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MEMORANDUM

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR &
CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Sara Bedford
Director, Human Services
Department

SUBJECT: OYAC Annual Report

DATE: April 24, 2021

City Administrator
Approval



Date: May 18, 2021

INFORMATION

On behalf of the Oakland Youth Advisory Commission (OYAC), the Human Services Department is pleased to share the attached informational report (*Attachment 1*) providing a detailed overview of OYAC's activities and achievements for the combined fiscal years (FY) of 2019-2021. The Commission is to be commended for the breadth and success of their work over the past years and their contribution in lifting up the voices and power of Oakland youth.

Respectfully submitted,



Sara Bedford, Director
Human Services Department

For questions, please contact Carina Lieu, Youth Leadership Development Coordinator, at (510) 238-3245.

Attachments (1)

- 1) Letter from OYAC Co-Chairs, OYAC Roster, FY 2019-2021 Activities, and Youth Commissioner Profiles

Attachment 1:

**Annual Report of the
Oakland Youth Advisory Commission**



Oakland Youth Advisory Commission Appointees

| Name | Officer Roles | Subcommittee | Council District | Years Served |
|------------------------|------------------------|---|------------------|--------------|
| Benjamin Salop | Chair | Civic Engagement | CD 1 | 2 years |
| Barrett Valentine | Vice Chair | Civic Engagement | CD 5 | 2 years |
| Aniyah Story | Operations Officer | Civic Engagement | CD 2 | 1 year |
| Alessandra Mohar | Secretary | Housing, Transportation, and Other Policy | CD 3 | 3 years |
| Aisha Elbgal | Social Media Officer | Communications | CD 1 | 1 year |
| Harper Valentine | Graphic Design Officer | Communications & Civic Engagement | CD 5 | 2 years |
| Julia Basch | -- | Civic Engagement | CD 2 | 2 years |
| Aa' Jahlee-Soleil Long | -- | Communications | CD 3 | 2 years |
| Ivan Garcia | RPSTF Youth Appointee | Public Safety | CD 4 | 4 years |
| Maxwell Stern | -- | Civic Engagement | CD 4 | 4 years |
| Francesca Berlow | -- | Housing, Transportation, and Other Policy | CD 4 | 2 years |
| Jessica Ramos | Community Ambassador | Communications | CD 4 | 2 years |
| Ahmed Muhammad | Community Ambassador | Public Safety | CD 6 | 1 year |
| Athena Muhammad | -- | Public Safety | CD 6 | 1 year |
| Losaline Moa | RPSTF Youth Appointee | Public Safety | CD 7 | 1 year |
| Yarency Lizbeth Avelar | -- | Communications | CD 7 | 2 years |
| Luciano Calderon | -- | Public Safety | CD 7 | 1 year |
| Natalie Dharmapalan | Peer Advisor | | CD 2 | 5 years |
| Sophia Young | Peer Advisor | Civic Engagement | CD 2 | 1 year |
| Giovanni Hernandez | Peer Advisor | Public Safety | CD 7 | 3 years |

Letter from the Oakland Youth Advisory Commission Co-Chairs



Dear Mayor Schaaf and esteemed City Council Members,

Since the commission's establishment in 1985, the Oakland Youth Advisory Commission has strived to meaningfully represent the goals and needs of the more than forty thousand Oakland youth. At the start of 2020, youth experiences and our education were radically reshaped by the incursion of the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 affected every component of our community, and OYAC has summarily modified its meeting structure and outreach by going 100% online. Over the last two years, we are proud to have worked on various types of advocacy to achieve impactful legislative change in the City of Oakland and build new partnerships with community leaders.

One of OYAC's principal campaigns prior to the pandemic was to expand civic rights to Oakland youth. This campaign manifested in different forms, most notably through our support of Vice Mayor Kaplan's resolution to lower the voting age for School Board elections; and our partnership with Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) All City Council (ACC) to organize a City Council and School Board youth-led candidates' forum. Throughout these initiatives, OYAC has strived to uplift the voices of non-commissioners to ensure we are a representational body that reflects the city's youth needs.

