

Applicant Information

Name	Ariana J Ziolkowski
Are you a Sunnyvale resident?	Yes
How long have you lived in Sunnyvale?	28 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	November 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?

By attending City Council and Human Relations Commission meetings, I've gained valuable insight into the city's priorities and how those efforts are impacting Sunnyvale residents on the ground. Public comment, in particular, has been eye-opening-shedding light on the lived experiences of community members and highlighting where current initiatives are falling short.

In observing the Human Relations Commission specifically, I noticed that the workplan often lacks the specificity needed to clearly understand what actions are being taken. For instance, during one meeting I attended, the Community Needs Assessment was reviewed, but there was little discussion about how the findings would translate into actionable steps. As a constituent, it's difficult to discern the commission's impact or progress when the goals remain broad and undefined.

To strengthen both transparency and community engagement, I recommend adding more targeted, issue-specific initiatives to the workplan-such as neighborhood-based forums on housing, education, or language access-to ensure the commission is hearing from a wide range of residents across the city. Creating opportunities for public hearings on key topics would also allow for deeper community input and shared accountability. Additionally, the commission should expand its outreach efforts to actively engage residents-particularly those in underrepresented communities-in the events and conversations it hosts. Once the commission clearly defines key priorities and goals, it will be better positioned to develop focused, community-driven initiatives that can inform and inspire meaningful policy recommendations to the City Council.

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

Yes

How many meetings have you attended?

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Board or Commission Selection

First Choice

Human Relations Commission

Applicant Qualifications

What motivated you to apply for this board or commission?

I'm applying to serve on the Human Relations Commission because I deeply believe in the power of inclusive, community-driven policymaking to build a more equitable and compassionate city for all residents. My professional background in government has given me a strong understanding of the systemic barriers many community members face, as well as the transformative impact of policies shaped by those most affected. I've had the privilege of supporting constituents at the federal, state, and county levels, working with historically marginalized communities-people who are often navigating complex systems without adequate access or resources. Through this work, I've seen firsthand how language barriers, lack of representation, and economic instability can hinder full civic participation. Addressing these inequities has been a central focus of my career, and I'm committed to continuing that work in service to Sunnyvale.

My roles in public service have not only allowed me to advocate for those whose voices are often left out of the conversation-they've also given me the practical insight to identify opportunities for structural change. Whether it's pushing for more accessible public information, supporting stronger outreach in multiple languages, or helping shape policies that reflect the lived experiences of all community members, I've learned that effective equity work must be grounded in both compassion and realism. My direct experience navigating the government from the inside allows me to approach this role with a strong understanding of how to move ideas forward and what it takes to turn community needs into actionable outcomes.

One issue I'm particularly passionate about is housing equity-especially as it relates to renters. As a lifelong Sunnyvale resident and renter myself, I've seen how the rising cost of living and lack of affordable housing options have created instability and exclusion for many people in our city. Renters make up the majority of Sunnyvale's population, yet we are often underrepresented in local policymaking. I believe the Human Relations Commission can help address this imbalance by advocating for policies that recognize housing as a fundamental issue of equity and belonging. For community members who are part of marginalized groups or who don't speak English, the challenges are even greater-language barriers and limited access to resources often prevent them from fully understanding their rights or navigating the housing system. These inequities contribute to cycles of displacement and exclusion, making it even more critical that we center their voices in our efforts toward housing justice.

By serving on the Commission, I hope to continue bridging the gap between government and community-working to ensure that

every resident, regardless of background, income, or housing status, has the opportunity to feel seen, supported, and included in Sunnyvale's future.

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

My experience as a government employee has uniquely prepared me to contribute meaningfully to the Human Relations Commission. I've spent years navigating the inner workings of local, state, and federal systems-learning how policy is shaped, how resources are distributed, and where the gaps lie. I understand the process behind getting programs funded, proposals adopted, and constituent needs translated into concrete action. This knowledge gives me a practical advantage: I know what's attainable, how to move ideas forward within government structures, and how to build relationships that make progress possible. It also means I won't just bring ideas to the table-I'll bring the skills, strategies, and institutional insight needed to help implement them effectively.

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 serve in an advisory role to the City Council, I would take several concrete steps to ensure that the Human Relations Commission's recommendations are grounded in community needs, informed by data, and reflective of Sunnyvale's diversity. First, I would focus on expanding community input by helping organize neighborhood-based forums and public hearings on key equity issues such as housing, education, and language access. These events would create space for residents-particularly those from historically marginalized or non-English-speaking communities-to voice their concerns and priorities directly.

Second, I would advocate for more intentional and proactive outreach strategies, including multilingual communication, partnerships with trusted community organizations, and greater promotion of commission-hosted events. Making our work more visible and accessible is critical to engaging residents who may not traditionally interact with city government.

