



NOVI CITY CLERK'S OFFICE
45175 TEN MILE ROAD
NOVI, MI 48375
(248) 347-0456
Fax (248) 347-0577
www.cityofnovi.org

BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS APPLICATION

Thank you for your interest in serving on an advisory board or commission. The purpose of this form is to provide City Council members with comprehensive information about residents who would like to be considered for appointment. Please provide thoughtful, detailed answers. City Council will make appointments based on this application and a two minute introductory speech given by candidates during a City Council meeting. Boards and commissions candidate introductions typically take place in February, June and December. This application will be kept on file for one year, and is open for public inspection upon request.

Name (Please print): Rachel Yamakura

Nickname, if preferred: _____

Address: 20931 E. Glen Haven Cir., Northville, MI 48167

Preferred Phone Number: 248.935.9391

E-mail: rachel.yamakura@gmail.com

Are you a registered voter in the City of Novi? Yes

How long have you lived continuously in the City of Novi? 2015-Present

Employed by: Holy Cross Services; DIBS Collaborative

Educational Background: In-Progress: Doctorate in Educational Leadership & Policy

Please describe your professional qualifications, skills and/or work experience, and how you would use these to benefit the boards and/or commissions for which you are applying.

I have had the privilege of developing departments, engaging in the strategic planning process, and implementing effective initiatives—with both regional and global footprints—at several institutions. In partnership with campus stakeholders, I have created engagement plans that have measurably bolstered alumni engagement, student involvement, and institutional connections with the internal and external campus community. My innovative leadership at various institutions has granted me the opportunity to curate bespoke programmatic experiences that have positively impacted individuals and communities.

My philosophy is simple: Results are achieved through people. When perspectives are diverse, differences are celebrated, institutions are intentionally inclusive, and opportunities are equitable, everyone wins. With this philosophy, I have proven organizational successes that have yielded sustainable, inclusive, and equitable outcomes for alumni, students, faculty, and staff in the following key areas:

As the Director of Equity & Inclusion at Lansing Community College, I strategically piloted several data-informed, metrics-driven initiatives within the institution. I led Beyond the Book, which was a program dedicated to amplifying diverse perspectives to the campus community. This program brought four best-selling titles to students, faculty, and staff—at no cost to the campus community—to explore diverse themes, including race, gender identity, and accessibility. Beyond the Book reached and impacted all corners of the campus community, providing participants with the opportunity to engage in discussion and empowering them to take meaningful action around important matters facing our community. In April 2021, I successfully partnered with key stakeholders to bring Isabel Wilkerson, author of the 2020 best selling Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents to LCC for a community-wide event.

Through intentional collaboration with campus partners, I have developed and implemented exciting, impactful affinity programs for alumni of various institutions globally. I have partnered with internal and external stakeholders to bring riveting, innovative programming to students, alumni, faculty, and staff, ranging from inclusive institutes, DEI committees, and Cultural Awareness 365 Committees, to community service, professional development, and more, increasing campus engagement, supporting the strategic plan, and advancing institutional missions. I have successfully brokered mutually productive relationships between underrepresented student populations, alumni groups, and Fortune 200 & 500 corporations to customize internship and job shadowing opportunities that foster intellectual curiosity and professional growth—and establish recruitment pipelines! Under my leadership, I have connected with donors to secure significant funding specific for equitable programming, with campaigns exceeding goals by 20% and still rising. Leveraging my existing relationships with dynamic partners—including other academic institutions, private corporations, public organizations, and governments—while cultivating new strategic alliances to advance institutions, has been key to the success I have brought to over 50 institutions worldwide.

My previous experience with Global Alliance Solutions encompassed a vast range of DEI initiatives I created for higher education and school districts across the country. I am proud of my ability to connect with donors to secure significant funding specific for equitable programming, and my campaigns to increase donations incrementally have exceeded goals by 20% and are still rising. I have led numerous initiatives to build transfer partnerships between community colleges and universities, particularly with Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) across the United States. These transfer partnerships have led to sustainable increases in student success and campus climate, with students ascending to remarkable heights. After working on high-profile Title IX violations and racial bias incidents for numerous institutions, I am most proud of the turnaround management strategies that I designed for varying industries that have revived colleges and universities—unifying the campuses in the process.

