



NACOLE Candidate Election Questionnaire

Name: Dr. Lesli C. Myers-Small

Position Sought: At Large Member, Board of Directors

Geographic Location: Rochester, New York

Current Employment: Executive Director: Rochester PAB

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

I have been actively involved with NACOLE since June 2024, when I was appointed Executive Director of the Rochester Police Accountability Board. As part of my role, I am required to become a Certified Practitioner of Oversight (CPO) within two years of my appointment, which initially introduced me to NACOLE's training, professional standards, and broader community of civilian oversight practitioners. What began as a professional requirement quickly developed into a much deeper commitment to NACOLE and the field of civilian oversight. I saw NACOLE not simply as a pathway to certification, but as an opportunity to learn from experienced practitioners, strengthen the work of my agency, build relationships with colleagues across the country, and contribute to the continued development of civilian oversight. Since then, I have become actively engaged in NACOLE through committee service, conferences, training and professional development, peer collaboration, and other opportunities to support the organization and the field. My involvement has also expanded into statewide leadership. Most recently, I helped lead the development of the New York State Civilian Oversight Consortium and worked collaboratively with NACOLE leadership to develop a statewide affiliate model. In July 2026, the NACOLE Board unanimously approved the proposal as its first statewide affiliate pilot, creating an opportunity not only to strengthen oversight collaboration across New York State but potentially to inform similar NACOLE affiliate models nationally. In just over two years, my relationship with NACOLE has evolved from entering the organization as a new executive director seeking training and certification to becoming an active contributor to its committees, initiatives, and broader mission. That evolution, and the relationships I have developed with oversight professionals across the country, has deepened my commitment to NACOLE and is an important part of why I am now seeking the opportunity to serve the organization at the national leadership level.

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

In 2026, I began serving on NACOLE's Membership Development & Support Committee, where I have had the opportunity to contribute to efforts focused on member engagement, support, and strengthening connections across the civilian oversight community. My volunteer involvement with NACOLE also includes serving as Co-Chair, alongside Edward Harness, of the Executive Leadership One-Day Workshop at NACOLE's 2025 Pre-Conference. This opportunity allowed me to help shape and facilitate a professional learning experience specifically designed for executive leaders in civilian oversight. I particularly valued the opportunity to engage with

fellow executives around the unique leadership, organizational, and strategic challenges that accompany this work. Beyond these formal roles, I have remained actively engaged in NACOLE conferences, trainings, professional development, and peer collaboration. These experiences have allowed me not only to benefit from NACOLE's resources, but also to contribute my leadership experience and perspective to the broader oversight community. I see volunteer service as an important part of NACOLE's strength. My involvement has reinforced my desire to continue contributing my time, experience, and leadership to the organization in ways that support both its members and the advancement of civilian oversight nationally.

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

I have served as Executive Director of the Rochester Police Accountability Board (PAB) since June 2024, leading an independent civilian oversight agency charged with advancing accountability, transparency, and public trust in policing in Rochester, New York. I am also a Certified Practitioner of Oversight through NACOLE. My experience in civilian oversight has required me to lead during a particularly complex period for the PAB. Significant court decisions altered portions of the Board's original authority, requiring our organization to adapt while remaining firmly focused on the responsibilities and opportunities that remained available to us. I have led the PAB's strategic transition toward an increased emphasis on policy and systemic oversight, complaint intake and trend identification, public education, community engagement, transparency, and data-informed recommendations for change. Under my leadership, the PAB has continued to examine policing policies and practices and develop recommendations intended to strengthen accountability and community trust. Our work has addressed issues including police surveillance, the cost of police misconduct, mass gatherings and protests, and emerging technologies in law enforcement. I have also worked extensively with elected officials, law enforcement leadership, legal counsel, community organizations, and residents to advance productive conversations about civilian oversight while preserving the PAB's independence and mission. A significant part of my oversight philosophy is that oversight does not have to begin after something goes wrong. Effective civilian oversight can also be proactive, examining policies, systems, training, technology, organizational practices, and emerging issues before they result in harm or erode public trust. My experience has increasingly expanded beyond Rochester. I spearheaded the development of the New York State Civilian Oversight Consortium, an initiative designed to connect civilian oversight agencies and practitioners across New York State for collaboration, professional development, resource sharing, and mutual support. Working collaboratively with NACOLE leadership, that initiative evolved into a proposal for a statewide affiliate model, which the NACOLE Board unanimously approved in July 2026 as its first statewide affiliate pilot. I bring to civilian oversight not only my experience leading an oversight agency, but also decades of executive leadership in complex public institutions. That background has shaped how I approach this work: with an emphasis on organizational leadership, strategic thinking, collaboration, equity, transparency, systems change, and the courage to continue advancing meaningful oversight even when the environment is challenging.

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

I want to serve on NACOLE's Board because I believe deeply in the importance of effective, independent, and sustainable civilian oversight and in NACOLE's unique role in strengthening the people and organizations entrusted with this work. Leading the Rochester Police Accountability Board has shown me both the promise and complexity of civilian oversight. While agencies operate within different legal and political environments, many face similar challenges: maintaining independence, securing access to information, building public trust, navigating change, and demonstrating impact. NACOLE provides the

professional standards, training, resources, and national network that help practitioners meet those challenges. NACOLE has played an important role in my own development as an oversight professional. I came to the organization in 2024 seeking to learn and grow, and I have since had opportunities to lead, collaborate, and build relationships with colleagues across the country. I now want to contribute to strengthening that experience for others. I am particularly interested in expanding peer support, leadership development, professional learning, and state and regional collaboration. My work developing the New York State Civilian Oversight Consortium reinforced my belief that oversight is stronger when practitioners are connected rather than working in isolation. NACOLE's mission is important to me because oversight is about more than responding when something goes wrong. At its best, civilian oversight can strengthen systems, improve policies and practices, elevate community voice, and build public trust. I would bring to the Board my perspective as an oversight practitioner and experienced executive leader, along with a willingness to listen, collaborate, and work. NACOLE has strengthened my ability to do this work, and I would welcome the opportunity to help strengthen NACOLE and the field in return.

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

I would bring strategic leadership, collaboration, organizational development, and systems thinking to the NACOLE Board. As a longtime executive leader, I have experience leading organizations through significant change, building partnerships, developing people, and turning ideas into actionable initiatives. I also bring a strong commitment to innovation, equity, transparency, and relationship-building. I am a collaborative leader who listens, asks difficult questions when necessary, and is willing to do the work required to move an organization forward. Most importantly, I would bring a national perspective grounded in the day-to-day realities of leading a civilian oversight agency and a genuine commitment to helping NACOLE and its members thrive.

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

My primary goal would be to help strengthen NACOLE's capacity to support, connect, and develop civilian oversight practitioners and agencies across the country. I would particularly like to advance opportunities for leadership development, mentoring, peer support, and state and regional collaboration. Oversight professionals often lead in complex and sometimes isolating environments, and NACOLE can play an important role in ensuring that practitioners have strong networks, practical resources, and access to colleagues who understand the challenges of the work. I would also like to help NACOLE continue strengthening the field's ability to demonstrate the value and impact of civilian oversight, particularly as agencies navigate changing legal, political, technological, and community environments. Finally, I want to contribute to NACOLE's long-term organizational strength and sustainability. I would approach Board service by listening to members, working collaboratively with fellow Board members and staff, and helping turn good ideas into meaningful action. Ultimately, I would like my Board service to help ensure that no oversight practitioner or agency feels that it has to do this difficult work alone.