Transparency is another key priority. I would work with fellow commissioners to ensure our goals, progress, and impact are clearly communicated through regular updates and detailed reporting that show how community input is informing our recommendations.

Finally, I would draw on my experience in government-supporting constituents at the federal, state, and county levels-to help shape realistic, actionable policy recommendations. My experience working across federal, state, and county government has taught me how to navigate complex systems and turn community input into actionable, policy-driven outcomes-skills I would use to help ensure the commission's recommendations are both meaningful and feasible for the City Council to implement.

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

In 2019 I earned my Bachelor's degree in Political Science from San Francisco State University. After college I began my career in public service. My experience includes serving as a Field Representative for former Congresswoman Anna G. Eshoo, as well as for Assemblymember Marc Berman. I currently serve as a Policy and Board Aide to Santa Clara County Supervisor Margaret Abe-Koga. Through these roles, I've had the opportunity to engage directly with constituents on a wide range of issues-experiences that deeply inform and align with the mission of the Human Relations Commission. This work has strengthened my commitment to fostering an inclusive dialogue and addressing the needs of diverse communities within the City of Sunnyvale.

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

I've spent several years working as a political staffer for three elected officials, which has allowed me to build meaningful connections within the community and engage directly with residents on the issues that matter most to them.

In the most recent election cycle, I volunteered on a local political campaign, further deepening my understanding of constituent concerns and priorities.

In addition, I'm a member of the Silicon Valley Young Democrats, where I continue to stay involved, advocate for progressive policies, and support the next generation of local leadership. Engaging with this group also allows me to hear directly from other young people about the challenges we face in common-like housing, economic opportunity, and access to education-and how those issues can impact us in different ways based on our cultural backgrounds, lived experiences, and identities.

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

Human Relations Commission

Category One: I'm a Sunnyvale resident.

Yes

What do you think are major equity challenges facing the Sunnyvale community?

One of the major equity challenges in Sunnyvale is the growing disparity in access to affordable housing, which is closely tied to broader issues of economic inequality, displacement, and representation. As the cost of living continues to rise, many long-time residents-especially renters, low-income families, and communities of color-are being pushed to the margins or out of the city altogether. Language barriers, digital access gaps, and limited outreach to non-English-speaking communities further compound these challenges, making it harder for many residents to access vital services, understand their rights, or engage in civic processes. Additionally, underrepresentation of these communities in policymaking spaces means that their lived experiences are often overlooked in decision-making. To build a truly inclusive city, Sunnyvale must prioritize equity in how we design, communicate, and implement policies-ensuring all residents have meaningful access to resources, representation, and opportunities to shape the future of their community.

Describe your experience working with historically marginalized communities. How have your actions benefited these communities?

My work in government has profoundly shaped my understanding of the challenges historically marginalized communities face. I've assisted constituents with casework at the federal, state, and now county levels, and one truth remains consistent: navigating government systems is often overwhelming-especially for those whose first language isn't English. These systemic complexities can create significant barriers to access, leaving too many residents without the critical support and resources they need.

I believe public service carries two essential responsibilities. First, we must actively listen to our communities to understand the issues they are facing and identify meaningful, community-informed solutions-whether through policy, programs, or advocacy. Second, we have a duty to connect residents with the resources that already exist but may be difficult to locate or navigate, especially for those who face linguistic, cultural, or economic barriers.

Increasing equity in our community starts with ensuring that Sunnyvale's existing services are accessible to all residents-regardless of language, background, or education level. While the city offers a wide range of valuable programs, these efforts fall short if information and support are only available in English. Expanding language access and culturally responsive outreach is key to breaking down barriers and ensuring every resident has the tools to fully engage with their government and benefit from the services it provides.

Ultimately, equity means recognizing that not everyone begins from the same starting point-and that it's our responsibility as public servants to eliminate systemic obstacles, not just offer opportunities. By listening closely, addressing specific community challenges, and ensuring inclusive access to resources, we move closer to building a more equitable, inclusive Sunnyvale-one where all residents have the chance to thrive and participate fully in civic life.

Demographic Information

Your age

Your gender

Description Area

LGBTQIA+ Identity (LGBTQIA+ stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, and the “+” is an all-inclusive way to include additional terms used to describe one’s gender, romantic, and sexual identities for those who do not identify with heterosexuality or the gender binary.)

LGBTQIA+ Identity**Race or Ethnicity (select all that apply)****Do you speak a language other than English?****Household Income****Residence - Are you a****Do you live in a****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

Ariana Jacqueline Ziolkowski

Date

Jul 16, 2025