

Form Name:
Unique ID:

Boards and Commissions Application
1331914159

Date Received: 4/4/25
Voter registration verified:
On: 4/7/25
By: MH

Rao Shen
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Applicant Information

Name	Rao Shen
Are you a Sunnyvale resident?	Yes
How long have you lived in Sunnyvale?	over 8 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]
Are you currently a registered voter in Sunnyvale?	Yes
When was the last time you voted? Month/Year	Oct. 2024
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?	During previous meetings, I had the opportunity to listen to presentations from various non-profit organizations regarding their funding applications. I learned about the significant impact these organizations have on our community and the impressive achievements they've made in addressing key local issues. The presentations highlighted the important role these organizations play in enhancing the quality of life for residents, particularly in areas such as housing and human services.
Have you attended meetings of the board(s) or commission(s) for which you are applying?	Yes

How many meetings have you attended? 2

Board or Commission Selection

First Choice Housing and Human Services Commission

Apply for another board or commission?1 Yes

Second Choice Arts Commission

Applicant Qualifications

What motivated you to apply for this board or commission? I am motivated to apply for the Housing and Human Services Commission because I am passionate about making a positive impact in our community, particularly in addressing the critical issues of affordable housing and access to essential services. I believe that everyone deserves a safe and supportive environment to thrive, and I want to contribute to the city's efforts in ensuring that these resources are available to those who need them most.

Additionally, I have a deep interest in collaborating with diverse stakeholders, including non-profits, local government, and residents, to help shape policies and programs that can improve the lives of Sunnyvale residents. My background and values align with the mission of this Commission, and I am eager to contribute my skills, experience, and passion to help create sustainable solutions that benefit our community.

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

I bring a combination of skills and attributes that I believe would be valuable to the Housing and Human Services Commission.

As a Sr. Director and Tech Lead in AI research, I am skilled in analyzing complex information and making informed decisions, which is crucial when reviewing funding applications or assessing the impact of various programs. My problem-solving abilities, attention to detail, and ability to work within a team will also allow me to contribute positively to the Commission's goals.

My strong communication skills also allow me to effectively listen, engage, and collaborate with diverse groups, whether they are community members, non-profit organizations, or local government officials.

Additionally, I have a deep understanding of the challenges faced by underrepresented and vulnerable populations, and I'm committed to advocating for equitable solutions.

Lastly, my passion for community service and my desire to make a tangible difference in the lives of others will drive me to contribute actively and meaningfully to the work of the Commission.

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?

To effectively exercise the role of providing advice to the City Council on policy issues, I would take several key steps:

1. Staying Informed: I would make it a priority to stay informed about the key issues, policies, and initiatives that fall within the scope of the Housing and Human Services Commission. This includes reviewing meeting agendas, reports, and relevant research to ensure I have a comprehensive understanding of the topics under discussion.

2. Community Engagement: Engaging with community members is essential to understanding their needs and concerns. I would actively seek input from residents, local organizations, and other stakeholders to ensure that the Commission's advice is reflective of the community's values and priorities.

3. Collaboration: Working collaboratively with fellow commission members and other stakeholders is crucial for developing effective recommendations. I would encourage open dialogue and ensure that diverse perspectives are considered in discussions and decision-making processes.

4. Data-Driven Recommendations: I believe in making decisions based on evidence and data. I would strive to ensure that the advice provided to the City Council is backed by solid research, clear analysis, and measurable outcomes, helping to ensure that the recommendations are not only thoughtful but also practical and achievable.

By following the above four steps, I believe I can effectively contribute to the work of the Commission and provide meaningful, actionable advice to the City Council.

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

Certificate of Engineering Leadership Professional Program:
University of California, Berkeley

Ph.D.: computer science: Virginia Tech

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

I've volunteered as teachers at the Bliss & Wisdom Culture and Education Organization (BWCEO) for more than 10 years. BWCEO's mission is to develop conscientious world citizens that are committed to building a harmonious global society. It offers ethics classes for students of different ages. The classes help students establish a spiritual and moral foundation and to cultivate their minds and virtuous qualities.

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

Arts Commission

What role do you think public art plays in a city? Public art plays a crucial role in shaping a city's identity. It allows diverse voices and perspectives to be represented in public spaces.

How might the City strengthen art programs in the community? To strengthen art programs in the community, the city can take some strategic steps to ensure accessibility, engagement, and sustainability.

The Sunnyvale Public Art collection includes sculptures and other physical art. As an Arts Commissioner, how would you prioritize the inclusion of visual, literary, interactive and performing arts to embody the cultures of our diverse community? I would prioritize creating an inclusive and diverse public art collection that represents the rich cultural tapestry of Sunnyvale's community.
This would involve ensuring that all forms of artistic expression are thoughtfully integrated into public spaces and city events.

Housing and Human Services Commission

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

The quality and adequacy of the housing programs in Sunnyvale are critical to ensuring that all residents, especially those from low-income and vulnerable populations, have access to safe and affordable housing.

In terms of quality, while some housing projects have been well-designed and integrated into the community, there's room for improvement in terms of the diversity of housing options. Additionally, ensuring that housing units are not only affordable but also of high quality and sustainability should be a priority.

