.

Education - List college degrees, majors and any relevant training or experience that demonstrates your ability to effectively serve on this board or commission.

I have a Bachelors Degree from Cornell University with dual majors in Mechanical and Biological Engineering, and I have a Masters Degree in Mechanical Engineering from Georgia Institute of Technology.

I have worked in Semiconductor Equipment Manufacturing since 2010, first as a design engineer and then as a team leader and people manager. I now manage a team of Mechatronics Engineers at KLA working to design next-generation photomask inspection systems, some of the most complicated tools in the industry. In this role I manage a large budget, make priority and risk decisions, and hold team members accountable for on-time delivery.

My education and engineering experience has left me with a passion for problem-solving and a desire for lifelong learning, which will be useful as I continue to expand my understanding of housing policy and funding requirements. My management experience is directly applicable to evaluating funding requests and monitoring program outcomes as part of the HHSC.

Describe your involvement in community activities, volunteer and civic organizations.

After the birth of my first child, I joined the non-profit group Las Madres. This group works across the Bay Area to provide support for parents along with educational and social opportunities for children ages 0-5. Structurally, the group is split into seven clubs based on geographic region. Since November of 2024 I have served as President of the Sunnyvale-Santa Clara Club and a member of the Executive Board. In this role I participate in monthly executive board meetings, manage an annual budget, plan events for over 200 parents and families, and coordinate community service activities. Last year I drove a donation drive for KAFPA (Kinship, Adoptive, and Foster Parent Association) and a school supply drive for Family Giving Tree.

Description Area

The City has a Code of Ethics and Conduct for Elected and Appointed Officials and an Attendance Policy (7.2.19), 2 G (II) that appointed members are required to follow.

Do you have any concerns related to the above code and policy? No

Are you willing to accept a temporary appointment for the remainder of an unexpired term? Yes

Board or Commission-Specific Questions

Housing and Human Services Commission

Evaluate the quality and adequacy of the housing programs that serve the Sunnyvale community.

I will address this question in two parts, separating classes of programs which aim to provide affordable housing from those focused on housing stability and reducing homelessness. While both are needed for a complete landscape of housing programs serving the Sunnyvale community, the latter is more directly influenced by the HHSC.

The first class of programs are those which provide affordable housing for low to moderate income residents. This includes below-market-rate (BMR) rental housing, BMR home ownership, and section 8/housing choice vouchers. Qualification for these programs is based on income as compared with the median income locally. A portion of both affordable rental units and BMR ownership homes are produced through Sunnyvale's 15% inclusionary housing requirement on new residential development, while larger affordable developments typically rely on additional public subsidies. Housing Choice Vouchers are federally funded through HUD and administered locally through the Santa Clara County Housing Authority and local jurisdictions. All of these programs serve only a small fraction of the total households that qualify, so families can spend years waiting for availability. While programs like these are essential for addressing affordable housing today, they have limited ability to stabilize housing prices long term—there is some long-term impact through zoning (low-income units are preserved for 55 years), but ultimately I believe housing affordability must be addressed by increasing supply. A plan to increase supply is outlined in the Housing Element. Sunnyvale must execute on this plan over the next 5 years. This is mostly outside the direct influence of the HHSC, although there may be opportunities to provide soft influence by attending Planning Commission and City Council meetings.

The next class of programs are aimed at providing housing stability (preventing homelessness) and reducing homelessness. These programs leverage federal funding through HUD, Santa Clara County funding, and limited Sunnyvale city grants. Providing recommendations for funding allocations to these types of programs is the core of the HHSC scope in the housing domain.

Prevention includes programs for emergency rental and utility assistance, fair housing enforcement (Project Sentinel), and providing support for tenant legal services. Support for unhoused residents is available in the form of rapid rehousing, shelter programs, homeless outreach and case management, and permanent supportive housing.

In general, prevention programs tend to be more cost effective (which means the same budget can serve more households), and

they also contain the scale required for future support programs. For these reasons I am generally aligned with an increased policy emphasis on prevention programs. However, prevention programs alone are not sufficient to reduce homelessness. As an engineer, the idea of assessing program impacts on homelessness as a flow system really resonates with me. In order to reduce homelessness, inflow (those entering or re-entering homelessness) must be less than outflow (those who have transitioned to housing). Prevention programs decrease inflow. Support programs increase outflow. When outflow is greater than inflow, homelessness decreases.

Are the current programs adequate? The Sunnyvale homeless population (as estimated by PIT counts) has increased slightly from 2019 to 2023 despite increased prevention spending. However, a global pandemic and a rapid rise in housing costs also occurred during this period. I believe the programs are reasonable given the available budget, and the most powerful long-term lever for decreasing inflow is to curb rising housing costs. Increase housing supply to fundamentally address affordability, and then continue to optimize program funding allocations based on impact.

Evaluate the quality and availability of the human services programs that serve the Sunnyvale community.

Human services funding available through the city of Sunnyvale is limited. This means city-funded programs should focus on critical gaps in the ecosystem provided by federal, state, and county programs. I will start with an overview of the higher-level ecosystem, then I will assess the gaps and how well they are filled by funding allocated by the city.

Human services programs address basic needs for low-income residents and vulnerable populations. These programs also support housing stability by helping residents maintain employment, reducing the risk of housing insecurity. Programs primarily targeting low-income residents which receive federal and state funding include: CalFresh (food), Medi-Cal (medical costs including behavioral health services), CalWORKS (financial assistance and work opportunities for parents with children), Santa Clara County Department of Aging and Adult Services (senior services including in-home support services, nutrition programs, and case management), Work2Future (career counseling, job training, and support for residents facing employment barriers), and Supplemental Security Income (cash assistance for low-income seniors and individuals who are blind or disabled). One structural challenge with federal assistance programs is that many tie eligibility thresholds to the Federal Poverty Level, which is low relative to the cost of living in Sunnyvale. As a result, some residents may not qualify for these programs even though they still face affordability challenges. Sunnyvale addresses this gap in a limited capacity by using local tax revenue alongside federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding to support nonprofit service programs.

