



NACOLE Candidate Election Questionnaire

Name: Veneilya Harden

Position Sought: Board Member

Geographic Location: Albany New York

Current Employment: New York State Office of Mental Health (10 years).

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

- I have been a member of NACOLE since 2016 when I joined the Albany Community Police Review Board.

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

- I have not served on any NACOLE committees however I have served on 2 NACOLE panels from last year's conference, and this year's regional conference topics outlined below.
- *October 2024- Overcoming Obstacle: Strategies for Effective Civilian Oversight. Tucson, AZ.*
- *Resource Allocation & Sustainability: Ensuring the Long- Term Viability of Civilian Oversight. NACOLE Regional Conference New York City.*

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

- Vice Chair (2017- 2025)
- Police liaison (2018- 2025)
- Mediation Chair (2020-2025)
- Collaborated with Albany Police and Community Stakeholders to establish a discipline matrix, collaborated with Albany Police to re-establish the use of Mediation working closely with Program Director Michele Andre to identify best practices, collaborated with Albany Police to provide education to new police recruits, advocated and collaborated with community groups for the passage of Local Law J in 2020 providing the Police Review Board with increased independence and autonomy to investigate complaints

independently, review police discipline files, review body and police camera footage in critical incidents prior to public dissemination, advocated and received budget increase to operationalize mandates of new powers, identified independent legal counsel to support compliance of the law and subpoena power, identified and hired expert contract investigators to respond to high profile complaints.

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

As a community member impacted by police practices, I became curious about the system and joined the board in 2016. I wanted to learn and operationalized how to support my local community and establish transparency, accountability, and build bridges to progress within oversight locally.

As a tenured member in Albany, I believe joining NACOLE now nationally to use my skills, knowledge, and expertise would be a value add to the community of oversight. It would be an honor and privilege to carry on and expand the work of previous practitioners that have come before me.

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

I would bring my expert knowledge first as a community member, an expert in the field of oversight, and practitioner in the field of mental health. I believe the intersectionality of my experience coupled with my commitment to changing the narrative in police oversight for marginalized communities in collaboration with stakeholders contributes to the ongoing work and critical to have potential members like me who are willing to take the baton and keep moving the dial forward.

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

- Increased membership for groups who maybe missing from the forum most impacted.
- Support boards in technical assistance, knowledge, and expertise.
- Expand personal knowledge of boards across the country.