The participation of thousands of Oakland youth in last year's landmark Black Lives Matter protests following the death of George Floyd told us that youth are tired of being victims of systemic injustice caused by decades of community divestments. As commissioners, we participated in supporting OUSD's George Floyd Resolution and the funding of the Alternative Education Hub. As youth appointees to the Reimagining Public Safety Task Force (RPSTF), we continued the work of our predecessors, serving as a uniting link between the youth community and city government. We participated in a Community Safety 101 professional development series and the launch of the RPSTF Youth Advisory Board (YAB) to ensure youth perspectives were impactful in shaping critical conversations on community safety reinvestments. To continue youth engagement work, the Task Force adopted youth-created policies such as Recommendation 122 (increase investment and alignment in the OYAC and the Oakland Police & Community Youth Leadership Council (OPC-YLC) to enable effective planning and coordination needed to center and

legitimize youth voice at-scale). Following this year's advocacy work, we are excited to continue participating in the community safety reinvestment discussions.

OYAC is honored to connect with local government and uplift the growing youth advocacy movements in our school and communities. COVID-19 has made commissioners more aware of our role of serving as a conduit of information between the youth community and our city government. To that end, we have led a series of efforts on budget advocacy, including hosting a budget webinar for 150 participants last year and meeting with legislators on our budget priorities on multiple occasions. We have added to the housing justice conversation by having youth delegates serve on the Alameda County Homeless Youth Action Board and Guaranteed Income for Youth Planning Committee.

We have been effective in our stated mission, yet, we encourage City leaders to increase their investment in championing youth engagement in every municipal action by providing resources for youth commissioners to be successful. Our commission is one of Oakland's largest bodies and one of its most diverse. In the coming year, we foresee opportunities to provide citywide trainings on youth community engagement and improve interdepartmental services for career and technical education pathways.

Those closest to the problem are closest to the solution. We look forward to partnering with you to continue trailblazing policy change in our city.

Sincerely,



Benjamin Salop, D1
OYAC Co-Chair



Barrett Valentine, D5
OYAC Co-Chair

OYAC Annual Report 2019-2021

It is often said that, “youth are leaders of social movements,” and that “those closest to the issue are closest to the solution.” As evidenced by the social justice movements of the past year, these sayings could not be more true. Youth Commissioners have much to offer Oakland. As experts on the issues affecting youth most, youth are well-positioned to be valuable ideation partners and co-conspirators of solutions that make Oakland better. Youth represent a doubly marginalized community due to the intersecting factors of adultism with racism, sexism, and classism. Commissioners want to work with City leaders to overcome the stigma associated with youth and want to contribute to all facets of City policies. When our voices are included, the outcomes are more equitable, inclusionary, and innovative.

“I’ve really really appreciated my time on the Commission, and it’s been one of the most important experiences for my growth both professionally and personally.” - Barrett Valentine, D5 Commissioner

Youth Engagement

Norm-Setting, Training, & Safe Space

Over the past two years, 17 commissioners and three Peer Advisors came together from a diverse cross-section of Oakland to tackle the city’s issues head-on. Commissioners divided their various interests into four subcategories: Civic Engagement, Health, Housing, and Transportation, Public Safety, and Digital Communications. Like other commissions, youth use team-building and community agreements to set [norms](#) for safe spaces that enhanced their ability to perform. The Commission utilized Robert’s Rules of Order for decision-making and to conduct meetings. Between August 2020 and May 2021, OYAC held two public meetings and two subcommittee meetings per month. Youth began and ended meetings with check-in and check-out questions in an effort to hear everyone’s voices. Commission business typically included receiving updates from subcommittees, presentations from City staff and/or community members, and advocacy campaigns requests from stakeholders.

