

Application Form

Profile

If you have any questions or difficulty submitting this application, please reach out to Alex Guzhnay at aguzhnay@newhavenct.gov or call 203-946-7670.

Rania

First Name

M.

Middle
Initial

Das

Last Name

raniamdas@gmail.com

Email Address

470 Whitney Avenue

Home Address

Apartment B2

Suite or Apt

New Haven

City

CT

State

06511

Postal Code

What ward do you live in (optional - please select ward if you know)?☒ Ward 21

Home: (203) 997-9613

Primary Phone

Alternate Phone

Are any of the above number a cell phone number?☒ Yes ☐ No**If so, which? Also, is it okay to send a text message?**

Yes.

Are you currently employed by the City of New Haven or the New Haven Public School System?☐ Yes ☒ No

Hopkin School

Employer

Job Title

To see our list of Boards and Commissions please click here: <https://newhaven-ct.granicus.com/boards/w/976a34cad711af7c/boards>

Which Boards would you like to apply for?

Youth Commission: Submitted

Is this an appointment or reappointment request? *

☒ Reappointment

Interests & Experiences

Please tell us about yourself and why you want to serve. Please attach any of the follow:

Resume, Curriculum Vitae (CV), Professional Bio, or a Statement of Interest.

[Rania_Das_Resume_.docx.pdf](#)

Upload a Resume

If not submitting a Resume or CV, please submit a ~150 word Statement of Interest as to why you are interested in serving on your selected boards/commissions. If you have uploaded a resume, you can write n/a.

N/A

Question applies to Youth Commission, Peace Commission

Are you under 18 or over 18? If under 18, please provide your DOB. If over 18, you can write n/a

I am 17 years old

Why are you interested in serving on a board or commission?

I believe that every young person deserves a fair chance to succeed and fulfill their potential, regardless of their socioeconomic status or race. As a high school student passionate about addressing the achievement gap, recidivism, and gun violence in New Haven, I am eager to contribute my energy, dedication, and ideas to promote positive change in our community. Throughout my academic journey, I have become increasingly aware of the significant disparities that exist within our education and justice systems. Additionally, I am deeply concerned about the cycle of recidivism that affects individuals who have been involved in the criminal justice system, preventing them from successfully reintegrating into society and accessing opportunities for growth. Furthermore, the impact of gun violence on our community is an urgent issue that demands our attention and collaborative efforts. By continuing on the City Youth Commission, I hope to work with other dedicated members to develop comprehensive strategies that bridge the achievement gap and promote equitable access to education and resources for all youth. As an active member of the Commission's Research Committee, I am hoping to continue learning more about the needs of our city's youth, especially during such a politically turbulent time. I believe that investing in educational opportunities and support systems will positively impact the lives of young individuals and contribute to a thriving community. In addressing recidivism, I am eager to engage with community organizations, social services, and law enforcement agencies to create programs that facilitate successful reintegration and provide resources for at-risk individuals seeking a fresh start. Moreover, I am committed to collaborating with community leaders and organizations to promote gun violence prevention initiatives, including awareness campaigns, conflict resolution workshops, and advocating for sensible gun safety measures.

Why do you believe you would be a good fit for your selected board and commission(s)?

Throughout my academic journey, I have actively participated in various extracurricular activities, student organizations, New Haven specific democratic processes and community service projects. These experiences have instilled in me a deep sense of responsible citizenship. I possess excellent communication skills, both verbal and written, which have allowed me to effectively engage with diverse groups of people. As an articulate and empathetic individual, I believe I can effectively represent the concerns and interests of my fellow youth and be a proactive voice in advocating for the needs of our generation. In addition to my interpersonal skills, I am proactive and adept at researching and analyzing complex issues, which will enable me to contribute valuable insights to the Commission's discussions and decision-making processes. I have attached my resume, which further highlights my leadership experiences, involvement in extracurricular activities, and community service contributions. I am confident that these experiences have prepared me to make a meaningful impact, should I continue on the Youth Commission.

