Tapping into power: Explaining women's access to local political power

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Abstract

Women lack equal access to political power. Remedying women's exclusion from political power requires disentangling women's lack of interest or ambition (supply) from discrimination against women by elites and voters (demand). We provide a new window into this puzzle by focusing on appointments to local boards and commissions. Our unique dataset of applicants to appointed boards at the local level in the United States contains detailed professional, civic, and political information about the applicants, permitting us to test not just whether women's ambition differs from men's, but also if their qualifications and interests vary in meaningful ways. Using this new lens into local political power, we find that women are indeed less likely to apply for political positions, particularly powerful positions. The men and women who do apply are equally qualified. Despite these qualifications, women are less likely to be appointed to boards with more authority and power.

Keywords: gender, urban politics, political selection, political engagement, appointed office, expertise, gender stereotypes

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Women lack access to positions of power across a wide set of political offices, both elected and appointed (Jalalzai 2016; Oliver and Conroy 2018). The consequences of women's underrepresentation are widespread, including the exclusion of women's perspectives from the policymaking process, lower quality deliberation and policymaking, and general challenges to fairness and democracy. Remedying women's exclusion from political power requires disentangling women's lack of interest or ambition from discrimination against women by elites and voters. An extensive literature points to a lack of *supply;* that is, women do not put themselves forward for positions of power, are reluctant to run for office, or are interested in roles that relate to specific policy areas, rather than more general positions of power (Green et al. 2023; Crowder-Meyer 2020; Junqueira et al. 2025). Another robust body of scholarship points to limits via *demand,* or bias on the part of political elites and voters, who express skepticism about the ability of women to hold or succeed in positions of power (Crowder-Meyer 2013; McGrath et al. 2025).

Even once women access positions in political institutions, that power is segmented within bodies, with women segregated into less powerful committee memberships, remits, or offices, particularly those that focus on communal issues like education and social welfare (Payson et al. 2023; Armstrong et al. 2022; Murray and Sénac 2018). But complete information about the preferences for committee assignments or the qualifications of applicants are rarely available, challenging the ability of scholars to isolate the effects of supply compared to demand.

In this article, we focus on local appointed boards as a unique lens through which to understand the influence of *supply* and *demand* as forces that keep women out of positions of power. Even though all cities in the United States have local boards, and commissions and

hundreds of thousands of men and women sit on these boards, scholars have paid only limited attention to these political bodies (Holman 2025; Einstein, Palmer, et al. 2019; Sahn 2025). Drawing on original data on the gender composition of more than 40,000 board seats in the United States, we first show that patterns on local boards in the U.S. mirror what we have long observed about legislatures and other public offices in the U.S. and around the world: Women are (1) generally underrepresented in local appointed boards, (2) particularly underrepresented on boards with the most power and influence, and (3) equally or overrepresented on boards related to communal issues, such as welfare and health.

But where do these gender differences come from? We collect and analyze a new database that offers unprecedent insight into the supply and demand factors which produce these patterns. Our database features the entire universe of women's and men's applications to serve on appointed boards in a mid-sized city in the western United States for over a decade. Included in our dataset is information on the applicants' full professional qualifications, previous civic participation, and political engagement. In contrast to existing work on appointments to committees or remits that only observes who is ultimately selected for positions, these data permit us to examine separately the gender differences among applicants (reflecting the *supply*) and gender differences among those who are appointed, given the supply (or the *demand* from those already in power).

We find that the pattern of women's representation on boards is a function of *both* the supply of women applicants and the demand for women on boards. Women apply at lower rates overall and especially to power boards, while men and women apply at the same rate to communal boards. Over and above women's lower rates of application to power boards, women are selected for these positions at even lower rates, even though they are either similarly or more

qualified than the men in the pool of applicants. Our results speak to the ways that gendered patterns in society interact with biases to limit women's access to power.

Our findings of gender differences in access to power in local boards suggest broad applicability of these patterns. The barrier to entry for these positions is quite low, with minimal demands on time and effort; in particular, appointees do not need to win an election to hold these offices. The city we study has non-partisan local elections, with a woman mayor and majority woman city council over our timespan. For much of our period of study, the state legislature had one of the highest rate of women legislators of any state in the nation (Sweet-Cushman et al. 2025). That we observe the same patterns of underrepresentation and segregation for local and appointed positions as we do for national and elected positions points to the limits of women's access to power, the stereotypes that shape that access, and the interests of women themselves.

Local Boards and Commissions in American Politics

Cities across the United States routinely appoint thousands of residents to local boards and commissions (hereafter, boards) (Holman 2025; Einstein, Glick, et al. 2019; Lucas 2016). These local political institutions exercise real power and impact through policy-making (Einstein, Glick, et al. 2019; Sahn 2025). Appointed office holders engage with all local issues, including those related to economic development, planning, zoning, and housing development, public services such as infrastructure, libraries, and parks, public safety, and budgeting. Board appointments offer individuals a chance to engage in political deliberation, network with other elites, and learn the political processes of their city government. These boards often provide an opportunity to build political experience and networks prior to running for elected office (Sanbonmatsu 2006; Shames et al. 2020).

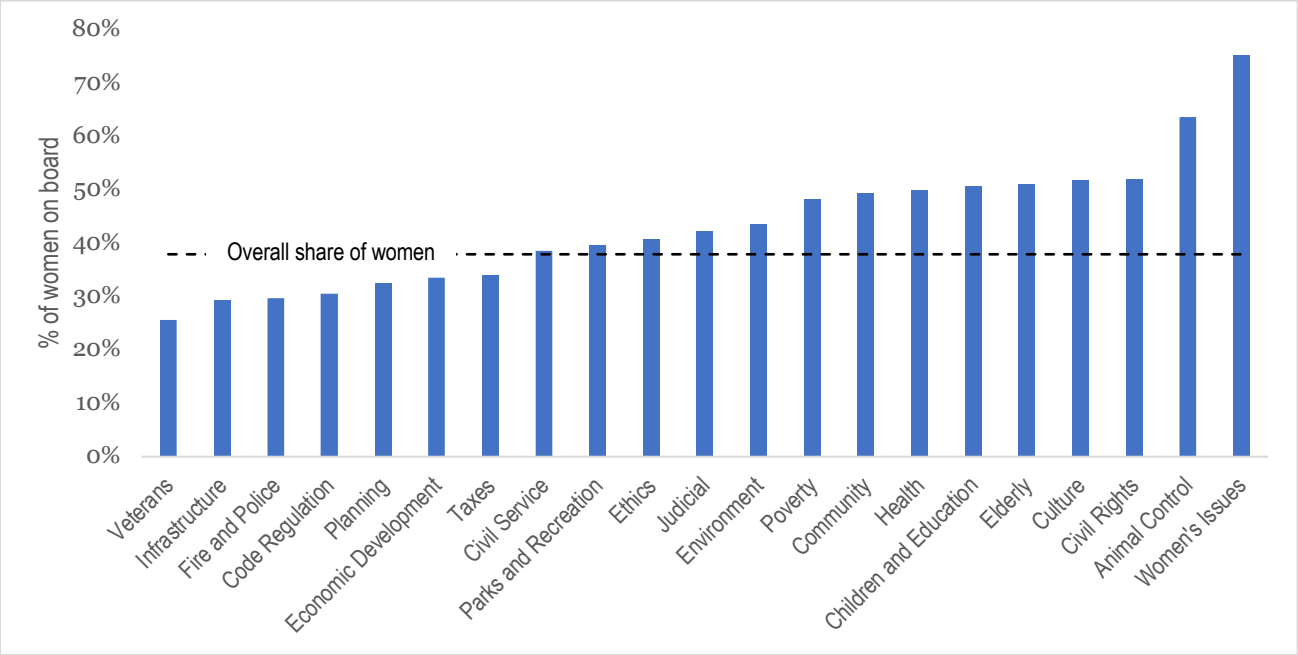
Appointments to these local offices are persistently understudied: As Dougherty and Easton (2011, 520) note: "One of the most common, but least understood mechanisms for citizen participation is the appointed public volunteer board." While the exact process of appointment varies from city to city, generally city councils and mayors appoint residents to boards to demonstrate commitment to participatory democratic ideals, increase citizen engagement with government, and distribute (and influence) the policy-making capacity of government across a larger set of individuals (Holman 2025). Appointees are generally volunteers and only rarely compensated. Most cities invite citizens to apply for board positions through a public process. Nominations also can be made by members of the city council, the mayor, and/or civic groups. On some boards, seats may be reserved for certain industries or interests, such as a representative from local realtors on an economic development board. In most cities, board appointments are formally considered and approved by the city council or the mayor. Unlike running for office, where candidacy is followed by a public campaign, a board appointment does not require that kind of publicity, effort, or expense. But board appointment can be a relatively low-cost way to build political experience and networks if interested in moving on to elected office in the future (Sanbonmatsu 2006; Shames et al. 2020).