Staff provided training during Summer and Spring retreats and throughout the 2020-2021 year. The Summer retreat focused on providing background such as City Government 101, Youth-Adult Partnerships, the 3 Faces of Power, Privilege and Power, Identity Reflection, and hopes/fears. The Spring retreat focused on re-centering our purpose as a Commission and included a restorative justice circle to address the challenges of virtual meetings, delegations with the Mayor, Councilmembers Reid and Fife, and department

leads, and a keynote speaker, Saabir Lockett, a board member of the Oakland Army Base Jobs Oversight Commission. Interspersed throughout the year, the Commission received skills-based training on Oakland Youth Vote, Media Training, How to Facilitate a Meeting, and Power Mapping. We held one restorative circle and team-building meeting with OUSD's All City Council.

Citywide Training Sessions

The Executive Committee presented to the City's Community Engagement Working Group to emphasize the importance of youth engagement with the goal of building adult-youth led partnerships and using [Hart's Ladder of Youth Engagement](#). To be successful, youth need adults to be allies who recognize that youth balance competing priorities such as work, school, extracurricular activities, family obligations, and college applications while tracking, developing, and advocating on various policies. Accommodations in the form of choosing meeting times to match their school schedules, adapting policies and presentations into youth-friendly formats, having adequate training, and creating safe spaces to build community are necessary. As a result, youth advised audience members how to make flyers and websites more engaging for use on social media.

“When youth input is designed to solicit ideas for improvement, but only as a last-minute consultation, where plans lack in conscious planning and scheduling with youth to address barriers, youth can feel tokenized. Ways to change this is to view youth as equal thought-partners in ideation, planning and design stages of policies and community engagement, and to include youth voice early on or from a very beginning stage.” - Benjamin Salop, D1 Commissioner

Youth expressed desire for City leaders to include them at the beginning of designing projects or plans rather than to invite them for comment at the end of a project cycle. Youth also desire for the city to recognize that youth make trade-offs to participate in community activities and therefore offering incentives to compensate youth for their time and labor can make youth engagement more successful. Additionally, this would help black, indigenous, people of color and low-income youth overcome traditional barriers. As a result of this presentation, OYAC was invited to offer a workshop on Youth Community Engagement Tools to the City of Oakland's employees via Citywide Trainings in June 2021. OYAC will collaborate with KTOP to record a 10 to 15-minute presentation for future employee training sessions.

COVID-19 & Social Media Outreach

Last year's COVID-19 Alameda County Shelter-in-Place (SiP) Order took a major toll on the Commission activities because it suspended non-essential commission activity for the remainder of the fiscal year.

Although the Commission did not hold meetings to discuss policy, they participated in several training sessions, attended City Council meetings, and volunteered to support the senior participants of the Senior Companion/Foster Grandparents program. Commissioner Stern spoke in support of strengthening the [Oakland Children Smoking Prevention Ordinance](#) Ban. Commissioners Valentine, Garcia, and Salop spoke in support of the Oakland Youth Vote resolution. Some youth participated in Yoga 4 Youth virtual classes led by staff to assist with mental health stress; and one commissioner led a yoga workshop at the [A/PI Middle Eastern North African Virtual Gathering](#) co-hosted by OUSD's API Student Achievement program.

Because digital organizing became a necessity during the pandemic, the Commission enhanced its use of digital platforms and grew its following on platforms such as [Instagram](#), [Linktr.ee](#), [Facebook](#), [YouTube](#), newsletter, and [website](#) to connect with the community and spread the word about COVID-19 mutual aid, youth-oriented events, and housing and economic workforce development opportunities for youth. OYAC conducted outreach for open seats through social media. The Communications subcommittee utilized Canva to develop graphics for the Youth Candidates Forum, Youth to Youth Minigrant, OYAC t-shirt design, and to update the OYAC logo.



OYAC meeting in delegation with the City's department heads such as Fire Services, Public Works, Oakland Public Library, and Auditor.