To enhance the adequacy of these programs, the city could benefit from expanding the availability of affordable housing through new development projects, as well as exploring alternative models like shared housing or modular housing. Furthermore, increasing funding and support for programs addressing homelessness and housing instability is essential. Ensuring that housing services are paired with necessary support services, such as job training and mental health care would also help improve long-term housing stability for residents.

Overall, while Sunnyvale's housing programs are valuable, a more holistic approach and increased resources are necessary to meet the growing needs of the community and ensure that all residents have access to affordable, high-quality housing.

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

Overall, the city has made significant progress in providing services that address critical needs, such as food assistance and programs for seniors, children, and families.

The quality of these services is generally high, with a variety of community-based organizations offering specialized support to residents. Additionally, services aimed at addressing homelessness and housing instability have been important in helping individuals transition to more stable living conditions. As Sunnyvale continues to experience population growth, especially with a rising number of low-income and elderly residents, the need for these services outpaces their availability.

To improve the adequacy of human services, the city could focus on expanding funding to increase the capacity of existing programs, as well as exploring new partnerships with local agencies to provide additional resources.

Additionally, greater outreach and awareness efforts would help ensure that all residents, especially those in underserved communities, are aware of and have access to these services. While Sunnyvale's human services programs are of good quality and serve the community well, there is a growing need to enhance their availability to ensure that all residents can access the services they need in a timely manner.

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

To better improve housing affordability, prevent displacement, and serve unhoused residents in Sunnyvale, comprehensive strategies are needed to address both short-term needs and long-term solutions. By implementing the following strategies, I hope Sunnyvale can create a more inclusive and equitable community for all residents.

1. Community Engagement: Ensuring that the voices of impacted residents are heard is essential. The city could invest in community outreach programs to better understand the challenges residents face and involve them in decision-making processes. Public education campaigns about affordable housing, homelessness, and displacement prevention can also help foster a more supportive and compassionate community.

2. Affordable Housing Supply Increase : This could be achieved by incentivizing developers to include affordable units in new developments through inclusionary zoning policies or offering subsidies for affordable housing projects.

3. Unhoused Population Support: To better serve unhoused residents, the city can expand its emergency shelter programs, ensuring they are accessible, safe, and inclusive. Long-term solutions, such as supportive housing that combines affordable housing with services like job training, mental health care, and addiction recovery programs, can help individuals transition out of homelessness.

4. Non-Profits and Regional Partners Collaboration: By building stronger partnerships with these organizations, Sunnyvale can leverage additional resources and services to meet the needs of vulnerable populations. Coordination with neighboring cities and regional agencies is also vital to create comprehensive solutions that address housing and homelessness on a larger scale.

Description Area

View Unhoused Community Support

Have you read Unhoused Community Support?

Yes

What are your thoughts on Sunnyvale's support for the unhoused community?

Sunnyvale has made important strides in supporting its unhoused community through a range of initiatives and partnerships. The city collaborates with public and nonprofit organizations to prevent homelessness and provide services to unhoused residents.

While these programs are impactful, expanding outreach efforts, increasing shelter capacity, and exploring more permanent housing solutions remain essential. Continued investment and creative solutions are needed to fully address the complex issue of homelessness in Sunnyvale.

Fair Political Practices Commission Statement of Economic Interests

Description Area

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.

Radio Button

Yes

Demographic Information

Your age

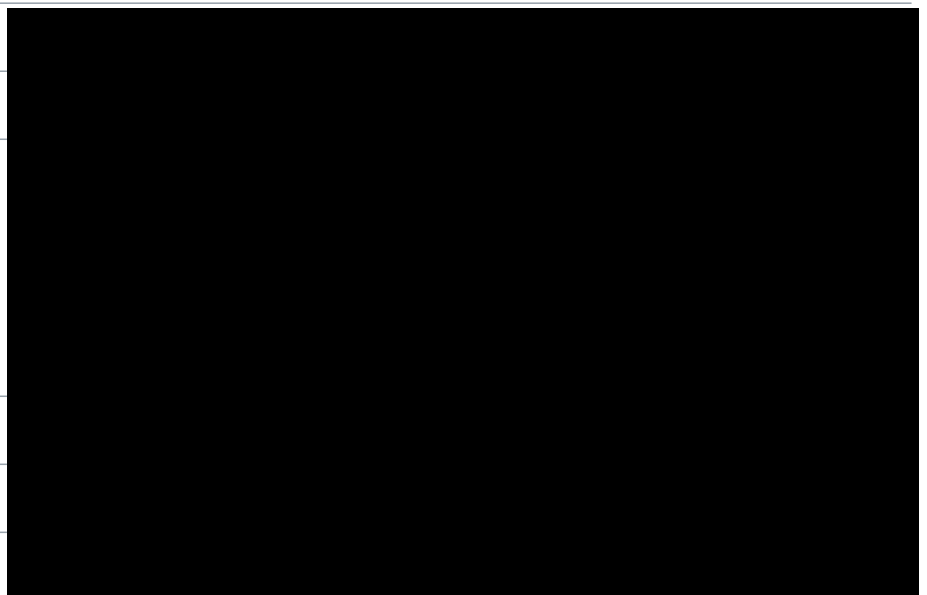
Your gender

Description Area

Household Income

Residence - Are you a

Do you live in a

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the demographic information section of the form.

Do you have any other identities*
you would like to share with us?



Your Agreement

Description Area

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.

I agree

Yes

Your full name

Rao Shen

Date

Apr 04, 2025