



## NACOLE Candidate Election Questionnaire

Name: Florence L. Finkle

Position Sought: President

Geographic Location: New York

Current Employment: Part-time Consultant

1. 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 Prisons." 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. I have served as NACOLE's vice president since 2023.

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

I currently chair NACOLE's Finance Committee. For the 2023 and 2024 board terms, I served as co-chair of the NACOLE Annual Conference Committee. From 2023-2024, I also worked with Professor Lonnie Schaible, of the University of Colorado Denver, who, with the support of NACOLE grant funds, researched and drafted a report, "Impediments and Challenges to Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement," which is on NACOLE's website. I helped structure and edit the report and independently researched and redrafted the section on state preemption of local civilian oversight.

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."

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

For more than 30 years, 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 for nearly a year, from 2022 to 2023, on behalf of the OIR Group, as Boulder, Colorado's interim independent police monitor. And in 2024, again for the OIR Group, I reviewed and assessed Santa Cruz County Sheriff Department's internal investigations and uses of force.

4. Why do you want to serve on NACOLE's 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 27 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'm also horrified at the political backlash to local civilian oversight that has occurred during the last few years.

I want to help NACOLE expand its capacity to educate the public about civilian oversight's benefits and inform stakeholders of effective civilian oversight models and practices, reinstitute 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 largely depends on attracting, retaining, and expanding staff, which requires an increase in net revenue. As president, I hope to assist the executive director develop and institute a sustainable and ongoing fundraising program.

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

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. As a result of my broad involvement with policing, corrections, and civilian oversight, I possess a national perspective on civilian oversight models and effective law enforcement accountability practices. I also bring a wealth of different experiences and skill-sets to the board. I hired and managed hundreds of employees, reconceived investigative procedures, designed investigator training programs, reviewed and assessed hundreds of civilian-law enforcement interactions, helped configure a case management system, oversaw development of and adherence to budgets, supervised a complaint mediation program, wrote numerous statistics-based, investigative, and policy recommendation reports, drafted and delivered testimony, and interacted with the press.

I have a strong work ethic, get things done, and am willing to express opinions that do not always comport with the majority viewpoint. Based on my writing ability, on behalf of the board I have often written, revised, and/or edited various material, including the 2024 NACOLE-funded report "Impediments and Challenges to Civilian

Oversight of Law Enforcement," the NACOLE-DOJ 2021 report "Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement: Report on the State of the Field and Effective Oversight Practices," and NACOLE's Policies and Procedures. As a lawyer, I have frequently helped draft and reviewed NACOLE employment and other contracts.

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

Over the next two years, I seek to assist NACOLE's executive director create a sustainable and ongoing fundraising program that involves tracking, soliciting, and increasing yearly charitable donations and/or grants. Since 2022, I've been responsible for approximately \$35,000 in charitable donations, yet as an organization NACOLE has generally received under \$20,000 per year in donations (independent of conference sponsorships, scholarship-restricted funds, and project grants).

NACOLE has taken important steps during my board tenure to strengthen its internal infrastructure to better fulfill its mission and goals. For example, we established and filled the positions of executive director, event coordinator, administrative assistant, and communications and marketing consultant, hired a professional bookkeeping firm, and revised our policies and procedures manual. We have begun branding and expanding our communications, raising NACOLE's visibility. We are offering more webinars, training and technical assistance programs, and specialized forums than we have in the past. However, NACOLE must increase its net revenues in order to attract and retain staff by offering competitive salaries and benefits. Expanding and retaining staff will allow NACOLE to continue increasing its capacity to educate communities regarding civilian oversight, broaden training programs for members and stakeholders, maintain and routinely update a comprehensive repository of civilian oversight of law enforcement data, research, and resources, and enhance membership support programs.