Establishing Rapport

Youth Commissioners felt appreciated and recognized as part of City government when staff and public officials made presentations for comment and request to partner with the youth. By establishing relationships with City staff, youth gained confidence in public speaking and found that the City of Oakland is a welcoming place for youth. This year, Youth Commissioners established relationships with the heads

of the Oakland Police Department, Oakland Public Library, Fire Services, City Auditor, and Public Works to identify opportunities to collaborate. Youth received presentations from the City Administrator, Finance Department, Community Housing Services, Oakland Fund for Children & Youth, Economic Recovery Council, Equitable Climate Action Plan, Zero Emissions Vehicle Action Plan, and the Office of Emergency Management Services.

“Being professional at these meetings is another thing that I learned is important. Our guest speakers often noticed and pointed out our professionalism, and were impressed by it. The way we introduce or present ourselves to others leaves a mark on the way they see us. I believe because of our professionalism and genuine care for wanting to make Oakland a better place helped build the connections we have now.” - Yarency Avelar, D7 Commissioner

Anti-Racism and Solidarity Work

A key component of the Youth Commission was improving cultural competency and being aware of its ability to change root causes for systemic change. Consistent with the City’s Race Equity mandate, Commissioners underwent two trauma-informed restorative circles led by Stephanie Montgomery of ReCAST and two technical workshops led by Darlene Flynn, director of the Department of Race and Equity to identify privilege in group dynamics, and build toward being an anti-racist body. Commissioners voted unanimously in favor of continuing to work on developing culturally competent practices through reflection and training in hopes to increase racial equity awareness throughout the Commission and improve the City’s inclusionary practices in service of Oakland residents.

Individual members of the Commission supported the work of other youth events by speaking or showing support. Commissioner Story uplifted the importance of acknowledging youth mental health and for fostering healthy relationships with youth at the Oakland Promise and the NAACP Black Agenda Townhall. Commissioner Muhammad helped co-create the Black Thought Wall project in east Oakland. Commissioner Mohar spoke at a rally to show her support of the Reparations for Black Students resolution as an Asian/Pacific Islander youth leader. In light of the spike in anti-Asian violence, she also reached out to Councilmember Bas’ office to seek her support in promoting a youth-led community zine about safety and the history of Asian Americans. Commissioner Elbgal attended API Women Healing Sessions held by the OUSD APISA Office in solidarity, following the mass shooting killing six Asian female workers in Atlanta. We hope to continue to raise awareness of representational leadership and inclusivity in the Commission.

“I hope to push for more representation of the Yemeni community and to really address the issues impacting our community and the youth.” - Aisha Elbgal, DI Commissioner

Policy Work

A goal of the Commission was to have an effective youth body that creates sound policy to advocate for systemic changes. Youth have: 1) displayed fervor and aptitude to interface with City leaders in several delegations, 2) actively engaged in budget advocacy, 3) developed coalitions with other youth leaders to increase civic engagement, and 4) provided input through public comment and workshops to weigh in on policies regarding community safety, health, housing, transportation, parks and recreation, climate change, small business development, and education.

Budget Advocacy

A unique accomplishment of this Commission was its willingness to engage in the mid-cycle and bi-annual budget cycle. It is believed to be the first Youth Commission to engage in budget advocacy. Beginning with hosting a [COVID-19 Budget Townhall](#) in partnership with Margareta Lin, former Deputy City Administrator, in summer 2020, Commissioners attended City Council meetings and set-up delegation meetings with Councilmembers Kaplan, Gallo, and Thao, as well as the City Administrator’s Office and Human Services Director. In the Fall of 2021, two youth members participated in the Budget Advisory

Board for the Reimagining Public Safety Task Force and the entire commission sought expert advice from several City and community leaders.

OYAC meeting in delegation with Councilmembers Treva Reid and Carroll Fife.



