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IMAGINEAUSTON
SPEAKER SERIES

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Taking the Next Step in Civic Engagement:
How to Volunteer to Serve on Local Boards and Commissions
Imagine Austin Speaker Series

December 8, 2021
5:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Questions & Answer Section

Questions	Answers <i>(Submitted By Q&A Widget and Answered In Written Form by Office of The City Clerk)</i>
Forgive me, I missed the specifics of being a “Austin Resident” – must you live within the city limits?	The general requirement is that members are residents of Austin, however, a Council Member can issue a waiver for this requirement if they would like.
If we're in a neighborhood that is changing Council districts, when does that officially change over?	The change has been certified and staff is working on updating that information and starting community outreach.
If we submitted an application and only indicated one Commission at the time of submission, are we able to go back and indicate others?	Yes! You can make updates on your application. You would use the same link and once you enter your email, the application should recognize it and bring up your previously application to update.
I also live in what I believe is considered an unincorporated area of Austin: West Oak Hill - am I considered a resident, and will I meet the residency qualifications?	I would have to check that specifically, but even if you are not, a Council Member is able to issue a residency waiver to allow you to serve if they would like to move forward with an appointment.
Can you ask Aways what the time commitment is he typically has experienced in serving?	live answered by Katie (varies depending on board or commission)
Do you only represent the district you reside in or can you represent another district?	Typically, Council Members appoint from within their district, but they are not limited to this. They may decide to appoint anyone within the city (and occasionally outside with a residency wavier in certain instances)



<p>Is being on a board or commission a full-time job, or how does that work?</p>	<p>It is a voluntary position and we do not expect it to be a full-time job, however depending on the board or commission the time commitment might vary. Typically, meetings are once a month (with a few meetings twice a month) for a few hours.</p>
<p>I might have missed this earlier, but what are some common conflicts of interest to watch out for?</p>	<p>This can really vary, but in general it usually revolves around whether you have a substantial interest in an item or issue being discussed/addressed by the commission.</p>
<p>Where can I find the list of Boards and Commissions available to serve on?</p>	<p>I would start here: https://austintexas.gov/department/boards-and-commissions.</p>
<p>Can you apply to be on a board while being a city employee?</p>	<p>Yes, but there are some exceptions for specific boards - mostly sovereign. If you are an employee and selected for appointment, you need to receive your supervisor's approval and there are some other requirements in City Code to agree to.</p>
<p>Can be a city employee can serve on a board or commission?</p>	<p>Yes, but there are some exceptions. Supervisor approval is required and there are some additional requirements to meet that are outlined in city code.</p>
<p>What are some of the conflicts if you are a COA employee?</p>	<p>Those are outlined in City Code, if you'd like to email me, I can follow up with those specifics later.</p>
<p>Further advice on how to raise your application to a CM or other office would be helpful.</p>	<p>I always recommend emailing or calling the office and they should be able to direct you further.</p>
<p>What is the age range of the commissioners?</p>	<p>(The age range) is HUGE! There is not set range, the subject matter can sometimes influence that, but we have a College Student Commission with students and then there is no age limit!</p>
<p>Are applications ongoing throughout the year as openings arise or is there a quarterly or annual application deadline?</p>	<p>The application is always open! During an election year, Council Members are typically looking for the most applications as they are making new appointments or reappointments, but there is turn over all the time.</p>
<p>What is the time commitment like? Is this a year commitment, full time, part time, or multi-year?</p>	<p>The typical term is 4 years - it aligns with the term of the appointing Council Member.</p>



<p>Based on Katie's mention of joint work, is there any sort of matching assistance available? I'll read all the descriptions but may not be aware an emerging need /commission where I could contribute.</p>	<p>I believe Katie mentioned this as well, but I would suggest watching some of the meetings to get a better idea of the tip of work some commissions do. I would also suggest you have a conversation with the staff in your council member's office to see if they have other suggestions or ideas.</p>
<p>How likely is it that a council member will appoint someone who does not live in their district?</p>	<p>I'm not sure we are able to know how often it happens, but it certainly does happen.</p>
<p>Where can i find a list of available Boards, and when the relevant application process opens?</p>	<p>live answered</p>
<p>Is there a way to view the vacancies by district versus specific boards?</p>	<p>Not really, the best way to view vacancies is by looking at the board pages.</p>
<p>I've worked as a teacher for quite a while, but I am interested in helping citizens use outdoor space, nature keeping the environment healthy. what boards would you suggest that I (should) investigate.</p>	<p>live answered</p>
<p>Should I put my city email on the application or use my personal until appointed?</p>	<p>I recommend including the personal email, however there is a section of the application that asks about employment, which should be clearly answered.</p>
<p>Where can staff find out about the exceptions and/or who can they talk to about finding more information for their situation?</p>	<p>The requirements are outlined in city code § 2-1-21 - ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS AND REMOVAL. Supervisor approval is also necessary.</p>
<p>How do you prepare for a board or commission? Do you need a technical background for every role to serve on?</p>	<p>This really depends on the specific board or commission. In general, no technical background is required.</p>
<p>Any advice on getting started on building relationships with your council member?</p>	<p>Just call their office and speak to their constituent liaison.</p>
<p>exceptions for city staff that were mentioned.</p>	<p>I think it depends on what kind of Board/Commission you are applying for. If there would be a conflict of interest, likely, it wouldn't be a good fit.</p>
<p>Can you clarify that it is possible to serve if you live outside of Austin?</p>	<p>Yes, but council must issue a waiver of the requirement. This just requires an additional approval.</p>



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Will we have access to the recording? I missed the first part because of another meeting running late...

Yes! The link will be uploaded to austintexas.gov/department/imagine-austin-speaker-series within a week.