Over the past 5 years, Sunnyvale has consistently allocated funding to nonprofits providing food, counseling, domestic violence support, and senior legal assistance. These effectively supplement the programs outlined above. A few specific examples are included for illustration. Sunnyvale Community Services has used funds to help residents register with CalFresh and provide bagged meals during the waiting period between application and when benefits are available. The Bill Wilson Center provides counseling and crisis support services for youth and families, complementing services covered through Medi-Cal.

The total funding is limited, but this portfolio balances prevention and stabilization with programs to address immediate needs. It is also well-aligned with the city's goal to prioritize support for homelessness prevention, low-income residents, seniors, youth/families, and domestic violence survivors.

Share your thoughts on how the City might better improve housing affordability, prevent displacement and serve our unhoused residents.

Housing and rental prices are tied to supply. Supply must be increased to stabilize prices. As this is largely outside the direct scope of the HHSC, I will not discuss it further. I will focus instead on housing programs which prevent homelessness and serve unhoused residents.

Funding available for Sunnyvale to allocate to housing programs is limited. To maximize impact, the city must strongly partner with the Santa Clara County Office of Supportive Housing.

The first step to drive improvement is to set measurable and time-bound goals which align with the County Community Plan to End Homelessness objectives. Since the current Community Plan ended in 2025, 2026 provides an opportunity to participate in discussion and revision of the successor plan before it is formally accepted. Sunnyvale Housing Division staff participate in countywide homelessness planning. The city must be engaged in the Santa Clara Continuum of Care Board meetings, and the regional Community Plan updates and discussion should follow the same flow as the City Strategic Plan to End Homelessness. This provides HHSC an opportunity to make recommendations to the City Council ensuring the continued alignment of the City Strategic Plan with the county-level ecosystem.

Additionally, while Sunnyvale has very clear goals in the Strategic Plan to Address Homelessness, they do not directly map to the county-level goals (expressed as people housed, households helped with prevention assistance, reduction in inflow, and shelter capacity). I believe useful insights can be derived by using the most recent PIT counts as a scaling factor to map county numbers into city targets. This will allow Sunnyvale to speak the same language as the county, which I believe can improve efficacy when advocating for county partnership and support.

The next step to drive improvement is to ensure funding approvals align with goals defined in the Strategic Plan. Currently, evaluation is based on broad policy priorities, but I would take this a step further. During funding approval the key metrics (for prevention programs this is typically the number of residents or households served) should be compared against Strategic Plan targets. The City Staff, HHSC, and the City Council should all know before any funding approval if the proposed funding allocation will meet stated targets.

The final step to drive improvement is to track progress toward goals and review results in HHSC meetings. The HUD CAPER report drives formal annual reviews, and informal updates happen more frequently but the cadence is not clearly defined. I recommend a quarterly update including: progress updates from

city-managed programs, a trend report for available leading indicators (evictions, rental assistance requests, progress of housing supply pipeline), and a trend report for city-controlled operational indicators (shelter occupancy, hotel and safe parking utilization, program enrollments/exits, time to placement, number of outreach contacts, case manager caseload, and number of households receiving rental assistance). A quarterly cadence balances overhead with the ability to respond quickly. When available, county updates should also be discussed in the HHSC meetings and impacts to city goals (if any) should be assessed.

These three steps drive better alignment with the county, a clear understanding of gaps in city-managed funding proposals, and the ability to respond more rapidly when reality is deviating from the plan. This will improve service outcomes for Sunnyvale residents.

Description Area	View Homelessness Response
Have you read Homelessness Response?	Yes
What are your thoughts on Sunnyvale's support for the unhoused community?	I have provided detailed assessments in two of the above questions. Overall, Sunnyvale's response is thorough, thoughtful, and data-driven.

Fair Political Practices Commission Statement of Economic Interests

Description Area	<p>If you are appointed to the Arts Commission, Heritage Preservation Commission, Housing and Human Services Commission or the Planning Commission, you must electronically file the Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC) Statement of Economic Interests (Form 700), which will be a public record. Statement of Economic Interests - Form 700 Understanding of Filing Requirement I understand and agree that if I'm appointed to the Arts Commission, Heritage Preservation Commission, Housing and Human Services Commission or Planning Commission I must electronically file the Fair Political Practices Statement of Economic Interests (Form 700). This form reports my economic interests and those of my spouse or domestic partner, if applicable. I understand this will be a public record.</p>
Radio Button	Yes

Your Agreement

Description Area	<p>IMPORTANT NOTICE - READ BEFORE SIGNING: By selecting both "Yes" and "Submit Form" below I am adding my digital signature to this application. I am also agreeing with the following statements: All statements I have made on this application are true and correct. I authorize the City of Sunnyvale (City) to investigate the accuracy of this information. I release the City from all claims and liabilities arising from such investigation. I acknowledge that any false statement on this application will be grounds for the City to deny my appointment. A false statement discovered later, will be grounds to dismiss me from my appointment at any time. I acknowledge that any false statement on this application could lead to criminal charges. Charges could fall under California Penal Code, Section 115 or other applicable law.</p>
I agree	Yes
Your full name	Elaina Noelle Babayan

Date

Mar 06, 2026
