

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.

<u>Crystal</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>Fernandez</u>
First Name	Middle Initial	Last Name

ms.crystalfernandez@gmail.com
Email Address

<u>207 Rosette Street</u>	<u></u>
Home Address	Suite or Apt

<u>New Haven</u>	<u>CT</u>	<u>06519</u>
City	State	Postal Code

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

Ward 4

<u>Mobile: (860) 913-1904</u>	<u></u>
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?

primary and yes

Are you currently employed by the City of New Haven or the New Haven Public School System?

Yes No

<u>LEAP, Inc.</u>	<u>Q House Manager</u>
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?

Affordable Housing Commission: Submitted
City Plan Commission: Submitted
Commission on Equal Opportunities: Submitted
Development Commission: Submitted
Youth Commission: Submitted

Is this an appointment or reappointment request? *

Appointment

Question applies to multiple boards

Are you seeking a mayoral appointment/reappointment or a appointment/reappointment from the Board of Alders? Mayoral appointments go through the Mayor's Office, while Aldermanic appointments go through the Alders Office of Legislative Services. *

Mayoral Appointment

Question applies to multiple boards

*Note: If this is an appointment or reappointment request for a Board of Alders slot, please contact the Office of Legislative Services (OLS) at (203) 946-8371 or at alucas@newhavenct.gov if you have any questions on the progress of your appointment. The Mayor's Office is not involved in the timeline of Aldermanic appointees, but forwards any interested applicants for those slots to OLS.

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.

[Crystal A. Fernandez Resume.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 OR you are seeking reappointment, 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

n/a

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

I am interested in serving on a board or commission because I am deeply committed to New Haven’s future and to ensuring that our policies, programs, and planning processes reflect the needs, strengths, and lived experiences of our communities. Much of my professional life has been dedicated to youth development, economic mobility, community engagement, and equitable program design. Serving on a commission is a meaningful way to contribute that experience to citywide decision-making while helping advance inclusive growth, fairness, and opportunity for residents across neighborhoods.

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

I believe I would be a strong fit for the commissions I selected because my career has centered around building partnerships, strengthening community institutions, and designing programs that support families, youth, and marginalized communities. I bring 17 years of experience working at the intersection of youth development, workforce pathways, and community planning—experience that aligns directly with the work of the City Plan, Affordable Housing, Development, Youth, and Commission on Equal Opportunities. My leadership roles have required strategic thinking, data-informed decision-making, collaboration across sectors, and a deep commitment to social justice and equitable access. I understand the importance of transparent processes, community voice, and policies that promote long-term stability and opportunity. I would bring a grounded, community-centered, equity-focused perspective to any commission I serve on, along with the ability to work collaboratively, ask thoughtful questions, and help advance solutions that strengthen New Haven’s future.

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.

Not at this time

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?

Democrat

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

Hispanic

Gender

Female

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

Alex Guzhnay

CRYSTAL A. FERNÁNDEZ

ms.crystalfernandez@gmail.com || (860) 913-1904 || www.linkedin.com/in/crystalfndz

SUMMARY

Visionary leader with 17+ years of experience leading people and programs in youth development, workforce education, and community engagement, with a strong focus on economic empowerment and youth leadership initiatives. Proven ability to build coalitions, drive systemic change, and develop strategic programs that support diverse populations. Experienced at leading cross-sector collaborations, managing budgets, and amplifying the voices of marginalized communities

CORE COMPETENCIES

- Trust Based Relationship Building & Stakeholder Engagement
- Strategic Program Design & Management
- Grant Acquisition, Compliance & Financial Oversight
- Coalition Building & Cross Sector Collaboration
- Staff Leadership, Coaching & Development
- Public Speaking & Communications

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Manager, Dixwell Q House *Leap, Inc. | Oct 2025-Present*

- Provide executive oversight for Q House operations, ensuring strategic alignment between programs, partnerships, and community needs
- Lead cross-functional program delivery across youth, teen, and adult services, driving quality, consistency, and community impact
- Oversee regulatory compliance and operational standards for the teaching kitchen and serve as the primary liaison with CitySeed and city agencies
- Build and manage a high-performing team by recruiting, coaching, and supervising staff and specialized contractors
- Strengthen institutional partnerships and represent the Q House in high-level city, partner, and stakeholder engagements
- Guide facility operations, including access, safety, and vendor management, to ensure an efficient and community-centered environment