Do you have any time commitments that would prevent you from participating in board/commission meetings? Meeting times can be found by visiting newhavenct.gov/boards, but most are usually once a month for 1-2 hours.

I can make myself available in the evenings after school hours.

Demographics

Some boards and commissions require membership to be politically proportionate, per State Statute on minority party representation (CGS § 9-167a). What is your political affiliation on your voter registration?

YOUTH

In order to stay compliant with our city's charter, are you registered to vote in New Haven?

☐ Yes ☒ No

We strive to maintain diversity in all of our Boards and Commissions. These questions are optional and if you volunteer the information we will only use it to ensure that our boards and commissions are diverse.

Ethnicity

☒ Asian or Pacific islander

Gender

☒ Female

How did you hear about serving on our Boards & Commissions?

EDUCATION

HOPKINS SCHOOL, New Haven, CT
Grade 11

SKILLS

◆ Advanced Excel Skills ◆ MS Office Suite ◆ Canva ◆ Persuasive Writing

HONORS AND AWARDS

- ◆ **The Pulitzer Centre Local Letters for Global Change Winner 2024, [First Place in the Human Rights Category](#)**

The letter was selected from among nearly 1,200 entries representing 38 countries, 26 states, and the District of Columbia.

- ◆ **City of New Haven Board of Alders**

Awarded a Citation and Prize to “*uplift the next generation of change makers*” for winning the 2024 Pulitzer Center’s Local Letters for Global Change contest (Human Rights category).

- ◆ **Stanley Daggett Leadership Award 2024**

Recognized for leadership, strong character, and positive contributions to the quality of life at Hopkins School.

- ◆ **Harvard Political Union Young Global Leaders Program Scholarship 2025**

Recipient of a prestigious scholarship awarded by Hopkins School to attend a week long program at Harvard University for promising young leaders committed to promoting civic engagement, civil discourse, and ethical leadership.

PUBLIC ADVOCACY AND PANEL DISCUSSIONS

2024- current

- ◆ January 2025: Panelist at the *State of the Student Conference: Reconnecting Connecticut's Disconnected Students*
- ◆ December 2024: Panelist alongside CT State Leadership on webinar hosted by the Tow Youth Justice Institute’s *Building on a Decade of Progress: A Strategic Vision for Connecticut’s Youth*, contributing insights on Connecticut’s ongoing commitment to enhancing the system for children and youth.
- ◆ October 2024: Invited Speaker, CT Conference of Municipalities - 119 K Commission report launch *Young People First - A Bold Plan To Address Connecticut’s Statewide Crisis*

PUBLIC TESTIMONY – CT CONFERENCE OF MUNICIPALITIES 119K

COMMISSION

2024-2025

- ◆ March & August 2024: Testified in person at two public hearings organized by the 119K Commission, a panel of 15 statewide leaders shaping a strategy to reconnect at-risk and disconnected youth.
- ◆ Advocated for community-based solutions to integrate social-emotional learning (SEL) in schools, establish peer mentoring programs, and develop community centers to support and uplift youth.
- ◆ Contributions built upon findings from the Dalio Education Report, *Connecticut’s Unspoken Crisis*.

- ◆ March 2025: Submitted written testimony regarding *Senate Bill 1511, An Act Concerning Disconnected Youth*, opposing Governor Lamont's proposed budget cuts to education and youth workforce programs.

LEADERSHIP

Mayor's Youth Leadership Council

January 2025 - current

Youth Representative, City of New Haven Youth Commission

2023-current

- ◆ Appointed by Mayor Justin Elicker
- ◆ Collaborates with the Mayor's Office to address youth-related policy issues and develop actionable strategies for youth development and upliftment.