Representation of Women on Local Boards

Scholarly inattention to local boards means that we previously had little information on women's representation on them (Manion et al. 2025). Our original dataset consists of the membership of local boards (50,674 board members and almost 11,000 board-year observations) in 46 cities over at least ten years (2010-2023); see Appendix B for details on the data. The data reveal three key gendered patterns on local appointed boards. First, women are underrepresented: On average, women make up 39 percent of a city's board appointments (Figure 1). The average

masks considerable variation across boards. 30 percent of boards have no women at all, and another 29 percent have only one woman. Second, women are equally or overly represented on boards that address issues like health, children, culture, the elderly, and (especially) women's issues. Third, women are particularly excluded from those boards that represent the traditional power sources in local politics, including taxation, fire and police, and land use regulation.

Figure 1. The share of women on local boards varies by board type.



These patterns are familiar. A persistent finding in research on gender and political representation is that women in political office focus more on issues of concern to women, such as crafting legislation on children, education, and families, or funding social services and education (Swers 2002; Holman 2015; Barnes et al. 2021). Women in state legislatures are more likely to serve on health and education related committees (Payson et al. 2023) and women's representation on national cabinets is similarly focused on less prestigious and more communal remits (Barnes and O'Brien 2018; Armstrong et al. 2022). The Inter-Parliamentary Union reports that women cabinet ministers tend to lead "human rights, gender equality, and social protection

portfolios," while men "dominate policy areas such as economic, defence, justice, and home affairs portfolios" (IPU 2023). Is such segregation a consequence of supply or demand? Appointers may assume women have specific kinds of expertise, but women may also seek out boards in particular areas. For example, women are more likely to run for positions like school board, city clerk, and state education officers (Fox and Oxley 2003; Anzia and Bernhard 2022; Bernhard and Holman 2025).

Explaining Women's Representation on Boards

What explains these widely observed patterns? Grounded in the literature on women's representation, we focus on two general sets of explanations. One set of explanations concerns the *supply* of women applicants. First, women and men may have different *interests*, and those differences may lead women to be less focused on or attentive to politics than men in general, and to gender segregation in the kinds of policies that attract women and men to politics. Second, women and men may have different *qualifications, expertise,* and/or *access to power*, which provide differential preparation for and opportunities to serve on boards. The other set of explanations highlight the problem of *demand*. Both women's underrepresentation and their segregation to certain kinds of boards may be a result of gender *bias* on the part of those doing the appointing. Our original data on local boards offer a unique opportunity to test the relative influence of these different kinds of explanations.

Boards as an ideal case

A central obstacle to increasing the gender parity in positions of power is women's lack of interest in pursuing them. In short, women are far less likely than men to put themselves forward for political positions. Why? Gendered political socialization teaches children that politics is for boys from a young age, a lesson that is reinforced throughout the lifecycle

(Campbell and Wolbrecht 2025; Bos et al. 2022). But local appointed boards circumvent many of the challenges identified by researchers as gender-specific barriers to gender equity in elected office.

If women are going to express equal rates of ambition for any position, a local appointed board offers an ideal environment. Compared to elected office, the barriers to entry are quite low. Previous research suggests women are election averse; they are interested in problem solving and leadership, but dislike the conflictual necessity of standing for office (Kanthak and Woon 2015; Preece and Stoddard 2015). Board appointments avoid the election problem. Women are more likely than men to be driven by communal, rather than agentic, goals (Diekman et al. 2011); board appointments are often framed around caring for the community and solving local problems (Holman 2025). Women are particularly motivated to engage in politics to solve specific policy problems (Green et al. 2023). While many elected positions require generalists, the issue-based organization of boards permits women to specialize and work directly on a specific local concern. Women's family obligations often stand as a barrier to them seeking political office (Bernhard et al. 2021), but board appointments require far less time and energy than elected positions and do not require that participants give up jobs or income.

Supply: Interest, qualifications, and access

Despite the advantages that boards offer for remedying women's underrepresentation, they are still political bodies that require a base level of interest. The gap between men and women in political ambition, where women consistently express lower levels of interest in political office and see politics as incompatible with their broader goals, has persisted even as other barriers to women's access have weakened or disappeared (Junqueira et al. 2025). Because women will not be selected for positions they do not pursue, women's lack of interest in political

office serves as a central obstacle to gender parity. If women are simply less interested in political leadership, then they will be less likely to apply for a board position.

Gender differences in interest may also help explain women's overrepresentation on communal issue boards and underrepresentation on power boards. A tendency toward communal (rather than agentic) goals means that women's motivations for running for political office are often different than men's interests (Green et al. 2023; Fraile and Marinova 2024; Schneider et al. 2016), Women are more likely to look to influence policy, work collaboratively with others to solve social problems, and to give voice to voiceless, while men are more likely to report that they want to run for office to gain power, to further their own careers, and to become leaders (Green et al. 2023; Gulzar 2021). Men and women may thus see board membership through different lenses, where men seek membership on boards that will bring them additional leadership opportunities (power boards) and women seek committee memberships that will allow them to solve specific policy problems, particularly in areas that align with their expected interests in care, children, and so on (communal boards).

Occupational segregation, where men and women work in different occupations and industries, is one of the most stable, widespread, and persistent forms of gender difference in modern American society. For example, more than 85% of elementary school teachers are women and a similar share of construction workers are men (Barnes and Holman 2020). Gender segregation in occupations mean that women are also more likely to come from occupational backgrounds (such as education and health) that align with communal issue boards (Barnes et al. 2021). A mismatch between women's occupations, experiences, and education and the substantive expertise associated with many boards might produce gender segregation in the types of boards on which women seek to serve.

People also develop expertise through their participation in voluntary associations. As with occupation, women's civic networks and activism are likely more focused on communal topics than on topics related to power boards (Conroy and Green 2020). Even when in the same groups, men are more likely to serve in leadership and public-facing positions (Burns et al. 2001). In sum, there may be a lower *supply* of women overall and for power boards in particular, due to patterns in the distinct expertise and experience women and men gain from employment and volunteer activity.