Director, Green Jobs Corps *Common Ground/ New Haven Ecology Project | Apr 2019- July 2025*

- Led strategic planning and implementation, transforming a school based program into a citywide initiative serving 100 youth between Common Ground and NHPS high schools annually
- Expanded partnerships by 50%, building a robust network to host internships and support youth career exploration and economic stability
- Integrated transferable career skills into the academic curriculum, advancing workforce readiness and long-term career success
- Secured a competitive \$500,000 multi-year federal grant, the only awardee in the state, and grew the program budget by 133%
- Provided academic advising, career mapping, and leadership development to youth participants
- Directed large-scale events including career fairs, college fairs, apprenticeship fairs, and partner summits
- Presented at conferences and facilitated workshops on best practices in youth leadership, recognized by state and federal leaders

YouthBuild Case Manager *Human Resources Agency of New Britain | Jan 2015- Mar 2019*

- Co-facilitated workshops on youth workforce development for justice-involved youth at the CT Dept. of Labor's 2017 Youth Conference, showing student support experience
- Provided comprehensive case management services, connecting youth with employment opportunities and post-secondary education resources

CRYSTAL A. FERNÁNDEZ

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- Co-created and presented a national webinar on best practices in YouthBuild programming, influencing policy and practice shifts in youth development

Lead Employment Specialist & Job Developer *Women and Families Center | Sep 2011- Jan 2015*

- Developed employer partnerships to create job opportunities for youth and adults, increasing placements and career advancement.
- Designed and delivered job readiness training programs to enhance participants' employability and economic mobility.

Youth Development Specialist & Program Coordinator *Urban League of Greater Hartford | Jan 2008- Aug 2010*

- Supervised and mentored over 200 youth participants, providing academic and career guidance to support success
- Coordinated with 15 worksites to ensure safe and productive experiences for youth interns, fostering partnerships that benefited both youth and employer

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Advisor/ Conference Panelist *CT Urban Opportunity Collaborative (CUOC) & UpTogether | Oct 2023- June 2024*

- Served on a community advisory council designing a Guaranteed Basic Income initiative in Bridgeport, Hartford, and New Haven
- Collaborated with resident leaders to develop recommendations on payment structures, eligibility criteria, and community engagement strategies
- Promoted equitable, community-driven outcomes through policy insight and advocacy

Co-Founder & Community Organizer *Friends of Kimberly Field | Apr 2022- Present*

- Spearheaded a greenspace restoration initiative in the Hill neighborhood, engaging over 50 residents to plant trees, create pollinator gardens, and improve local habitat

RECOGNITION

Pi Alpha Alpha Global Honor Society for Public Affairs and Administration | *University of Connecticut | April 2025*

Recognizing academic excellence and commitment to public service

Grit, Perseverance, and Success Award | *Southern Connecticut State University Multicultural Center | Nov 2022*

Awarded for leadership, courage, and dedication to uplifting and inspiring SCSU students

M.E.T.A.S. Mentor of the Year Award | *University of Connecticut Puerto Rican/Latin American Cultural Center | Apr 2007*

Recognized for leadership, dedication, and service to the university and Latino community

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Non-Profit Management for Emerging Leaders of Color | *Community Foundation for Greater New Haven | Sep 2022- May 2024*

Youth Mentor/ Leadership Coach Training | *Youth Coaching Institute | Jan 2017- Nov 2017*

Middle Management Institute | *City of Hartford Office of Youth Services* | *Sep 2012- Jun 2013*

Youth Development Practitioner Academy | *City of Hartford Office of Youth Services* | *Sep 2008- May 2009*

EDUCATION

Master of Public Administration- Executive Leadership | *UConn School of Public Policy | May 2025* | **GPA: 3.8**

Bachelor of Arts- General Studies | *Charter Oak State College* | *Aug 2012- May 2016*