Youth Representative, 119K Commission

2024 - current

- ◆ Represented the New Haven Youth Commission at the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) 119K Commission on At-Risk and Disconnected Youth, a statewide coalition working to reconnect 60,000 young people to education and career pathways.
- ◆ Commission adopted two of my recommendations in their [report](#), with a proposed investment of \$29M
 - o Proposal 3A: Invest in refreshed 211 system - including launching a rebranded digital app - with reduced wait times, easy navigation, more youth-centric functionality and availability in multiple languages (page 29).
 - o Proposal 20A: Provide flexible funding for operations and expansion of organizations running recreational hubs (page 77).

New Haven Community Expertise Workgroup of the CT Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee (JJPOC).

2024-current

- ◆ Collaborate with justice-involved youth and their families to ensure their perspectives are included in shaping policies that impact them.
- ◆ Represent New Haven Community Expertise Workgroup at Voting Meeting on Gender Responsive and Reentry Recommendations

INTERNSHIPS & FELLOWSHIPS

Public Policy Intern, Connecticut Conference of Municipalities

Summer 2025

I will be working directly with the Director of Public Policy on research, analysis, and policy initiatives

Mayor's Office, New Haven, CT

Summer 2024

I gained insights into how various City government divisions collaborate to support residents' well-being in areas like public safety, public health, violence prevention, safe streets, and social services. I applied my previous volunteer experience and service on the Youth Commission to ask informed questions of City staff and department heads. I also took the initiative to request meetings with the Mayor and the Director of the Youth and Recreation Department to share ideas on improving information and resource dissemination for youth, based on my past volunteer work and data I gathered. By the end of my internship, I was invited to join the [Mayor's Youth Leadership Council](#).

The Institute Library Social Justice Reader

January-June 2024

Created a short film highlighting how arts-based programs can positively impact youth in the juvenile justice system. It shows the transformative power of creative expression in helping them rehabilitate and aims to raise awareness of its benefits.

[Video: The Art of Renewal: How the Arts Can Reduce Recidivism | A Film by Rania Das](#)

Summer Intern, Mayor Justin Elicker Reelection Campaign, New Haven, CT

2023

Primary responsibility was to connect with voters, find out about their concerns and where appropriate, encourage them to vote for Mayor Elicker. I was also selected as an exemplary young intern and invited to meet with elected officials.

- ◆ **High School Fellow, International Festival of Arts & Ideas**, New Haven, CT 2023
Semester-long college-level immersive course to develop skills in communication and critical thinking including performances, lectures, community engagement, production, and management.

VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

- ◆ **Fundraising for the Connecticut Food Bank Fundraiser**, New Haven, CT 2022-24
Annual six-week-long event is organized by the Hopkins School Student Council and the Diversity Board.
- ◆ **SANCTUARY KITCHEN**, New Haven, CT *current*
Assisted refugee cooks (women from Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria) to prepare and present their culinary creations for commercial purposes.
- ◆ **ROSA DELAURO FOR CONGRESS**, New Haven, CT 2022
Assisted the campaign team in implementing various aspects of voter outreach strategies.
- ◆ **MARITZA BOND FOR CT SECRETARY OF STATE**, New Haven, CT 2022
Assisted with voter outreach for the Connecticut Secretary of State Primary Campaign of Maritza Bond, New Haven Director of Public Health.
- ◆ **ELICKER FOR MAYOR CAMPAIGN**, New Haven, CT 2021

EXTRA CURRICULAR

- ◆ **Squash** (Member of the Hopkins School Girls Junior Varsity Team)
- ◆ **Indian Classical Dance**
- ◆ **Videography**

CLUBS

- | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| ◆ Elm City Equity
(Co-leader) | ◆ Dance Crew
(Co-leader) | ◆ Model United Nations | ◆ Student Diversity Board | ◆ Amnesty International |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|

LANGUAGES

- | | | | |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|---------|
| ◆ English | ◆ Spanish | ◆ Bengali | ◆ Hindi |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|---------|