Demand: Gender bias

Demand side explanations focus on the potential biases of those who are directly or indirectly responsible for the election or appointment of women to public office. Contemporary gender biases in politics take many forms, including explicit sexism (Cassese and Holman 2019), a preference for leaders who will be strong enough or have relevant policy expertise (Bauer 2020), assumptions about women's and men's traits and issue expertise (Sweet-Cushman 2022), and women's exclusion from social and professional networks so that they are not 'in mind' when recruitment and appointment occurs (Crowder-Meyer 2013; Sweet-Cushman 2020). As a result, women less likely to be appointed, even those who have the appropriate credentials and experience and have expressed interest in the position.

Gender biases may also lead to gender segregation in women's appointments. Stereotypes about women's expertise and interests include that women are going to be better at handling issues related to children and redistribution (Hamel and Bauer 2024; Bauer 2018). Political party leaders in legislatures may believe that women will be better at being a member of education or welfare committees, or that men will be better at handling the issues handled by more powerful committees (McGrath et al. 2025); similarly, heads of state often see men as better able to handle

the policy demands of powerful cabinet remits (Barnes and O'Brien 2018). In a relatively low information environment like board appointments, appointers may rely on these gender biases and appoint men and women to the boards that they believe align with strengths associated with their gender. This might lead appointers to view women as a bad fit for power boards or a preference for women on communal interest boards.

The Board Applicant Pool Dataset

To assess the degree to which *supply* and *demand* shape which boards women are apply to and are appointed to, we turn to a second original dataset, our Board Applicant Pool dataset. The Board Applicant Pool dataset contains the universe of applicants for all board and commission positions in a medium-sized city in the American west from 2013 to 2024, more than 2,200 applications. Because we observe the applicant pool, not just those who are ultimately appointed, these data provide a unique opportunity to distinguish between supply and demand.

In many ways, our city is a best possible case for women's appointment to boards. The city had a woman mayor for the entirety of our data collection period (Manion et al. 2025) and the share of women on the elected city council ranged from 45% to 60% during these eleven years. All elections in the city are non-partisan and the partisan composition of the city council and mayor includes independents (20%), Democrats (50%), and Republicans (30%). The city is racially, ethnically, and economically diverse, with several main industries and a growing population base.

Open positions on boards are well advertised by the city and a highly professionalized city staff oversees the application process. To apply, residents provide a range of information including full address, occupation, employer, community group membership, education, and a statement about why they are interested in the position via an application form. Applicants are

also asked to attach a resume to their application. By all accounts, the process of appointment is fairly low-barrier and available to any resident of the city with interest in serving. See Appendix C1 for an example of the application. These applications provide the information for our measures of supply.

The city council (including the mayor) votes on all appointments to boards. Positions on boards are filled as terms expire, or board members resign. As a result, board appointments are generally considered during most city council meetings, with each board receiving attention as needed, generally once or twice a year. Before each meeting, the city clerk prepares a packet of information for the elected representatives that includes the names of all applicants to the board and each applicants' full packet of information (as available). The city council then votes on who will be appointed from the list provided to them by the city council. The selection from this applicant pool cohort represents our measure of demand.

Applicant characteristics

We obtained information on applicants and their characteristics from the publicly available minutes of the city council meetings, where board appointments were discussed or finalized. We gathered data on 2,258 applications over the period 2013-2024 and coded the application materials into quantitative data for statistical analysis. Approximately 84% of applications included resumes. From these, we are able to obtain information on baseline qualifications such as education, employment, and volunteer activities. Of the applicants where these data are available, 82% have a college degree, 42% have a graduate degree, 86% are employed, and 92% are registered to vote. 23% of applicants have at least one volunteer experience listed as part of their application profile, about 9% have political volunteer experience

such as participation in political campaigns. Details of the coding process are included in Appendix C2.

Applicants' fit with board profiles

While women are often stereotyped as lacking the right qualifications for specific roles, we are rarely able to directly observe the fit between women's and men's qualifications and specific political positions. Our data permits us to directly gauge the degree of congruence between a board's profile and those of the applicant, what we refer to as board fit. We categorize all applicants' jobs into one of 13 occupational categories from the US Census (Appendix Table D2). We also categorize applicants' jobs into 11 broad industry groups from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (Appendix Table D3). Similarly, we categorize volunteering activities and memberships into one of 16 categories based on common areas of volunteering (Appendix Table D4).

We generate a *match score* to measure the degree to which men's and women's professional and volunteer experiences may, or may not, "match" the remit of any specific board. To do so, we first categorize each board's fit with these occupation, industry, and volunteer categories. We then create a matrix of indicators based on whether the applicants' categories of occupation, industry, and volunteering match with the board to which they applied. This matrix yields three indicator variables, namely whether the applicant matches with the board on their occupation, industry, or volunteer profile. For example, if someone's occupation was "art teacher" and they volunteered for the Midtown Arts Walk and FirstStart (a mentoring program for low-income kids), then they would be categorized into the "education" category for occupation, into the "artist" industry, and the "arts and culture" and "youth" categories for volunteering. Consequently, the Arts and Culture Board would "match" with this applicant on both their industry and volunteering but not their occupation, while the Urban Forestry

Commission would not match with the applicant's profile on any dimension. We combine these indicators to generate a zero-to-three score of the match between the applicant's experience and the subject of the board to which they have applied. We assume that the decision-makers on board appointments have the same information set that we observe; i.e., if the resume or profile information is missing, we assign a score of zero on these matches. In our database, only 44% of applicants display any match with the board to which they apply, and the average match score is 0.61 on the zero-to-three scale (for further information, see Appendix Table A1).

Board classification

As described earlier, we expect patterns of gendered representation to be different across boards that represent the traditional power sources in local politics ("power boards") and those that represent community interests including women's issues ("communal boards") based on existing scholarship on both boards and communal interests (Diekman et al. 2020) and work on establishing the policymaking power of some kinds of boards (Holman 2025). In our database, we classify 15 boards as power boards and 10 as communal boards (see Appendix Table C1 for the complete lists). 28% of the applications in our database are to positions on power boards. While we have used the term power boards in this paper, consistent with previous research, we recognize that such labels are also the product of a political process. The areas in which men are active have long been viewed as more important and powerful, by definition, than those where women play a larger role. Previous research, for example, shows that when women move into professions (such as grade school teaching), the profession loses status (Levanon et al. 2009). We do not view public health, education, or children as unimportant policy arenas. Nonetheless, so-called power boards manage the largest budgets, have the most real policy making power, and

are more likely to garner attention from elected representatives (Holman 2025), and thus indicate the highest government priorities.

Applicant gender

We estimate the gender of applicants using gender-api.com, which matches first names in our data to their existing database and provides a probability that a given first name is a woman, a man, or neither.[1] We are able to classify the gender of 2255 of our 2,258 applicants.

Board appointments

In addition to applicant profiles, we constructed a database of board appointees by examining the "rosters" provided by the city clerk any time the council considered an appointment. Note that such rosters would include people who were appointed before our applicant database began in 2013, and who were still on the board several years later. We match the applicant list with the appointees list (by first and last name) to identify who was appointed to the board in the year they applied. 7.6% of our applicants get appointed to the board they applied to in the year that they apply.

The applicant pool for each board seat varies considerably across boards and time, with consequences for any one applicant's likelihood of appointment. For example, for some boards, there is a single candidate under consideration for the position, while other boards have two or three dozen applicants under consideration at one time. Because applicants will be evaluated directly against the other applicants at that specific time, we use fixed effects for this *applicant pool cohort,* representing everyone that was considered for that specific board appointment in that specific city council meeting.

[1] Applicants provide their gender and race on their applicants; this is redacted on approximately 75% of the applicants that we have access to but remains available for approximately 500 of the applicants. The two measures match 97% of the time (kappa 0.939).

Findings

With these data in hand, we now turn to our analysis of the relative importance of supply versus demand explanations for women's underrepresentation. Our initial analysis suggests that both are at work.