In March 2021, the Youth Commission confidently unveiled its [Spring Budget Priorities](#) to the Mayor and Councilmembers Reid and Fife. To match the demand of work needed to support an effective and healthy body, the Commission proposed the

creation of an annual stipend for Commissioners, to hire one additional full-time staff - to track, translate, and train youth of policy matters, particularly in community safety, economic workforce development, and housing - one part-time student trainee to provide mentorship and carry out administrative duties, and the funding of a city-wide youth strategy survey. Understanding that additional staffing will still be needed to further develop programs for youth, these requests represent a good start until the research findings can demonstrate the gaps in Citywide youth services. The Spring Budget Priorities were emailed to Vice Mayor Kaplan, and Councilmember Thao, Kalb, Gallo, and Taylor's offices with plans to follow-up in delegation meetings.

Oakland Youth Vote

About two weeks prior to the SiP order, OYAC formally [endorsed](#) the Oakland Youth Vote resolution, an effort led by a coalition of youth-service providers. Commissioners conducted outreach to Councilmembers

to inform them of their support and spoke during public comment. Commissioners formed a Civic Engagement subcommittee to hold a candidates forum in the Fall. In October 2020, OYAC collaborated with OUSD’s All City Council to hold a successful virtual [Youth Candidates Forum](#) for City Council and School Board, signaling to candidates through a [youth voter guide](#) that youth do pay attention and care about elections. In November, voters passed Oakland Youth Vote’s Measure QQ in November to expand democracy to 16-year-olds. Since then, youth members have been working with City leaders to implement Measure QQ. Members of the Commission are in a coalition with other youth to implement various phases of the Oakland Youth Vote, such as ensuring that youth will be pre-registered to vote, schools will be equipped with civic education curriculum, and the Alameda County Registrar’s Office will be prepared to implement logistics in advance of the 2022 School Board election.



OUSD All City Council (left) and OYAC (right) posing questions to School Board and City Council Candidates.

Reimagining Public Safety

Following the murder of George Floyd and the movement to defund the police, the Youth Commission supported Oakland Unified School District’s (OUSD) [George Floyd Resolution](#). Shortly thereafter, Oakland’s Reimagining Public Safety Task Force (RPSTF) assigned two of the 17 seats to be appointed by the Youth Commission. The Commission appointed Ivan Garcia (D4) and Losaline Moa (D7). Staff recommended to the RPSTF Co-Chairs to form a [Youth Advisory Board \(YAB\)](#) facilitated by [Fresh Lifelines for Youth \(FLY\)](#), where Ivan and Losaline were the co-chairs. Staff attended the YAB regularly for support and coordination with OYAC. Following a youth survey, conference, social media outreach, and community listening session, the YAB promoted youth advocacy within the RPSTF by verifying that youth recommendations were merged with the final RPSTF recommendations submitted to the City Council. All of the [YAB recommendations](#) were integrated into the Task Force’s adopted 89 recommendations. In addition to the YAB recommendations that informed or were merged with other advisory board recommendations, the YAB submitted two stand-alone recommendations serving to increase the investment in youth leadership [#122](#), and to create an alternative to police calls [#125](#).

Aside from the YAB, youth members participated in the other four advisory boards. OYAC hired [Just Cities](#) to hold four workshops to train and support all youth - those in the Task Force, YAB, and OYAC combined - to broaden perspectives on community safety and expose them to subject-matter experts, such as the former City Administrator Dan Lindheim, the Department of Violence Prevention staff, a member of the Coalition for Police Accountability, and a member of the Anti-Police Terror Project. Meanwhile, Commissioners welcomed Police Chief Armstrong during its Spring retreat. And staff met with the Police Commission Chair to consider ways to structure future youth support. Commissioner Long continued OYAC's involvement in screening applications for the fifth year of the [Youth to Youth Minigrant](#). An additional positive outcome of the youth development efforts is that Langston Buddenhagen, the former Oakland Fund for Children and Youth Planning and Oversight Committee Youth Chair, YAB member, and RPSTF Advisory Board participant, was sworn-in to the Police Commission Selection Panel. The OYAC plans to monitor the implementation of the Task Force recommendations, and has an interest in developing recommendation #122 into a youth liaison role to the Police Commission, to increase youth involvement in policy tracking and support as laid out by the Spring Budget Priorities.