I have a strong ability to evaluate, identify opportunities for improvement, and generate realistic timelines and metrics for short- and long-term revitalization. I also have substantial experience brokering relationships between underrepresented students and alumni groups, customized internships with Fortune 200 and 500 corporations, and recommended diverse and equitable curricula. On behalf of Global Alliance Solutions' clients, I triaged and mediated racially charged incidents internally, hosted community conversations, updated policies, and created public-facing statements on behalf of institutions.

My commitment to equity has always been at the forefront of my work. As a leader in public policy at Southeast Michigan Council of Governments [SEMCOG] and Detroit Public Schools Community District [DPSCD], I championed equitable school funding, holding our legislators accountable to Michigan public schoolchildren. My fight for equitable school funding required strong partnerships with community leaders, special interest groups, lobbyists, policymakers, and our legislators to effect collective change. I am humbled by the fact that my hard work contributed to yielding an increase in DPSCD per-pupil funding from \$8,142 to \$8,700. The work must continue, but I am proud of my structural, public contributions to this fight.

With the support of SEMCOG's executive leadership, I pioneered the development and implementation of DEI initiatives within the organization, ranging from internal HR practices to public policy. I was integral in shaping SEMCOG's 2021-2022 Legislative Policy Platform, regional urban plans, and additional standards to include commitments to advancing racial and social equity in Southeast Michigan. In collaboration with the Metropolitan Affairs Coalition [MAC], SEMCOG's partner organization, I called upon business leaders to institutionalize, fund, and operationalize equitable change within their companies. I am humbled to say that I led initiatives at SEMCOG that directly benefit over 4.8 million people living in Southeast Michigan.

As a member of the City of Novi Library Board, I will draw upon my previous experiences and utilize all available resources to achieve strategic goals and the institution's overall mission. The City of Novi Public Library has made applaudable, commendable strides in its strategic dedication to DEI and I look forward to moving the institution forward to unprecedented heights. I will bring my tireless enthusiasm, solid relationships, and vast knowledge to the City of Novi's Library Board—expanding its DEI commitment and public service in all components of the institution's operations, finance practices, policies, future development, and community engagement.

My rich personal and professional life experiences have gifted me the privilege of possessing a broad-based knowledge of the myriad identities that make our planet an exciting place to live. These experiences have equipped me with the skills necessary to provide understanding, empathy, strategic leadership, and intentionally embed DEI in all operations, plans, initiatives, and strategies. I am confident that my past successes in higher education and public institutions, paired with my successful outcomes working with organizations across the country, will make me a strong addition to the City of Novi's Public Library Board. I look forward to continuing the conversation.



NOVI CITY CLERK'S OFFICE
45175 TEN MILE ROAD
NOVI, MI 48375
(248) 347-0456
Fax (248) 347-0577
www.cityofnovi.org

BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS APPLICATION

Please list any community groups with which you are currently or have previously been active and describe your role.

Current:
Orchard Hills Elementary PTO Co-President: I serve as co-President to lead various initiatives within the school community.

Michigan Department of Civil Rights Council for Government and Education on Equity & Inclusion: I serve on this committee to ensure that civil rights for all Michiganders are protected. I am leading a subcommittee that is responsible for creating a DEI resource guide for school districts across the State of Michigan.

FBI Multicultural Engagement Council: I serve on this committee to help the FBI better understand the unique needs of the communities it serves throughout Metro Detroit, which helps to inform bureau practices, policies, procedures, and improve community relations. This committee provides recommendations to the FBI regarding matters related to community concerns.

Wayne State University Alumni Association: I serve the University in a number of capacities, including as a mentor for the Center for Latino and Latin American Studies. I mentor students to help them reach personal, academic, and professional goals. I served as the keynote speaker for El Nuevo Comienzo, the Indigenous & Latino student commencement, in May 2022.

University of Michigan Alumni Association: I serve on a variety of initiatives, including Minority Student Recruitment.

BasBlue Detroit: I serve as a member of the community engagement committee, dedicated to empowering all women and non-binary individuals within Metro Detroit.

Current Professional Affiliations:
American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education (AAHHE), Association of Latino Professionals for America (ALPFA), Detroit Young Professionals, National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education (NADOHE), National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA), National Diversity Council & Michigan Diversity Council

Past:
ACLU of Michigan: I dedicated my time to leading citizen lobbying training related to Bail Reform & Legislative Advocacy initiatives.

What motivated you to apply to serve on a board or commission, and why did you select the boards and/or commissions that you did?