Women are less likely to apply to serve on boards. Women constitute 42% of applicants to boards (see Table 1). As we expected, then, at least some of the underrepresentation of women on local boards can be attributed to *supply* in that women are less likely to apply for such positions. Also in accord with our expectation, women's under-representation in the applicant pool is particularly severe for power boards: Women constitute only 33% of applicants to power boards, while they account for 46% of applicants to communal boards.

Table 1. Share of women applicants and appointees

	N	*Applicants*	*Appointed in year*
Overall	2250	42%	33%
Power boards	635	33%	13%
Communal boards	1607	46%	47%

Note: Percentages represent the share of women in each group for whom we have gender and board information.

Women are also less likely to be appointed to boards. Conditional on applying, appointers are less likely to select women for board positions; that is, there is lower *demand* for women applicants. While 42% of applicants are women, women comprise only 33% of those who are appointed to the board they applied to in a given year (Table 1). This difference is primarily driven by women's very low share (only 13%) of power board appointments, despite being 33% of all applicants. In contrast, women constitute 47% of communal board appointees, very close to their 46% representation in the applicant pool.

Supply side explanations

Supply side factors are not simply women's willingness to put themselves forward for appointments, but whether the pool of women candidates has the right qualifications and/or fit for that office. Even if women were half of the applicants, if the women who applied (the supply) were systematically less qualified or a less good fit for the position than men applicants, we would expect the outcome to be women's underrepresentation.

Are women applicants less qualified? We begin with baseline qualifications, such as a college education and political experience, that might make a candidate more competitive for appointment. Table 1 reports the overall rate of qualifications for men and women, followed by three difference values—between men and women in the applicant pool overall and then between men and women who apply to power or communal boards.[2] A positive value in these columns indicates that men have a higher level on average, while a negative value indicates that women do. We also indicate whether any of these differences are statistically significant, based on t-tests for differences of means. Note that, as discussed earlier, we code these qualifications assuming that the appointment decisionmakers have the same information that is visible to the researchers. For instance, if there is no education information available for the applicant in the city council minutes, we code "college degree" as zero.

[2] Mean values for men and women on power boards and communal boards are shown in Appendix Table A1.

Table 2. Comparing qualifications and fit of men and women applicants

	Mean values		Difference between men and women		
	Men	Women	*Overall*	*Power boards*	*Communal boards*
N	1303	947	2250	636	1611
Panel A: Qualifications					
College degree	0.510	0.520	-0.009	-0.097**	0.027
Graduate degree	0.245	0.296	-0.051**	-0.116**	-0.028
Employed	0.711	0.732	-0.020	-0.048	-0.025
Registered to vote	0.738	0.725	0.012	-0.051	0.020
Political volunteering	0.093	0.086	0.007	0.018	0.006
Any volunteer experience	0.213	0.245	-0.032*	0.002	-0.035*
Number of volunteer areas	0.423	0.505	-0.082*	0.048	-0.108**
Panel B: Match with board					
Applicant matches on industry, occupation, or volunteering	0.457	0.415	0.042**	0.028	0.051**
Applicant matches on occupation experience	0.167	0.175	-0.008	-0.008	-0.006
Applicant matches on industry experience	0.380	0.309	0.070**	0.050	0.080**
Applicant matches on volunteer experience	0.080	0.093	-0.013	0.009	-0.012
Applicant match score (0-3)	0.627	0.578	0.049	0.051	0.062

Note: Difference is calculated as men's rate minus women's rate; a negative value in the difference column indicates that women have a higher mean than men. * p<0.10, ** p<0.05 using difference of means tests.

Women are equally qualified or more qualified than men across nearly every measure. Among the whole pool of applicants, women are significantly more likely to have graduate degrees and volunteer experiences, as well as more volunteer activities per capita (Table 2, panel A). The education differences are particularly pronounced among power board applicants, where women are 10 percentage points more likely to have a college degree and 12 percentage points more likely to have a graduate degree. The volunteering differences are larger in the communal

board applicant pool, where women are 3.5 percentage points more likely to have some volunteering experience. A dearth of qualifications does not appear to explain women's underrepresentation in general, or their lesser likelihood of being appointed to power boards specifically.

Are men a better fit? Alternatively (or additionally), women in the applicant pool might be less likely to have employment and volunteer experiences that give them expertise relevant to a specific board position. Given occupational segregation and different volunteer experiences, we might expect men applicants to be a better match overall and particularly for power boards, while women applicants are a better match for communal boards.

We do indeed find that men are slightly more likely to match with the board to which they apply. Overall, 46% of male applicants show a match on occupation, industry or volunteer categories compared to 42% of female applicants (Table 2, panel B). The difference is primarily attributable to matching on the basis of industry, where men are 7 percentage points more likely to show a match with the board's requirements. Contrary to our expectations, however, women are not less likely to be a good fit with power boards; there is no significant gender difference in fit for power boards. Moreover, men are more likely to be a match (largely driven by occupation) on communal boards, also contrary to expectations. Note that such match differences are not statistically significant when we include fixed effects for application cohorts, while women's advantage in having a graduate degree remains statistically significant (Appendix Table A2).

Do supply-side or demand-side characteristics predict board appointments? Our emphasis on qualifications and fit assumes that these factors are relevant to the appointment process. In Table 3, we report on regression analyses assessing the predictive power of these supply-side applicant characteristics in explaining board appointments alongside models with

just gender included.[3] Our dependent variable is whether an applicant was appointed to the board to which they applied. Because of the possibility of cohort effects (i.e., each applicant is ultimately being evaluated alongside the other applicants in that specific pool), we include fixed effects for the applicant pool cohort in all models.

Table 3: Are women less likely to be appointed to boards, controlling for qualifications and fit?

	All boards		Power boards		Communal boards	
	Gender only	Controls	Gender only	Controls	Gender only	Controls
Gender	-0.03**	-0.03**	-0.10**	-0.09**	0.002	0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.01)	(0.01)
College degree		-0.01		0.01		-0.02
		(0.01)		(0.03)		(0.01)
Employed		-0.00		-0.01		-0.01
		(0.01)		(0.03)		(0.01)
Registered to vote		-0.00		0.08**		-0.03
		(0.01)		(0.04)		(0.02)
Any volunteer experience		0.04**		-0.04		0.03*
		(0.01)		(0.04)		(0.02)
Total match score		-0.00		0.06**		0.01
		(0.01)		(0.02)		(0.01)
Observations	2250	2250	635	635	1607	1607
R^2	0.003	0.006	0.022	0.407	0.0000	0.356

Standard errors in parentheses. * p<.1, ** p<.05. OLS regression; models with controls include fixed effects for applicant pool cohort.

