



NACOLE Candidate Election Questionnaire

Name: **Jerry Threet**

Position Sought: **Member At Large**

Geographic Location: **Reside in British Columbia, work mostly in California**

Current Employment: **Retired, with periodic work as an oversight consultant**

1. How long have you been involved with NACOLE, and how did you initially become involved?

I have been active in NACOLE since 2016, when I was appointed the founding director of Sonoma County's IOLERO, providing oversight of the county sheriff. Since that time, I have attended every annual conference and several regional conferences since that time, as well as volunteered in multiple capacities.

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

I served for several years on the Annual Conference Committee, helping review and select conference training proposals and shepherding several to fruition at the conference. I have also served on the Training and Education Committee for the last two years as we have worked to fortify NACOLE's online webinar training and to update resources on NACOLE's website. I also have served on the Awards Subcommittee that chooses NACOLE annual awards recipients, and on the Scholarship Subcommittee that chooses annual conference scholarship recipients. I also have proposed successful panels for the conference and for online webinars. I helped focus NACOLE on the issue of trauma and wellness practices among oversight practitioners, a panel focus that has continued since that time. I also have presented in panels focused on civilian oversight of Sheriffs and of jail environments.

3. Please share highlights of your background/experience in law enforcement oversight.

While I began my formal career in law enforcement oversight in 2016, previously I worked with officers as a public attorney for the United States Department of Justice (6 years) and as a San Francisco Deputy City Attorney (12 years). In those positions, I oversaw the work of officers involved in investigations of alleged violations of criminal and civil law and represented them as witnesses in litigation. I also reviewed the actions of officers and prosecutors as law clerk for the Presiding Judge of the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals, the highest appellate court for criminal matters in Texas.

Since 2016, I have worked in civilian oversight. I served as the founding director of Sonoma County's IOLERO from 2016-2019, providing civilian oversight to the County Sheriff's Office. At IOLERO, I created multiple systems necessary for the office to achieve its main missions at that time: audit investigations of alleged deputy misconduct; recommend improvements to policies, practices, and training; and engage with the community directly and through a Community Advisory Council. I completed over 50 audits of investigations, including complex officer-involved shootings and a mass use of force incident in the jail. I also authored two comprehensive Annual Reports and two stand-alone reports – one of which recommended improvements to the Sheriff's internal administrative investigations

In 2020, I helped spearhead a county-wide ballot initiative, which I also authored, to reform and strengthen IOLERO's oversight authority. The measure won with 2/3 of the voters supporting it. Since that time, I have been involved in repeated litigation against the Sheriff's unions seeking to derail the provisions of the ballot measure.

In 2021, I completed a year-long, comprehensive audit of the Sebastopol Police Department, earning praise for a detailed report that would serve as a blueprint for realizing the potential of SPD for effective community policing. From 2019-2024, I was the independent investigator for the Richmond Community Police Commission, completing 45 investigations of alleged serious officer misconduct. I spent much of 2024 auditing 153 complaint investigations conducted by the San Diego Police Department under a contract with the city's Commission on Police Practices, culminating in a 51-page written report noting systemic trends

and issues common among those investigations. I also have delivered numerous pro bono presentations on civilian oversight options for local community groups across California.

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

NACOLE for me feels like a home away from home. I suspect this is because, unlike much other work I have done in my career, the work of oversight feels like a calling. Many of us have a core commitment to respecting the dignity and human rights of all people and do our best to help law enforcement reflect those commitments to the entire community. Meeting with, working with, and learning together with like-minded people of good faith who gather together in NACOLE, has been a blessing and a boon in my professional life. Over the years, I have learned a great deal from NACOLE and have done my best to give back to NACOLE and its members. I want to continue to contribute through service on the NACOLE Board.

The next three years will likely be very challenging ones for civilian oversight of law enforcement, as political forces at the federal and state levels work to strip away principles of public transparency and community accountability from the criminal justice system and replace them with "might makes right." The same forces seek to turn the country away from efforts to equitably redress the nation's history and make a mockery of justice. NACOLE is well placed to speak out against such irrationality and appeal to our shared investments in community, diversity and equity. I am committed to standing strong to protect the gains we have made through civilian oversight and to support NACOLE in doing the same.

I have supported the shifts in NACOLE's mission that have included advocacy for oversight when it is under attack and will continue to push such efforts as a member of the Board. I also support NACOLE's efforts to help ensure that oversight adheres to minimum standards of effectiveness and believe NACOLE should support local efforts to achieve such standards. Finally, I strongly support NACOLE's efforts to support members through valuable professional training and education.

5. What skills/qualities do you expect to contribute as a Board member?

I have served in leadership of a number of non-profit organizations over the last decades and have significant experience working collaboratively with others to establish and achieve an organization's goals. I was President of the Harvey Milk Democratic Club, a very challenging organization of LGBT activists, leading that organization to help elect a progressive majority of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors. I served as Vice-Chair and Chair of the Sonoma County Human Rights Commission and helped lead that organization into human rights activism and real engagement with the community after decades of passivity. I founded a county department and established all of the protocols and systems that allowed it to function effectively in its first years.

I highly value diverse perspectives and work hard to ensure they are welcomed. I seek consensus and also work for results anchored in our shared core principles. I have been trained extensively in mediation and also have years of experience navigating the conflict-ridden environments of high stakes public litigation. My style is to speak plainly but usually do so to add something that has not been spoken, or to lift up a perspective that was offered but not acknowledged. I also love to facilitate/present trainings on oversight topics and am happy to do so on behalf of NACOLE.

I am currently retired and work when I seek out a consulting opportunity. I therefore am able to manage my schedule and have the time needed to offer real service to the board, if elected.

As a Gay, non-binary person with trauma in their background, working as a respected professional in civilian oversight and criminal justice fields, I have a lived experience and perspective that I think is unique and would be beneficial in NACOLE leadership. I hope you will entrust me with that opportunity.

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

If elected to the Board, I have several goals:

- a. I would like to further the process of offering specialized groupings of training for different oversight roles, such as investigator, auditor, policy analyst, community engagement specialist, general counsel, director, supervisor, etc.*
- b. In addition, given the challenging current political environment in the USA, I believe NACOLE needs to secure legal counsel on a retainer. Given the cost of such service, I would support seeking a pro bono commitment from one or more big law firms.*
- c. I would like to see NACOLE develop position papers laying out and supporting with evidence “best practices” in various areas of law enforcement policy and practice. This would allow lesser resourced oversight entities to make proposals that otherwise they might not be able to develop in-house.*
- d. I also believe the further expansion of NACOLE’s professional staff is key to continued success, and that contracting with a development professional may be advisable to support such an effort.*
- e. I support NACOLE taking a more significant role in supporting oversight that is under attack in various localities, including by offering testimony in legislative hearings and helping organize groups and individuals to support oversight when it is challenged.*
- f. I support NACOLE being direct and vocal about what is meant by the principles of effective oversight, in practice in specific jurisdictions.*