

Charter 738 News*

**Did you know ANCs were created in Section 738 of the DC Charter?*

Newsletter of the Office of ANCs



Volume 2 / Issue 4 (2023)

Increase Your Engagement With Your Constituents!!

ANC Commissioners now have a tool, GovDelivery, to help create email campaigns, improve internal communications, as well as design, and send newsletters, alerts, and bulletins. GovDelivery also allows ANC Commissioners to send messaging through SMS and social media integration.

Amber Wright, OANC's Administrative Assistant, will be presenting two, "How To" sessions per month, Tuesday mornings from 11 am – 12 noon and Thursday evenings from 6:00 pm -7:00 pm. To register for either training session, ANC Commissioners should send a request to amber.wright2@dc.gov, place "GovDelivery Training" in the subject line and indicate which session you plan to attend.

The Role of the OANC's General Counsel

In our last alert we introduced you to Denise Wiktor, the OANC's General Counsel. Denise was hired to expand the OANC's service to ANCs in the capacity of our very first General Counsel. As the duties of the OANC include "serving as the primary source of advice for Commissioners with respect to their official statutory responsibilities" Denise is an invaluable asset to our team.

OANC's General Counsel supports a wide range of duties. In addition to providing legal advice to OANC staff and Commissioners, they handle and resolve administrative matters; review and provide advice on bylaws; drafts legal documents; and plans, coordinates and manages the legal affairs of the OANC.

Practice areas include administrative law; personnel and labor matters; drafting and reviewing legislation, regulations, policies and procedures, contracts, inter-agency agreements, testimony and other OANC issuances. The General Counsel serves as an advisor to the Executive Director in the planning, directing, overseeing, and coordinating of the legal services to the OANC and is integral to the planning and management of the OANC Office of General Counsel.

Denise will be engaged in developing and instituting short- and long-term agency plans and activities, incorporating strategic provisions, as necessary, especially incorporating communicating with all Commissions and Commissioners to inform them of the types of advice and resources offered by the OANC with an emphasis on all aspects of FOIA matters.

Critically, she will be engaged in preparing, researching, and reviewing responses for the Executive Director, especially related to sensitive and confidential inquiries and correspondence from Commissions, Commissioners, the DC Auditor, the Executive Office of the Mayor, the Council of the District of Columbia, officials of the District and federal governments, the media, other governmental or regulatory entities or jurisdictions, regulated entities and persons, and the public.

In line with general counsel at other agencies, OANC's general counsel prepares legal documents on substantive matters of an urgent nature, providing summary analyses of issues and recommendations for consideration of the Executive Director as well as conducting extensive and detailed research of legal documents dealing with proposed laws and amendments to existing laws to ensure conformance with legal requirements.



Legal Lingo

*Brought to you by Kathy Williams,
Special Assistant to the Executive Director and
Denise Wiktor, General Counsel*

Yes, it is a FOIA Request!

You may remember that in our last Newsletter that the OANC counseled each Commissioner or Commission “never to ignore any FOIA request.” This is to reiterate once again that a FOIA, Freedom of Information Act, request must be quickly acknowledged because time limitations attach upon receipt by the Commissioner or Commission.

Be mindful that you are required to adequately search for the requested information. If you are unable to do so within the statutorily prescribed period of time, District regulations provide ample opportunity for a Commissioner or Commission to seek additional time within which to search the necessary files.

Notwithstanding, a Commissioner or Commission will certainly find it easier to search the requisite files when ALL Commission business is confined to the official government email account or telephone upon which any pertinent texts may be contained. As a result, it is easier for you to sort and collate the FOIA documents and it is easier for OCTO to search for same.

It must be noted that when OCTO is called upon to search ANC documents pursuant to FOIA requests, OCTO may only search the official government email accounts and telephones. If any ANC documents subject to FOIA requests are located on personal or private devices, those documents must be searched by the owner because OCTO is prohibited from conducting such a search.

Upon receipt of your next FOIA request, do not hesitate to call on the OANC at the first instance. We are here to assist and to act as your FOIA Officer.



Hear Ye, Hear Ye...

Hybrid Kits Are HERE!

The OANC will be providing training for any ANC interested in transitioning to a hybrid meeting format.

Two training sessions are available:

Friday, September 22, 2023, from 12:30 pm – 2 pm

OR

Thursday, September 28, 2023, from 5:00 pm – 6:30 pm

Both trainings will be held at the MLK Library, 901 G Street NW, Washington, DC

Please register for either session at oancs@dc.gov, with your preferred session date/time in the Subject line.