Housing Guaranteed-Income for Youth Program

OYAC acknowledges the linkage between housing affordability and other issues such as youth homelessness, educational attainment, safety, mental health, and displacement risk for low-income households. Although this is a core topic of interest, OYAC continues to grow and develop its issue-expertise on housing and transportation advocacy and campaigns. To better understand how OYAC can engage in advocacy, the Commission scheduled a Housing Justice workshop from Just Cities this Spring. Meanwhile, Commissioner Mohar, a member of the Housing, Transportation, and Other Policy subcommittee was appointed to the Alameda County Youth Homelessness Youth Action Board as a liaison. She spoke at the ALL-IN steering committee meeting to uplift OYAC's previous [policy developments on youth homelessness](#). Commissioner Mohar met in delegation with the Director of the Housing & Community Development department to understand the City's role in housing access.

OYAC recognizes the need to continue to build relationships between the City and community-based housing advocacy groups and to be a bridge for youth voice in these discussions. The Commission provided input to staff from Community Housing Services developing the Guaranteed-Income for Youth Pilot program. Currently, Shai Aikens, an alumni, participates in the Pilot's Planning Committee. Last year, OYAC endorsed [Alt-Ed Hub's inclusion in OUSD's Measure Y](#) bond. Within its proposal, the Alt-Ed Hub would provide wrap-around services and career pathways for students at-risk of dropping out of high

school, as well as transitional-age housing for youth. The Commission continues to track the developments of Measure Y to support all phases. On social media, OYAC promoted the Tiny Homes Project for youth in Berkeley and Oakland and successfully connected one Oakland youth to the project.

Looking Ahead

Data collected from the COVID-19 Townhall in 2020 and the RPSTF YAB in 2021 indicated that there is a wide interest for Oakland youth and youth-serving adult allies to obtain services from the City of Oakland. Next year, the Commission hopes to partner with Oakland Parks and Recreation and Youth Development Department and the Economic Workforce Development Department to create more pathways for youth leadership development and jobs. Youth hope to continue activities from last year such as Citywide trainings, public safety, civic engagement, social media outreach, race equity, and housing and transportation advocacy. OYAC plans to utilize funds for a citywide strategic plan survey towards assessing how the Commission can be more effective advocates for youth issues within Oakland and increase its capacity on housing justice. Commissioners will continue to build partnerships with a broad-base of youth service-providers to advance priorities impacting youth. Youth can and always will play a pivotal role in Oakland. We sincerely hope that you will continue to work with us as champions of youth-voice.



OYAC members pose for a serious (left) and silly (right) photo.

Youth Commissioner Profiles

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| Commissioner | Barrett Valentine, D5 | Benjamin Salop, D1 |
| Role | Vice-Chair | Chair |
| Committees | Civic Engagement Policy | Civic Engagement Policy |
| Reflection | I've really really appreciated my time on the Commission, and it's been one of the most important experiences for my growth both professionally and personally. | I'm not sure about whether I'll stay on OYAC because of my time commitment as chair of the California Youth Commissioner's Association. If I return to OYAC, I'd like to train the commission more about Robert's rules and official proceedings. I also want us to develop our professionalism to match other bodies. |
| What Professional Skills Did You Gain? | I have learned how to write professionally, including both policy and communication, organize communication and data, create strategic campaign plans, advocate for my priorities in a professional setting, effectively navigate the intricacies of local government, host events, facilitate meetings, create power maps, utilize social media as an information gathering and disseminating tool, pare down large ideological goals into manageable policy/program objectives, write speeches, and tailor my message to my audience. I've learned how to present a message to the media or other public spaces. | I've learned skills like power-mapping and identity-work, and have helped to develop my professional network during my tenure on OYAC. I've already started to use these skills productively: I lead power mapping and DEI training for leaders at a 501(c)4 I participate in, and have developed relationships with members of the city government who now support me in legislative advocacy. |
| What Soft Skills Did You Gain? | I've gained lots of leadership skills, including delegation, time management, identifying and utilizing the strengths of others, and communicating from a place of leadership without overpowering others. I've learned how to set clear standards for others and hold them accountable when they are not met; and I've learned how to express appreciation when they are. I've vastly improved at public speaking, and gained skills in relationship building, effective confrontation, and convincing argumentation. I've learned when to be blunt and aggressive, and when it is best to tone it down. I've learned how to push past interpersonal incompatibility in order to work towards a common goal, and how to compromise even when my instinct is to be stubborn. | OYAC has most importantly taught me about my social awareness, understanding the social dynamics about the Commission and our community relationships. After OYAC, I'd like to maintain my relationships and passions about the city of Oakland. |

