

City Council Application

Reference #	11820053
Status	Complete
First Name	Danielle
Last Name	Carlson-Harper
Phone Number	[REDACTED]
Email Address	[REDACTED]
Street Address	[REDACTED] Cadwell Ave
Place of Employment	The Center for Community Solutions
Position	Director of Communications and Digital Strategy
Length of residence in Cleveland Heights	2.5 years
Are you a registered Cleveland Heights voter?	Yes

What special qualities, abilities, skills, insights or perspectives do you possess which would be of value in serving on Cleveland Heights City Council?

I'm a relatively new resident to Cleveland Heights, living here for just a little more than two years. While some people may see this as a negative, I see it only as a positive. Not only did I choose Cleveland Heights after living in many different cities, states and countries, I'm energized and enthusiastic about my new home. I want to get involved and make it an even better place to live. I see so many positives in this welcoming, historic community, but I also see that there are things that need attention. For example, I currently work in the nonprofit world as the director of communications and digital strategy for the nonpartisan Center for Community Solutions. Community Solutions focuses on health and human services research and advocacy which means I am aware of many of the challenges our neighbors face. I know that in Cleveland Heights more than a third of the population lives at or near poverty – an issue that as a city councilperson I would hope to develop strategies to better address. I also know that my empathy and desire to listen and learn from my fellow citizens would be of value to the council, and to the city, if I am chosen as the next city councilperson.

What educational training (formal or informal), employment and other life experiences have helped you develop the qualities, abilities, etc., described above?

I received my formal degree at Northwestern University, but really feel as if a lot of my education began after graduation. Before joining the nonprofit world, I traveled the country as a news reporter and interacted with a wide swath of the population. As a result of this, I developed a level of sympathy and empathy for people in many different stations in their lives. I've spoken to people on their best days and their worst and listened to both stories of hardship and triumph. These experiences have made me a better person, more understanding and level-headed. I'm caring and always make sure to understand all sides of a story before I take action. I'm also personally familiar with the challenges that life can throw at families. Growing up my father was in and out of the hospital and ended up passing away when I was 14-years-old. While personally difficult, I think the experience provided me with a level of understanding and empathy for the private struggles people may be dealing with. It has made me a better person, a better listener and would make me a better city council person. I've also further honed my understanding and patience through my experiences teaching at both Northwestern University and Kent State University. I also have the practical skill of understanding municipal government. Through more than a decade of covering local governments as a television news reporter I received a detailed education in municipal government. I understand how city councils work and would be able to hit the ground running, participating and adding to the important work of the council, on my first day.

Please list your recent community, professional or charitable involvements. List the most recent first.

I'm currently the Communications Chair for Northwestern University's Alumni Club of Greater Cleveland. I create the promotional materials for the Council on Older Persons meetings/events and I'm also a member of the Press Club of Cleveland, Investigative Reporters and Editors, the Public Relations Society of America's Greater Cleveland chapter as well as a member of the Union Club.

What are your goals for our community and are there areas in which you believe the City needs improvement? How would your service on City Council help achieve those goals and improve the City?

I believe that the city needs to become a more attractive place for new residents. I think that bringing in new ideas and perspectives to the city council is a good way to start that. Having lived in many different cities and towns, many in the Midwest, I know that there can be a tendency to be insular or to accept the status quo. As a new Cleveland Heights resident, I would come to this position with new ideas from a different, varied perspective. Before moving to Ohio in 2015, I lived in Grand Rapids, Michigan for six years. During my time there I saw what can happen when a community welcomes new ideas and development. The city went through an extreme revitalization, welcoming hundreds of new residents and dozens of new businesses. It's now nearly unrecognizable from the place I moved to in 2009. I see many similarities between Grand Rapids and Cleveland Heights, and I think that the former's revitalization plan would be a good blueprint for growth in Cleveland Heights. One of the first things that the city of Grand Rapids did, in conjunction with the school board, was to work on revitalizing the public school system. I think this, in conjunction with the Cleveland Heights-University Heights school board, should be a priority for the council to continue. An article from Cleveland.com showed Cleveland Heights has one of the highest property tax rates in Cuyahoga County at \$4,088, yet of the 10 schools in the Cleveland Heights-University Heights School District that were ranked by the Ohio Department of Education, seven have a 'D' rating, and the remaining three received two Cs and a B. Again, using my experiences from what I've seen be successful in other places, I think there should be an effort to create specialized or theme programs within the district to attract families. The high school in particular has a fantastic facility, but in order to attract new residents, particularly young families, the community needs to have a unique product to offer. I think another thing that the city could do is to do a better job doing celebrating the small

successes within the community on both social, and local, media. If the only time Cleveland Heights is in the news is because of high property taxes or random crime, prospective new residents will go elsewhere. Cleveland Heights has a lot of wonderful things to offer and both current and future residents need to better understand that.

Do you have other responsibilities which would prevent you from participating in City Council and Council Committee work during certain hours or on certain days?

No

State any additional information you would like to have considered.

I've lived in Ohio for just a little more than three years, and Cleveland Heights for just a little more than two. Despite living in four other states and two other countries over my adult life, this is the first place I've ever bought property. That's because this community feels like home. I've chosen Cleveland Heights, I'm excited about it and I want to be a part of the city's leadership moving forward. I know that my outside, new perspective would be an asset to council and would help move the city forward. I'm excited to be a part of the community. I have new ideas, energy and a unique perspective that I would bring to council. I think I would be the best candidate for the open position on Cleveland Heights city council

Would you like to upload a Resume?

Yes

Resume or CV Upload (5 MB Limit)

[Cleveland_Heights_Resume_Dani_Carlson.pdf \(223k\)](#)

Item # 23

I agree to electronically sign this form.

Signature

Danielle Carlson Harper

Last Update

2019-01-15 09:48:39

Start Time

2019-01-15 09:29:42

Finish Time

2019-01-15 09:48:39

IP

██████████

Browser

Chrome

OS

Windows

Referrer

<https://www.clevelandheights.com/1085/City-Council-Application>
