

2023 NACOLE Candidate Questionnaire

Name *

Florence L. Finkle

Position Sought *

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President (2-year term)

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Vice-President (2-year term)

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Board Member-At-Large (3-year term)

Geographic Location *

New York

Current Employment *

Law enforcement accountability consultant

How long have you been involved with NACOLE and how did you initially become involved? *

I attended my first NACOLE annual conference in 1997, in Oakland, CA. At the time, I was the deputy executive director for investigations at the New York City Civilian Complaint Review Board, the largest civilian oversight agency in the United States. From 1998 through 2006, I attended six annual conferences and made panel presentations at most of them. I reconnected with NACOLE at its 2015 annual conference, when I made a presentation for the panel "Oversight of Violence in Jails and Prison." Subsequently, I attended the 2016 academic symposium and annual conference and in 2017 and 2020, the membership elected me to the NACOLE board of directors to serve two successive three-year terms.

Which NACOLE Committees have you served on? Have you had other involvement in NACOLE as a volunteer? *

I currently serve as co-chair of the NACOLE Annual Conference Committee. For the last year, I have also been working with Professor Lonnie Schaible, of the University of Colorado Denver, who, with the support of NACOLE grant funds, has researched and is currently drafting a report on impediments to effective civilian oversight of law enforcement in the United States.

From 2017-2022, I co-chaired NACOLE's Training, Education, and Standards (TES) Committee, which produced 30 webinars, several of which I organized, moderated, and/or conducted, including "Using Police Commissions to Achieve Accountability" (January 2022) and "Making Factual Determinations, Applying Legal Standards, and Reaching Allegation Outcomes (June 2020). The TES Committee is also responsible for academic symposiums, and I served as co-chair of the academic symposium, "New Frontiers in Independent Oversight of Jails, Prisons, and Police," held in Austin, Texas, on March 6, 2020. Prior to becoming a member of the NACOLE board of directors, during 2016-2017 I served on the TES Committee, and organized and moderated the webinar "Strategies for a Successful Mediation Program."

Please share highlights of your background/experience in law enforcement oversight or jail and prison oversight. *

During the last three decades, I have worked to hold law enforcement officers accountable for committing crimes and/or violating internal department policies, and to improve law enforcement practices and accountability systems. First, I investigated and prosecuted corrupt police officers as a Manhattan assistant district attorney (1987-1996). Second, for 11 years I helped build and professionalize the New York City Civilian Complaint Review Board, as its deputy executive director for investigations and executive director (1996-2007). Third, I worked as a deputy commissioner with the New York City Department of Correction, and led its internal investigations and operational audits (2010-2014). Cases I referred to criminal investigators resulted in indictments against 23 correction officers. Four, I served as a consultant (2018-2020) for the court-appointed monitor charged with overseeing implementation of the settlement agreement between the United States Department of Justice and Seattle, designed to ensure that the Seattle Police Department's practices are constitutional. I managed the team of experts that assessed the Seattle Office of Police Accountability's ("OPA") administrative disciplinary investigations and wrote the report describing the assessment's findings and recommendations for improving the quality and timeliness of OPA's investigations. Five, on behalf of Impact Justice (2020-2021), I furnished technical assistance regarding accountability and oversight to the District of Columbia Police Reform Commission, tasked with examining policing practices and providing evidence-based recommendations to the D.C. mayor and council for reforming and revisioning policing. For the commission's report, "Decentering the Police to Improve Public Safety," I formulated the recommendations and drafted the section on improving police accountability. Most recently, I served (2022-2023), on behalf of the OIR Group, as Boulder, Colorado's interim independent police monitor.

Why do you want to serve on the NACOLE Board? What makes NACOLE's mission important to you? *

I have dedicated the majority of my career to improving law enforcement practices and holding accountable police and correction officers for their criminal conduct and/or internal policy violations. I attended my first NACOLE annual conference in 1997, and still remember the feeling of being inspired by and learning from NACOLE's founders and the civilian oversight practitioners I met there. Over the last 26 years I've marveled at NACOLE's growth, the oversight field's professionalization, and the public's embrace of law enforcement accountability as critical to effective and constitutional policing. I want to help NACOLE expand its capacity to educate stakeholders regarding effective civilian oversight models and practices, reinstitute regional training and networking conferences and academic symposia, serve as the national repository of civilian oversight of law enforcement data, research, and resources, and be a go-to voice in the national conversation we're having about law enforcement. Increasing NACOLE's ability to provide these key services depends on creating a sustainable fundraising program. I hope to play an important role in developing NACOLE's fundraising, branding, and communications efforts, and continuing to build NACOLE's programming.

What skills/qualities do you have that you expect to contribute to the organization as a member of the NACOLE Board? *

My work has involved both policing and corrections, and stems from a variety of perspectives, including both external oversight—as a prosecutor, a leader of the New York City Civilian Complaint Review Board, a federal monitoring team member, a consultant for a blue-ribbon police reform commission, and an independent city police monitor—and internal accountability, as a deputy commissioner with the New York City Department of Correction. Consequently, I bring a wealth of different experiences and skill-sets to the board. I have hired and managed hundreds of employees, re-conceived investigative procedures, designed investigator training programs, helped configure a case management system, overseen development of and adherence to budgets, supervised a complaint mediation program, written numerous statistics-based, investigative, and policy recommendation reports, drafted and delivered testimony, and interacted with the press.

Based on my writing ability, the board has often asked me to write, revise, and/or edit various material, including NACOLE's Mission, Vision, Goals, and Values Statement, the NACOLE-DOJ 2021 report "Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement: Report on the State of the Field and Effective Oversight Practices," NACOLE's communications policy and strategic plan, panel/webinar descriptions, and NACOLE's statement on police reform following George Floyd's death. I possess a strong work ethic, get things done, and am willing to express opinions that do not always comport with the majority viewpoint.

What goals do you have for your service on the NACOLE Board, and what would you most like to accomplish as a member of the Board?

I seek to assist the new NACOLE executive director create a sustainable fundraising, branding, and communications program that involves tracking, soliciting, and increasing yearly charitable donations. In order to expand NACOLE's capacity to educate communities on effective oversight models and practices, broaden its training program for members and stakeholders, maintain a comprehensive repository for civilian oversight of law enforcement data, research, and resources, and retain and attract staff by offering competitive salaries and benefits, NACOLE must enhance its revenue stream. During the last three years, I've been responsible for approximately \$15,000 in charitable donations and intend to work with the executive director and other board members to increase NACOLE revenues. I also want to help NACOLE expand its membership roster and support, its on-line civilian oversight database, and its national profile.

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