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| Commissioner | Aniyah Story, D2 | Alessandra Mohar, D3 |
| Role | Operations Officer | Secretary |
| Committees | Civic Engagement Policy | Housing, Transportation, and Other Policy Application and Recruitment |
| Reflection | If I return to the Commission next year, then I hope to take on more of a leadership role. | I am really committed to finding new folx to be on the Commission and support as a community member/ fellow youth organizer. |
| What Professional Skills Did You Gain? | From working with the Commission, I have gotten better at facilitating meetings and sending drafting emails. I feel more confident in my ability to lead meetings, even outside of the Commission. I have also noticed that I am able to draft important emails quicker and they sound more professional. I also feel more comfortable hosting/participating in big events where I have speaking roles. Outside of the Commission, I feel like I can use these skills to speak/organize school events or to strengthen my work with other organizations. | I have learned how to send an email, host an event, power map, participate in a campaign, take notes and organize them, and create public-facing agendas. |
| What Soft Skills Did You Gain? | Some of the soft skills I have gained include problem solving and working on a tight schedule. I feel that these are skills I can use when I go to college or start working a job. I've noticed that my ability to use them has come in handy with school-work and other projects. | I have learned how to problem solve, build community, speaking in public, communicate with people who have more power, and social skills overall. |

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| Commissioner | Aisha Elbgal, D1 | Harper Valentine, D5 |
| Role | Social Media Officer | Graphic Design Officer |
| Committees | Communications Policy | Civic Engagement Communications Policy |
| Reflection | I hope to push for more representation of the Yemeni community and to really address the issues impacting our community and the youth. | I want to return as a Commissioner because I think I have more to offer the Social Media, Civic Engagement and Executive Committees moving forward. I hope to accomplish more engagement with Oakland youth through the Civic Engagement committee, in particular. |
| What Professional Skills Did You Gain? | Being on the Commission, I've learned how to network as well as really helpful ways to facilitate an effective meeting. Both of these skills as well as other professional skills I've gained on the Commission will really help me navigate college, build supportive communities, and facilitate meetings that are effective but not draining. | I learned how to start and run an event when I helped out with the Youth Candidates Forum as a member of the Civic Engagement committee. These skills in organization will help me in moving forward. I also have learned more about design and graphics. |
| What Soft Skills Did You Gain? | The biggest skill I've learned being on the Commission is public speaking. Although I still struggle with this at times, being on the Commission has taught me the importance of sharing my voice and ideas. These skills will really come in handy as I learn to find my place in college!! | I have developed my public speaking skills and become more comfortable speaking up in both youth- and adult-led spaces. These skills will be super helpful as I move forward in life. |