I believe in the mission of the Library and it is important to me that I dedicate time to ensure that all members of the City of Novi feel as though they are valued members of the community. My commitment to institutionalizing and operationalizing equity in education, is deeply rooted, and I look forward to helping the Library achieve its strategic goals for our entire community.

If appointed, what do you hope to accomplish during your term? What do you hope to learn?

I have been very pleased with the services that the Library offers and I hope to be able to help continue the forward momentum. With a strong background in public policy and DEI, I am hopeful that my expertise will help the Library expand its reach and footprint to impact all members of our community. I am looking forward to working on DEI matters to build robust programming, equitable resources, and expand accessibility for all members of our community. I am hoping to learn more about the opportunities for growth within the Library so that I can better assist the Library in achieving its strategic goals. Additionally, I look forward to meeting more members of our community!



NOVI CITY CLERK'S OFFICE
45175 TEN MILE ROAD
NOVI, MI 48375
(248) 347-0456
Fax (248) 347-0577
www.cityofnovi.org

BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS APPLICATION

What do you think the City is doing well or could be doing differently when you think about the areas of responsibility for the boards and/or commissions for which you are applying?

I maintain that the Library has taken great strides in embedding DEI in its public-facing operations, and I look forward to contributing to these initiatives. I have been observing how the Library has intentionally worked to become a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive resource within our community. I believe we can improve the DEI impact through more strategic community engagement, programming, and review of policies, practices, and procedures. When DEI is at the forefront of our planning and initiatives, everyone is served in a way that cultivates belonging and a strong sense of community.

Is there anything else you would like for Council to be aware of, or know about you?

I possess a bachelor's degree in Latin American & Caribbean Studies (Africana Studies), a Master's degree in Public Administration and Policy, and I am pursuing a doctorate in Educational Leadership and Policy. I hold several DEI certifications, including the industry-standard Certified Diversity Executive (CDE®) credential. I am regularly sought to speak at various institutions, including Wayne State University and Eastern Michigan University.

I strive to remain culturally humble—promising to self-critique, self-evaluate, and hold myself accountable—as I advocate for others and address systemic power imbalances to remove barriers to access. I recognize that each of us has a level of privilege that we must bravely utilize as allies to uplift others. To ensure that all members of the community feel as though they are valued and belong, I intentionally endeavor to cultivate deliberately diverse, equitable, and inclusive environments through empathy, paired with strategic planning and community collaboration. Leading with integrity & a fierce commitment to strategically advocating for the belonging of all people, I proudly own my obligation to instill the principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, justice, and belonging into all facets of my work. I have demonstrated a firm commitment to intentionally inclusive practices in recruiting, retaining, supporting, and nourishing students, faculty, and staff from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds to propel everyone to unexplored heights. I am always open to feedback and discussion to help everyone move forward.

As a DEI practitioner and college administrator, I have a documented record of organizational successes and proven proficiency and leadership around DEIB issues in higher education. I have worked closely with Title IX Coordinators across the country at the K-12, community college, and university levels on investigations related to a myriad of sex-based violations. I have partnered with general counsel at various institutions to conduct EEO and other discrimination investigations, leading to a change in the campus climate. I take ownership of ensuring that our institutions remain inclusive, welcoming, and equitable for everyone, while also remaining properly trained and compliant with applicable legislation.



NOVI CITY CLERK'S OFFICE
45175 TEN MILE ROAD
NOVI, MI 48375
(248) 347-0456
Fax (248) 347-0577
www.cityofnovi.org

BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS APPLICATION

Please number the boards and commissions you're interested in serving on, in order of your preference, with "1" being the board or commission you're most interested in. For the boards and commissions you're interested in, check the corresponding qualifications/areas of expertise that apply to you. Not all boards and commissions have vacancies at this time; contact the Clerk's Office for further details.

_____ **Beautification Commission** evaluates entries for the City's Neighborhood Entryway Enhancement Matching Grant Program, and is involved in various beautification projects and public events.

☐ Gardening/Landscaping ☐ Leadership ☐ Fundraising

_____ **Board of Review** reviews property assessments as set by the City Assessor and hears appeals by individual property owners; then reduces, adds to or denies said appeal. A certification of the assessment role is required by the Board of Review per the state statute.

☐ Real Estate ☐ Construction ☐ Organization/Preparedness ☐ Logic/Reasoning

_____ **Building Authority** oversees the issuance of financing bonds for special projects within the City of Novi.

☐ Banking/Finance ☐ Property Appraisal/Assessing ☐ Real Estate/Development/Law

_____ **Construction Board of Appeals** exists as a "fact finding" body for builders and developers; hear appeals for questions of interpretation and proper application and equivalency.