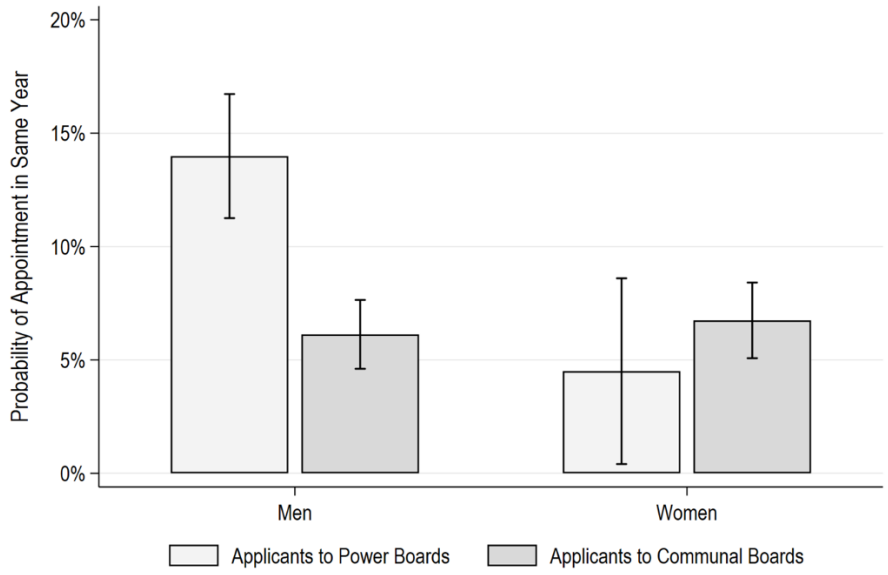
Our regression results show that, conditional on applying, women are significantly less likely to be appointed to the board they applied to (Table 3, column 1), even with controls for qualifications (Table 3, column 2). This result arises primarily from appointments to power boards (columns 3 and 4), while there is no significant difference in appointment rates of men and women on communal boards (columns 5 and 6). Power appointments are positively associated with registering to vote and the applicants match score. For communal models, only

[3] These variables are not very highly correlated among each other (Appendix Table A3), with most correlations in the expected direction e.g. college-educated applicants are more likely to have volunteer experience and slightly higher match scores.

volunteer experience is positively associated with appointment. None of the other indicators, including education and match scores, have a statistically significant association with being appointed to power or communal boards.

In Figure 2, we present post-hoc calculations of the probability of appointment for men and women across power and communal boards, with a full set of controls in a multilevel model with cohort serving as the second level. Men who apply to power boards have the highest probability of appointment, with 15% of the applicants receiving an appointment in that year. In comparison, women's and men's applications to communal boards occur at roughly half that rate, with 8% of both groups receiving an appointment. Women's appointments to power boards are the least successful, with just 5% of women receiving an appointment in that same year.

Figure 2: Men are more likely than women to be appointed to power boards



Note: produced from post-hoc calculations from Table 3

In sum, we have documented evidence for both supply- and demand-side explanations. Women are less likely to apply for board positions, particularly for power boards, indicating the presence of supply-side constraints. However, the characteristics of women applicants do not

explain why they are less likely to be appointed to power boards. Women who do apply are as qualified or more qualified than men, but less likely to be appointed, even when controlling for qualifications. This suggests a role for demand-side explanations.

Do qualifications and fit matter differently for women and men? We saw above that qualifications and fit are rarely significant predictors of whether a candidate is appointed to a board. Given stereotypes about women's abilities and expertise, as well as persistent assumptions about women's aptitude for politics, we might expect that appointers evaluate women's qualifications and fit differently when selecting board members. To evaluate that hypothesis, we estimate a model similar to the one in Table 3, but separately for women and men. We continue to report separate analyses for power and communal boards.

The results generally fail to support our expectations of bias in the weight assigned to qualifications and fit (see Table 4). Variables related to employment, including whether the applicant works outside the home and the match between the applicant's occupation and the board's remit, continue to be unrelated to whether an applicant is selected, as we saw in the full models above. In the case of voter registration, we find significant positive effects, but those effects are the same for women and men, counter to the expectation of bias.

Table 4: Do qualifications and fit matter differently for women and men?

	All boards		Power boards		Communal boards	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
College degree	-0.03*	0.01	-0.02	0.02	-0.04*	0.01
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.05)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Employed	-0.02	-0.01	0.03	-0.02	-0.03	-0.00
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.05)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Registered to vote	-0.02	0.03	0.07*	0.09*	-0.04	-0.00
	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Any volunteer experience	0.03	0.01	0.09**	-0.09	0.02	0.04
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.04)	(0.06)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Total match score	0.02*	0.01	0.03*	0.08**	0.02	-0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Constant	-0.03*	0.01	-0.02	0.02	-0.04*	0.01
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.05)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Observations	947	1300	209	426	736	871
R^2	0.594	0.384	0.804	0.405	0.559	0.360

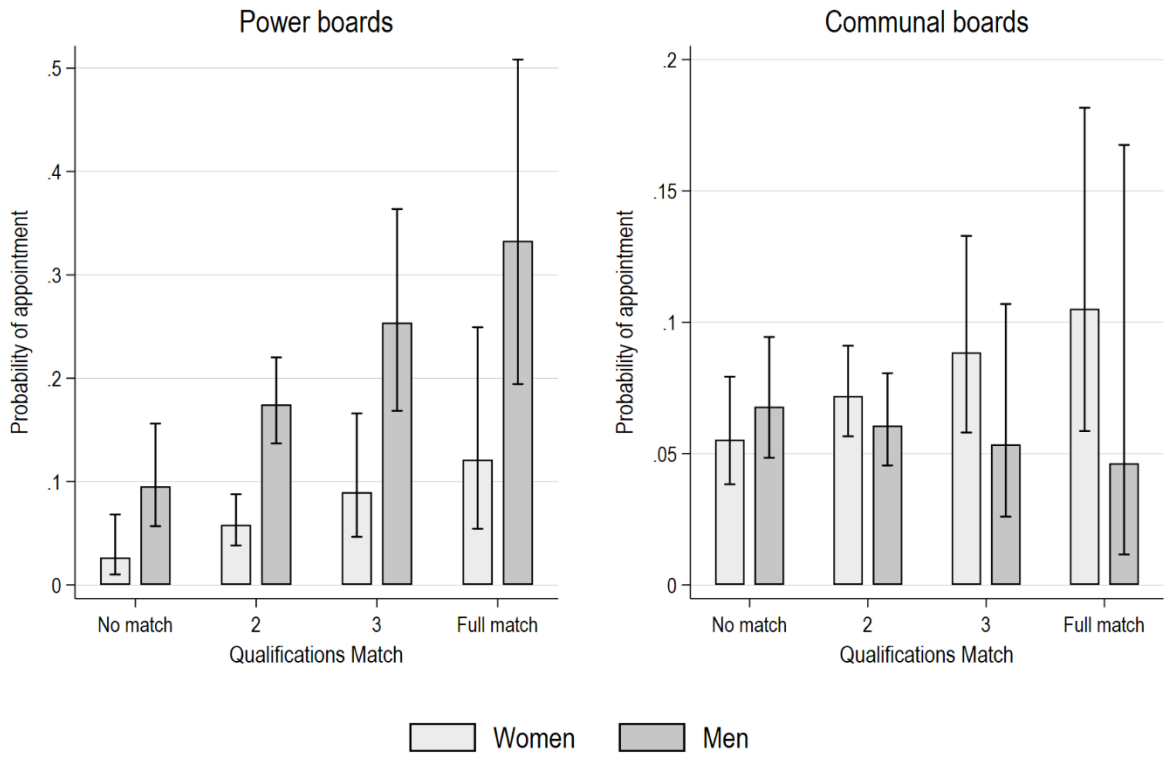
Standard errors in parentheses. * p<.1, ** p<.05

We do observe instances of qualifications working differently for women and men, but not in ways that explain women's underrepresentation on power boards. For example, a college degree does not predict appointment, perhaps reflecting that most applicants boast such degrees. The exception is women applicants to communal boards, where a college degree actually works against women's appointment, which might reflect the city council's interest in appointing economically diverse individuals to communally oriented boards, a common pattern across cities (Holman 2025). Volunteer experience is significantly associated with an increased probability of board appointment for women on power boards.

