

**From:** [Gary Williams](#)  
**To:** [CPC Applications](#)  
**Subject:** Cleveland Community Police Commission Application  
**Date:** Monday, May 9, 2022 9:06:51 PM

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Submitted on Mon, 05/09/2022 - 21:06

Submitted by: Anonymous

Submitted values are:

**First Name**

Gary

**Last Name**

Williams

**Are you a resident of Cleveland?**

Yes

**Home Address**

**City**

Cleveland

**State**

Ohio

**Zip Code**

44120

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**Are you over 18 years of age?**

Yes

**What is your gender identity?**

male

**What do you consider your race?**

Black/African American

**What do you consider your ethnicity?**

Black/African American

**Most recent place of work, job title, and address**

Sankofa Fine Art Plus, Executive Director/ Artist, 2013 - 2020, 11401 St. Clair Ave. 44108

Volunteer position

Retired from Cleveland-Marshall College of Law, Assistant Dean, 2002 - 2010, 1801 Euclid Ave. 44114

**Selection Criteria**

I was born and raised in Cleveland. As an African American I am part of a racial minority group. For 8 years (2013 - 2020), I was executive director of a small non-profit arts and culture organization, Sankofa Fine Art Plus. For 3 years, I was on the board of directors of the American Civil Liberties Union of Ohio (2010 - 2013).

**Have you been employed as a law enforcement officer during the past five (5) years?**

No

**Have you ever been employed by the Cleveland Division of Police in any capacity?**

No

**Have you ever been employed by the Cleveland Department of Public Safety?**

No

**Do you understand the role of the Commission and the responsibilities of its members?**

Yes

**Do you acknowledge the potentially significant time commitment expected of each member?**

Yes

**Do you understand that applications for the Commission are public records, subject to disclosure upon request?**

Yes

**Do you understand that your social security number may be required to conduct a background check if you are selected as a finalist?**

Yes

**Do you speak any other languages?**

No

**Please state your reasons for desiring to serve on the Commission.**

For more than a combined 15 years I served as a prosecutor and an assistant law director, first in Cleveland, then in Shaker Hts. Ohio. Over that time, I was able to see both the strengths and weaknesses of our present system of law enforcement. The problems of the present system

must be addressed and resolved if we are to stop unnecessary police violence. In the inaugural years of the Commission, it will be important to establish the Commission's integrity, fairness, and willingness to hold themselves and others accountable. This will involve a lot of planning and laying of a solid foundation so the Commission can function in a consistent and competent manner into the future. I believe that I can help make that happen.

**Please describe any skills, life experiences, and expertise that would qualify you for an appointment.**

I am a black man who has personally experienced the effects of both conscious and unconscious racism. I am a retired lawyer who worked with cities and city law enforcement for many years. I'm experienced with the ways that city governments work. I've tried cases involving allegations of excessive use of force by police officers. I've developed and taught a class for police officers on the limits on the use of force and search and seizure. I work well with a broad range of people of diverse backgrounds. I have seen how law enforcement has changed over the years, both for good and for ill.

I have experience developing successful programs from the ground up.

**Please describe how you see the oversight role of the new Community Police Commission impacting policing in Cleveland.**

I see the Commission having an impact on policing in at least three different areas:

- 1.) Training. While some attribute the excessive use of force by police as "just a few bad apples", I think in most cases the problem is a failure of training. Training regarding implicit bias; emphasis on de-escalation when dealing with non-violent crimes and other matters is a must. If the training is as complex as the problem, it requires hours of class time. So, in the short term, there may be staffing issues as training proceeds. However, the impact on policing will be enormous in the long term if done correctly.
- 2.) Accountability. I believe that the Commission's role in reviewing citizen complaints in the ways described in the ordinance will put officers on notice that the use of excessive force will be closely scrutinized. This, together with proper training should, over time, reduce the unnecessary use of force in Cleveland.
- 3.) Hiring. To the extent that there are potential "bad apples" applying for jobs with Cleveland's Police Department, proper vetting and evaluation of cadets should reduce their number; and make the City safer for both citizens and police.

**Please provide other information you consider pertinent: (i.e., civic and community group, memberships, related work experiences and professional groups).**

City of Cleveland, Assistant Prosecutor - 1984 -1988

City of Cleveland, Assistant Law Director - 1988 1991

Dyke College, Adjunct Professor - 1987 - 1992

City of Shaker Heights, Chief Prosecutor -1992 - 1998

American Sickle Cell Anemia Association, Board member - 1995 - 2017

Cleveland Marshall College of Law, Adjunct Professor - 1995 - 2010

City of Shaker heights, Chief Counsel - 1998 -2002

Cleveland Marshall College of Law, Assistant Dean of Student Affairs - 2002 - 2010

American Civil Liberties Union of Ohio, Board member - 2010 - 2013

Sankofa Fine Art Plus, Board member - 2011 - 2022

Sankofa fine Art Plus, Executive Director - 2013 - 2020

Collective Artists Network, Board member - 2020 - present