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| Commissioner | Losaline Moa, D7 | Sophie Young, D2 |
| Role | Reimagining Public Safety Task Force Appointee | Peer Advisor |
| Committees | Public Safety Policy | Civic Engagement |
| Reflection | Although I only served one term, it has been an absolute honor to be a part of the work that has been put forth in this unexpected year. | I've learned so much! OYAC has been an opportunity that I will always be grateful for. I want to be a community leader, and use my skills to better the world around me! |
| What Professional Skills Did You Gain? | Skills that I have grown from OYAC are practicing my facilitation skills by creating a space for others to have any level of discussion with the sense of security. I learned to facilitate meetings with an agenda and to be more effective in being straightforward in reaching the wanted goal/outcome. | I gained the ability to create a meeting agenda, how to facilitate a meeting, have clear and professional virtual communication, peer advising, and guiding a project and delegating tasks. |
| What Soft Skills Did You Gain? | I have gained better professionalism by practicing both emotional and social intelligence in political spaces and developed a better stance in youth advocacy. I will utilize the skills I learned from the Youth Commission in other spaces by showcasing professionalism and simply displaying empathy for others as I strive to be a well-rounded member of my community. | I learned leadership skills such as being more confident as a leader, including and encouraging others, public speaking, clear communication, practicing culturally-sensitive listening and communication. I also learned how to be a good person and uplift the voices of the people around me to create a more equitable and just society. |

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| Commissioner | Yarency Avelar, D7 | Julia Basch, D2 |
| Role | -- | -- |
| Committees | Communications Application and Recruitment | Civic Engagement |
| Reflection | I will apply these skills to future organizations I take part in as well as my own *future* nonprofit. I hope to start an official mentorship program in Oakland and expand to reach other youth of color. | I love working with my fellow youth commissioners and the relationships I have made are too important to let go of. I really want to create another city-wide youth event next year. I enjoyed much of that experience and would like to take another stab at it! |
| What Professional Skills Did You Gain? | As a Commissioner in OYAC, I gained the confidence of facilitating meetings, sending and emails, and building/networking with other Oakland organizations. After OYAC, I plan to apply these skills in community outreach organizations that I will take a part of in college or even back here in Oakland. | My biggest professional skill I have learned and utilized this year was event planning. I spent many weeks working on and creating the Youth Candidates Forum. It was definitely a very fulfilling experience. |
| What Soft Skills Did You Gain? | I have gained interpersonal skills and public speaking as well as community building. Every meeting that we had guest speakers from other organizations, I learned that genuinely getting to know them and their mission better is a good move to building a relationship with them. Being professional at these meetings is another thing that I learned is important. Our guest speakers often noticed and pointed out our professionalism, and were impressed by it. The way we introduce or present ourselves to others leaves a mark on the way they see us. I believe because of our professionalism and genuine care for wanting to make Oakland a better place helped build the connections we have now. | I learned a lot more about problem-solving and dealing with conflicts this year through the planning of the Youth Candidates Forum. I had to navigate problems with virtual life and communication and I will definitely reuse these skills in the future. |

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| Commissioner | Maxwell Stern, D4 | Francesca Berlow, D4 |
| Role | -- | -- |
| Committees | Civic Engagement Policy | Housing, Transportation, and Other Policy |
| Reflection | -- | I hope to keep working on Reimagining Public Safety and to improve youth sexual education and health. |
| What Professional Skills Did You Gain? | I have learned to formulate policies which are realistic and not idealistic. I have learned to be more a professional email editor and more concise. I know how to participate in a campaign and ask hard questions. | I have learned how to facilitate a meeting, power map, and participate in a campaign. |
| What Soft Skills Did You Gain? | I have learned to collaborate with others whom I might not otherwise within my social cliques. I have been incorrigible and spoke up for myself. | I have learned to express ideas and opinions within a group and to use social skills within a professional setting. |

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| Commissioner | Athena Muhammad, D6 |
| Role | YAB Member |
| Committees | Public Safety Policy |
| Reflection | I hope to establish a system of community policing in Oakland. |
| What Professional Skills Did You Gain? | I have learned and strengthened the following professional skills: efficiently sending informative emails to a mass number of people, networking with community leaders and other restorative justice and activist groups, using historical data and current events to inform policy that can help solve structural issues within the city, power mapping, and participating in a campaign. |
| What Soft Skills Did You Gain? | I have learned and strengthened the following soft skills: data collecting, getting people involved in surveys and conferences by campaigning, public speaking, community building, and problem solving. |