The degree to which applicants 'match' the board via their occupation, industry, or volunteer activities also has gender divergent effects, with women benefiting from a match overall, and both men and women benefiting from a match in power boards. Figure 3 below provides the post-hoc marginal effects of the effect of matching on appointment for men and women applying to the power boards (left panel) and communal boards (right panel). As the figure shows, appointments to the two kinds of boards follow very different patterns, with men's

background match increasing the probability of appointment to power boards at a substantively increased pace (especially at lower levels of the match), while men's and women's matches are statistically indistinguishable from each other in association with appointment to communal boards.

Figure 3: Probability of appointment, given background match



In sum, conditional on applying, women are less likely to be appointed to power boards, suggesting less demand for women on power boards contributes to women's representation. However, we do not find evidence that women's qualifications or fit are undervalued, or men's overvalued, suggesting that these are not the pathways for discrimination against women in appointment.

Discussion and Conclusion

Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi's (D, CA) first political position was as an appointed member of the San Francisco library commission. While Pelosi came from a political family, her work as a library commissioner helped her build political networks of her own and was a useful credential when she eventually ran for local office and then the House of Representatives (Pelosi 2019). Pelosi's story highlights the fact that local boards are often a stepping stone for broader political careers.

Local boards also have important policy-making and implementation powers on key public issues, highlighted by recent debates over banning books at libraries (governed by library boards) or about vaccinations and mask-wearing within communities (shaped by public health boards). Yet, far less scholarly attention has been focused on local boards (or local politics in general) than on the more prominent state and especially national offices. Our research addresses this oversight.

We find that the patterns of women's representation in legislatures, cabinets, and other political bodies around the world is largely replicated at the local level. Women remain underrepresented overall: In our sample of 46 cities, we find that women comprise just 39% of the membership of local boards. Women who do serve are more likely to end up on boards and committees concerning communal issues, and less likely to find their way to such bodies that are particularly powerful, and/or concerned with finance, development, and public safety. Women's exclusion from those areas constitutes a real lack of representation for women and deficiencies in the quality of deliberation and the legitimacy of the decision-making process.

To our knowledge, our paper is the first to examine data on the full set of board applicants (much less 10 years of such data), including those who are not selected, to trace the

influence of both supply- and demand-side factors. We find that women do express less *interest* in serving on boards. Moreover, women are significantly more likely to apply to serve on communal boards compared to power boards. Supply is certainly a factor in explaining women's under-representation.

The expectation that women applicants might lack the *qualifications* of the men applicants was not supported, however. Women applicants are generally equally qualified as men, and in some cases, more qualified, on dimensions such as education, employment, or volunteer experiences. Women's underrepresentation does not reflect a lack of general qualifications. We also examined match quality between an applicant's profile and the board's priorities. Women are generally as likely to match with their target board than are men, except in terms of industry, where men do have an advantage, consistent with supply explanations.

While we hypothesized that women's underrepresentation reflected their lesser likelihood of applying to boards (generally supported) and the different experiences and qualifications reflected in women's applications (generally not supported), we also allowed for the possibility that those doing the appointments are in some conscious or unconscious way biased against women applicants. Overall, we do find that demand matters, particularly in terms of power boards. Conditional on applying—that is, putting aside supply—women are still much less likely to be appointed to power boards than are men, even when controlling for qualifications and fit. Demand also matters. To our surprise, general qualifications like education and employment do not predict whether an applicant is appointed. Similarly, none of the match variables mattered in our model of communal board appointments. For power boards, however, men, but not women, get a boost in the probability of appointment when they match on industry.

An obvious caveat to our research is that no matter how useful our data are, they only represent one American city. We would certainly welcome the opportunity to replicate our analysis on a large, representative sample of U.S. cities. We note that our data come from a city that is in many ways a "best case" for women's appointment, and still our research indicates that both supply and demand remain important barriers to women's equality. Future research should further explore *why* women are less likely than men to apply for these relatively easily-accessed and policy-focused political positions; both surveys of those qualified to apply and insight into the distribution of expertise in the entire population would be useful here.

Service on local boards and commissions offers opportunities to shape public policy making and implementation that impacts thousands of people. Board membership is often a first step for those seeking broader political careers. Our research into this generally understudied form of political representation indicates that gendered patterns of representation characterize even the most local levels of government, and helps to set the stage for increasing gender inequality up the political ladder.

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Tapping into power: Explaining women's access to local political power

Appendix A: Supplemental Results

Table A1: Qualifications and match scores for men and women applicants to power and communal boards

	Power boards		*Communal boards*	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Panel A: Qualifications				
College degree	0.444	0.541	0.540	0.512
Graduate degree	0.209	0.325	0.258	0.287
Employed	0.791	0.842	0.680	0.705
Registered to vote	0.775	0.823	0.712	0.692
Political volunteering	0.075	0.057	0.099	0.092
Any volunteer experience	0.169	0.167	0.230	0.265
Number of volunteer areas	0.378	0.330	0.440	0.548
Panel B: Match with board				
Applicant matches on industry, occupation, or volunteering	0.434	0.407	0.470	0.418
Applicant matches on occupation experience	0.155	0.163	0.173	0.179
Applicant matches on industry experience	0.371	0.321	0.387	0.307
Applicant matches on volunteer experience	0.047	0.038	0.096	0.109
Applicant match score (0-3)	0.573	0.522	0.657	0.595

Table A2: Gender differences in qualifications with applicant pool cohort fixed effects

	Gender	
	Coefficient	Standard error
College degree	0.02	(0.02)
Graduate degree	0.06**	(0.02)
Employed	0.02	(0.02)
Registered to vote	0.02	(0.02)
Political volunteering	0.00	(0.01)
Any volunteer experience	0.03	(0.02)
Number of volunteer areas	0.08	(0.05)
Any Match	-0.02	(0.02)
Applicant Occupation & Board Match	-0.00	(0.02)
Applicant Industry & Board Match	-0.03	(0.02)
Applicant Volunteering & Board Match	0.00	(0.01)
Total match score	-0.03	(0.03)

Note: * p<0.05. Each coefficient represents the output from an ordinary least squares regression model regressing the qualification item onto gender with fixed effects for the applicant pool cohort. A positive value indicates women are more likely to have that qualification, while a negative value indicates that men are more likely to have that qualification.

Table A3: Correlations among supply-side explanatory variables

	College degree	Employed	Registered to vote	Any volunteer experience	Match score (0-3)
College degree	1				
Employed	0.0392*	1			
Registered to vote	0.0159	0.1656**	1		
Any volunteer experience	0.2883**	-0.0683**	-0.0671**	1	
Match score (0-3)	0.3349**	0.0072	-0.0048	0.3237**	1

* p<0.10, ** p<0.05

Appendix B: Representation in City Boards and Commissions (RCBC) Dataset

These data were gathered in collaboration with United WE, a nonprofit that seeks to, among other things, advance the representation of women on boards and commissions through its Appointments Project initiative. The dataset includes cities in which United WE's Appointments Project has been active as well as a set of comparator cities that are similar to those cities in terms of population and region (Table B1 provides a list of cities in the RCBC database). We use Gender API, an algorithm that uses available databases (such as Social Security), to assign the gender of the appointee based on first name. This API relies on databases from the U.S. census microdata (IPUMS) and the Social Security Administration. The program succeeds in classifying more than 99% of names in our database.