☐ Architecture ☐ Construction ☐ Engineering

_____ **Corridor Improvement Authority** helps to correct and prevent deterioration in commercial business districts, and promote the economic growth within the districts.

☐ Reside/Own Property in District ☐ Codes/Regulations/Law ☐ Strategic Planning ☐ Resource Allocation

_____ **Economic Development Corporation** is a resource for reviewing requests for Industrial Revenue Bonds and for other economic development initiatives; meets only as needed.

☐ Professional/Business/Industry Background ☐ Finance ☐ Short/Long Range Planning

_____ **Election Commission** has the duties and powers conferred on City Election Commissioners by statute. The City Clerk is the chairman of the Commission.

☐ Registered Voter (required) ☐ Basic Knowledge of Election Process

_____ **Historical Commission** in cooperation with the Historical Society and the Novi Public Library, the Historical Commission is responsible for Old Township Hall (which serves as a museum), and for the collection, preservation and marking of historical sites.

☐ Love of History ☐ Organizational Skills ☐ Programming Knowledge ☐ Project Management

_____ **Housing & Community Development Advisory Committee** was formulated for the purpose of reviewing community development needs in regards to these Community Development Block Grant funds. The committee works in conjunction with City administration to develop annual CDBG goals for the City of Novi.

☐ Federal Grants ☐ Knowledge of Community Needs

1 _____ **Library Board** approves payment of bills, acts upon recommendations of the Library Administrator and handles various other business matters.

☒ Policymaking/Review ☒ Budget and Finance ☒ Marketing/Public Relations ☒ Customer Service



NOVI CITY CLERK'S OFFICE
45175 TEN MILE ROAD
NOVI, MI 48375
(248) 347-0456
Fax (248) 347-0577
www.cityofnovi.org

BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS APPLICATION

2

Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Commission sets policy for and makes recommendations to the Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Department. The Commissioners work together with professional staff in the areas of programming, budget, facilities, planning and public relations. The Commission has the responsibility of meeting community recreational objectives, and reflecting community needs to the Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Department and City Council.

☒ Recreation/Cultural Arts Programs & Services ☒ Strategic Planning ☒ Advertising/Marketing/PR

Planning Commission prepares a Master Plan for Land Use and advises the City Council in regard to the proper development of the City of Novi. The Planning Commission reviews and recommends to City Council all requests for change in zoning and ordinance text amendments.

☐ Architecture/Landscape Architecture ☐ Engineering ☐ Land Use Planning ☐ Real Estate Development/Law

Zoning Board of Appeals authorizes use in a zoning district in which it is not otherwise permitted, provided it is clearly shown that the land cannot be utilized for a zoned use. The board is empowered to act on matters where zoning ordinances provide for administrative review, interpretation, exception or special approval permit, and to author a variance as defined in section 3104 of the Zoning Ordinance and Laws of the State of Michigan.

☐ Architecture ☐ Construction ☐ Land Use Planning ☐ Real Estate Development/Law

I understand I am volunteering my services with no monetary compensation or benefits. I understand I am not a City of Novi employee. I further understand the City of Novi is not obligated to accept my offer of volunteering service to the City of Novi. The City of Novi reserves the right to terminate my volunteer service at any time. I have read the Volunteer NOVI Guidebook and Policies. I will adhere to the policies and procedures of the City of Novi.

I authorize fingerprinting, criminal background checks, search of sex offender registry, and Department of Motor Vehicle checks as deemed necessary by the City of Novi. I authorize investigation of any matter contained in the application.

*I understand as a volunteer I am **NOT** covered under the City of Novi's Workers' Compensation Policy for any injury or accident sustained during my volunteer assignment. I understand I am to report any injury or accident immediately to my supervisor. I further understand any medical costs or other costs incurred as result of incident will be my responsibility. I further understand if I fail to report the injury or accident immediately to my supervisor I may be released from my current volunteer assignment and may be Ineligible for any assignment in the future.*

I give the City of Novi permission to use, publish and republish, without compensation or obligation to me any photographs, videos or other media now in existence, which may be developed for future use along with reproduction of my likeness taken during my volunteer service to the City of Novi.

I declare under penalty of perjury all statements made in this application are true and correct of my own personal knowledge.

Rachel Yamakura

Signature

March 14, 2023

Date