Table B1: List of cities and years of data in the database

City	Years of data
Arlington, TX	2010-2023
Austin, TX	2010-2023
Buffalo, NY	2016-2023
Cedar Rapids, IA	2010-2021
Charlotte, NC	2021
Columbia City, MO	2010-2021, 2023
Corpus Christi, TX	2012-2022
Dallas, TX	2010-2023
Denver, CO	2010-2022
Des Moines, IA	2010-2023
Durham, NC	2013-2023
El Paso, TX	2010-2022
Encinitas, CA	2010-2023
Fargo, ND	2010-2022
Fayetteville, NC	2016-2023
Fort Lauderdale, FL	2020-2023
Fort Worth, TX	2016-2023
Golden Valley, MN	2010, 2013, 2020-2022
Indio, CA	2010-2023
Kansas City, MO	2017, 2021
Lauderhill, FL	2020-2022
Lincoln, NE	2018-2023

Long Beach, CA	2010-2023
Mesa City, AZ	2010-2023
Miami, FL	2010-2023
New Orleans, LA	2011-2023
Oklahoma City, OK	2010-2023
Omaha, NE	2021-2023
Pittsburgh, PA	2010-2020
Prairie View, KS	2023
Prairie Village, KS	2010-2023
Raleigh, NC	2011-2021
Redlands, CA	2010-2023
XXX, NV	2020
Richmond, IN	2012-2022
Richmond, VA	2010-2014; 2020-2023
Sacramento, CA	2016-2023
Seattle, WA	2015-2023
Sioux Falls, SD	2010-2023
St Louis, MO	2022
Tucson, AZ	2010-2023
Tulsa, OK	2017-2023
Webster Groves, MO	2015-2022
West Fargo, ND	2014-2023
Wichita, KS	2010-2023
Wilmington, NC	2021

Table B2: Types of Boards

Communal boards

Animal Control, including zoos and animal shelters

Children and education, including youth councils, mentoring, anti-bullying initiatives, but not including elected boards of education

Civil rights, including minority rights, police oversight, recognition of native, Hispanic, African American history, and disability rights

Community, including neighborhood boards, community relations, and city-wide engagement efforts

Culture, including arts, music, sister cities (surprisingly popular), and library

Elderly, including senior citizen services, aging, and retirement

Ethics, including regulation of public officials, city employees, and elections

Health, including regulation of health occupations, public health, and counseling

Poverty and poor people's interests, including affordable housing, social services, and redistributional policies

Parks and Recreation, including parks, sports, and recreation activities

Women's Issues, including status of women boards, pay equity, and violence against women

Power boards

Civil Service, including pensions, hiring, and sanctions

Code Regulation, including code enforcement and regulation of electrical, plumbing, and building codes

Economic Development, including tax incentives, improvement districts, tourism, and other development-oriented services

Fire and Police, including 911, EMS, and public safety

Infrastructure, including public works, ports, bridges, and roads

Judicial, including public defenders, criminal enforcement, and sentencing

Planning, including zoning, historic preservation, and design review

Taxes and budgeting, including income tax regulation, budget oversight, and municipal borrowing

Veterans, including veteran support, military base coordination, and patriotic efforts.

Undecided

Environment, including climate change, urban forests, nature preserves, and wetlands

Appendix C: Board Applicant List Information

C1. Example of the application form:

City of XXX Board or Commission Membership Application (2024 version)
PLEASE BE ADVISED THAT ALL INFORMATION COLLECTED IN THIS APPLICATION IS PART OF THE CITY OF XXX'S PUBLIC RECORD AND IS, UPON REQUEST, AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC REVIEW. These positions are limited, in most cases, to residents of the City of XXX. The City Council endeavors to appoint persons who represent all of the various communities within the City of XXX. Please be advised that certain boards and commissions may have professional qualification requirements or require filing of financial statements with the Secretary of State. Contact the City Clerk's office at 775-334-2030 with any questions.
Contact Information
First Name (Required)
Nick Name/Preferred Name
Middle Name/Initial
Email Address (Required)
Last Name (Required)
Phone Number (Required)

Home Address (No PO Box) (Required)
City (Required)
Zip Code (Required)
Ward Press the down arrow key to access the values available for this field or start typing to filter the values
Business Address
City
Zip Code
Ward Press the down arrow key to access the values available for this field or start typing to filter the values
I agree to inform the XXX City Clerk's Office of any contact or address changes.
I Agree (Required)

Boards and Commissions Questions
Is this a new application, an application for reappointment, or an amendment to an existing application? (Required)
New Application
Reappointment
Amendment

Name of Board or Commission for which you would like to apply: (Required) Press the down arrow key to access the values available for this field or start typing to filter the values
Explain briefly why you would like to be appointed to this board or commission.
[Open ended response]
Relevant Education or Training
[Open ended response]
Are you 18 or over? (Required)
Yes No

Are you currently registered to vote in the City of XXX?
Yes No

I certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the information I provided in the application is true. If the information provided is false or incomplete, it shall be sufficient cause for disqualification or removal. If appointed, I agree to attend a board or commission orientation session, if applicable, within six months of my appointment. I understand that failure to comply with this requirement will result in automatic removal from the board or commission.

I Agree (Required)

WAIVER OF NOTICE REQUIRED UNDER NRS 241.033(1) TO ALLOW CITY COUNCIL TO CONSIDER CHARACTER, MISCONDUCT, OR COMPETENCE OF PERSON TO BE APPOINTED TO A BOARD, COMMISSION, OR OTHER PUBLIC BODY FOR THE CITY OF XXX

The City Council for the City of XXX will be considering on a future posted agenda your appointment to a board, commission or other public body for the City of XXX. Pursuant to NRS 241.033(1), in order to consider the professional competence of an applicant, notice need be provided to that person of the time and place of the meeting in compliance with such statutory provisions. By signing below, it is confirmed that I have been provided notice of the meeting at which my appointment will be considered by City Council. Further, I knowingly and voluntarily am waiving my rights to all written notice requirements under NRS 241.033(1) pertaining to my qualifications, competence, and character to hold this appointment and consent to the evaluation of my character and competence by the XXX City Council in a public meeting. Further, the undersigned acknowledges that they may at any time withdraw both this waiver and related application for appointment.
Applicants Signature

Click to Sign Document
Printed Name of Applicant:
Date
Attach Resume

C2. Data entry and coding process

What is the year of the meeting? (to find this, look at name of the file or look at the memo on the first page of the pdf)

- ○ 2024
- ○ 2023
- ○ 2022
- ○ 2021
- ○ 2020
- ○ 2019
- ○ 2018
- ○ 2017
- ○ 2016
- ○ 2015
- ○ 2014
- ○ 2013
- ○ 2012

What is the month of the meeting?

- ○ January
- ○ February
- ○ March
- ○ April

- ○ May
- ○ June
- ○ July
- ○ August
- ○ September
- ○ October
- ○ November
- ○ December

What is the name of the board or commission?
_____

What page number does this applicant's file start on?
_____

What is the applicant's first and last? Please do NOT include middle names, middle initials, or nicknames.

- ○ First name _____
- ○ Last name _____

Do you recognize this as someone whose application you have recently entered? If you click yes, you will be asked to re-enter the board application materials, but not the resume materials

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

What is the applicant's email address and phone?

- ○ Email _____
- ○ Phone _____

What is the person's address?

- ○ Home address _____
- ○ Apartment or suite _____
- ○ Zipcode _____

What ward does the applicant live in?

- ○ Ward 1
- ○ Ward 2
- ○ Ward 3
- ○ Ward 4
- ○ Ward 5
- ○ Unsure or no answer

How many years have they been a resident of [city]? If not listed, leave blank

_____

Is the applicant... (if not provided, leave blank)

	Yes	No
Over 18	○	○
Registered to vote	○	○

Employed	○	○
Convicted of a felony / misdemeanor	○	○

What is their employer and job title? For the last item, please google the employer and provide a link to their website if available. If no employer or job listed, please leave blank.

○ Employer _____

○ Job title _____

○ Website of employer _____

Which of the following boards has this person applied to? (Select all that apply - you may need to hit the control key to select multiple boards)

☐ Access advisory Committee

☐ Airport Noise Advisory

☐ Arts and Culture Commission

☐ Building Enterprise Fund Advisory Committee

☐ Charter Committee

☐ Civil Service Commission

☐ Development Committee of the [city] Housing Authority

☐ Downtown Police Special Assessment District Committee

☐ Financial Advisory Board

- [ ] Historical Resources Commission
- [ ] Housing Authority Board
- [ ] Human Rights Commission
- [ ] Neighborhood Advisory Boards
- [ ] OPEB Trust Fund
- [ ] Planning Commission
- [ ] Public Arts Commission
- [ ] Recreation and Parks Commission
- [ ] Regional Water Planning Commission
- [ ] Redevelopment Agency Board
- [ ] [city] City Council
- [ ] [city] Tahoe Airport Authority
- [ ] [city] Airport Noise Panel
- [ ] Senior Citizen Advisory Committee
- [ ] Special Events Sponsorship Committee
- [ ] Tenant Issues and Concerns Citizen Advisory Board

- [ ] Urban Forest Commission
- [ ] [County] County District Board of Health
- [ ] [County] County HOME Consortium
- [ ] Western Nevada Development District
- [ ] Youth City Council
- [ ] Ward 1 Neighborhood Advisory Board
- [ ] Ward 2 Neighborhood Advisory Board
- [ ] Ward 3 Neighborhood Advisory Board
- [ ] Ward 4 Neighborhood Advisory Board
- [ ] Ward 5 Neighborhood Advisory Board

What education or training relevant to the board does the applicant have? Sometimes the question reads "Please give a brief discourse on why you are qualified for this position." (Please transcribe or copy directly.)

_____

Why does the applicant want to join this board? (Please transcribe or copy directly)

_____

If the applicant's gender, race, and date of birth are not blacked out, please provide the gender below. Leave blank if it is blacked out.

- ○ Male

- ○ Female
- ○ Non-binary / third gender
- ○ Prefer not to say

Applicant's race, if listed

- ○ Black
- ○ Asian
- ○ Hispanic
- ○ White
- ○ Native American
- ○ Other

Applicant's date of birth, if listed

For the next block of questions, we want you to look at the applicants CV or resume, which should follow their application in the packet. If there is not a CV for this applicant, please select "No CV in packet" below.

- ○ No CV in packet
- ○ CV in packet

Does the applicant provide any of the following information on their resume (check all that apply)

- ☐ Birth date
- ☐ Marital status

- [ ] Presence or ages of children

Does the applicant have any college degree(s) listed on their resume? Please select all that apply.

- [ ] No college degree
- [ ] An associates degree
- [ ] A bachelor's degree
- [ ] A master's degree
- [ ] A PhD or Ed.D
- [ ] A JD
- [ ] A MBA
- [ ] Some other degree

What colleges did the applicant receive degrees from? If they didn't receive a degree, leave it blank. If they received multiple degrees (such as a masters and a PhD), provide both, separated by a semi colon

- Associate's degree _____
- Bachelor's degree _____
- Graduate degree _____
- Professional degree (JD, MBA, MD) _____

Do they list any politically relevant jobs, volunteerism, or interests? Select all that apply and then provide the details of this in the next question

- [ ] Political job, like running a political campaign
- [ ] Political volunteering, like volunteering for a political party or campaign

What politically-related efforts do they provide?

_____

Do they list any volunteering?

- ○ No
- ○ Yes

What kind of volunteering? Check all that apply. A single organization might address multiple issues (such as an organization that serves children in poverty). If you don't recognize an organization listed on their CV, please feel free to google it.

- [ ] Arts, culture, and the library, like an arts festival
- [ ] Business, like chamber of commerce
- [ ] Children or Youth, like Boys and Girls Club
- [ ] Disability services, like ARC
- [ ] Education, like a Parent-Teacher Organization
- [ ] Environmental causes, like Sierra Club
- [ ] Healthcare, like Hospice

- [ ] Housing affordability and access, including affordable housing or homelessness
- [ ] Homeowners Association
- [ ] LBGTQ+ volunteering like an ally program
- [ ] Parks and recreation, like friends of central park
- [ ] Political or government, like a political campaign
- [ ] Poverty-related, like a food bank
- [ ] Racial Equality like the NAACP or a racial unity group
- [ ] Religious organizations, like a church or faith group
- [ ] Women's organizations, like the Nevada Women's Fund or a domestic violence organization

Please list all organizations that the applicant volunteer or has volunteered for, separated by semi colons

_____

Do they list any boards or commissions in [city] that they have already served on?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

If yes, which boards:

These questions are about the employment and work listed on the resume

Does this person own their own business?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Unsure

Does this person work for the government in any capacity? Please do not include military service.

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Unsure

Has this person ever served in the military?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Unsure

What would you say that this person's occupation is? Some examples might be lawyer, teacher, office manager, small business owner, artist. If the person is retired or unemployed, please list the most recent occupation they provide

_____

What industry would you say that this person works in or has worked in? Some examples might be law, education, sales, art

_____

Is there anything that stands out from this application? Please let us know if there is anything interesting, weird, or unusual!

_____

Appendix D: Descriptive statistics of the Board Applicant Pool database

Table D1: Board list

	N applicants	% women applicants	% women appointees
Power Boards			
Airport Authority	19	37%	40%
Building Enterprise Committee	116	23%	0%
Capital Projects Surcharge	6	0%	0%
Charter Committee	4	25%	0%
Civil Service Commission	73	34%	11%
Downtown Maintenance District	6	17%	0%
Downtown Police Tax Committee	12	8%	0%
E911 Advisory Board	4	25%	0%
Financial Advisory Board	119	24%	8%
Historic Resources Commission	83	54%	22%
Trust Fund	3	67%	0%
Planning Commission	78	28%	0%
Special Events Sponsorship Committee	11	45%	0%
Technical Review Committee	2	0%	43%
Urban Forestry Commission	99	43%	13%
Communal Boards			
Access Advisory Committee	40	38%	60%
Arts And Culture	292	61%	44%
Housing Authority Board	39	56%	100%
Human Rights Commission	295	52%	50%
Neighborhood Advisory Board	656	39%	54%
Parks & Recreation	98	35%	17%
Senior Citizen Advisory Committee	47	47%	60%
Tenant Issues And Concerns	97	38%	0%
County District Board Of Health	8	0%	0%
Youth City Council	37	50%	50%

Table D2: Occupational categories

	Overall	Men	Women
business	465	276	189
information tech	23	18	5
science	118	70	48
social work	40	23	17
legal	78	42	36
education	130	49	81
artists	50	24	26
medical	34	9	25
protection	36	28	8
food prep and serving	37	22	15

admin	123	56	67
sales	71	41	30
blue collar	36	33	3
politics	11	8	3

Table D3: Industry categories

	Overall	Men	Women
business	87	55	32
information tech	42	30	12
legal	379	229	150
teacher	160	59	101
artists	96	54	42
medical	90	34	56
food prep and serving	63	35	28
admin	122	73	49
sales	90	45	45
blue collar	261	172	89
politics	125	93	32

Table D4: Volunteer categories

	Overall	Men	Women
arts & culture	67	30	37
business	50	32	18
youth	166	91	75
disability	28	14	14
education	113	57	55
environment	70	42	28
health	71	30	41
housing	55	28	27
homeowners association	24	18	6
lgbtq	27	11	16
parks	29	25	4
politics	73	46	27
poverty	71	35	36
race	23	14	9
religion	57	32	25
women's issues	55	27	28

Note: applicants can cite volunteer experience in more than one area.