



NEIGHBORHOOD LAW CORPS

Oakland City Attorney's Office

What is the Neighborhood Law Corps?

The Neighborhood Law Corps (NLC) is a community-facing, affirmative litigation unit within the Oakland City Attorney's Office.

Through civil lawsuits and other enforcement actions, the NLC focuses on some of the most challenging problems facing Oakland's neighborhoods, particularly tenant protection, substandard housing, public nuisance, and other key health and safety issues. NLC Attorneys also collaborate with other city departments, sister government agencies, and community organizations to connect residents with resources.

The program, launched in 2002, has been recognized with awards, including the Gold Award for Municipal Excellence from the National League of Cities and the Making Democracy Work Award from the League of Women Voters Oakland.

There is one NLC attorney assigned to each of the five Oakland Police Command Areas, which can be viewed here: [MapOfPoliceDistricts.pdf \(oaklandcityattorney.org\)](#). Additionally, the following interactive map is a handy tool where one can enter a specific address to determine the applicable police area, police beat, neighborhood council, Neighborhood Services Coordinator (NSC), and Community Resource Officer (CRO), among other information: <http://gisapps1.mapoakland.com/policedistricts/>.

How does the NLC address issues at properties?

NLC actions typically start with an initial investigation of issues brought to the team's attention from various sources, including, but not limited to, other City departments, community organizations, City Council, neighborhood councils, and community members.

The NLC generally focuses resources on matters where other methods of enforcement have failed. For example, there are many situations where compliance may be fully achieved without NLC action, such as by an enforcing City department (e.g., by Code Enforcement of the Planning and Building Department, through inspections, follow-up notices, and citations). Accordingly, it is important to report issues to the enforcing City department first, as that department may be able to resolve the issue. Sometimes, when the department cannot resolve the issue and NLC involvement is appropriate, the NLC gets involved, including by reviewing what an applicable department has already tried to resolve the issue. For additional information on reporting mechanisms for different types of problems, see the *Public Nuisance Reporting Guide* attached here as [Appendix A](#).

What are some of the focus areas of the NLC’s past and present affirmative litigation?

- Housing/Tenant Protection: Litigation aimed at combating harassment and discrimination by property owners and managers, preserving Oakland’s affordable housing stock, and enforcing local and state law to ensure housing in Oakland is safe and habitable for all residents.
- Anti-Human Trafficking: Litigation aimed at shutting down illicit massage businesses serving as fronts for human trafficking, disrupting organized crime networks, and holding property owners accountable for serious illegal activity that occurs at their properties.
- Environmental Justice: Litigation aimed at halting business practices that create environmental hazards disproportionately impacting marginalized communities.

How do NLC Attorneys engage with community members?

- Collaborate with community organizations to investigate potential cases and bring litigation
- Connect community members with the right City department to address their issues
- Provide community members with contact information for local organizations that offer legal and other services
- Attend neighborhood council meetings

NLC Attorneys do not:

- Represent individuals (e.g., provide eviction defense)
- Defend the City in litigation
- Advise City departments or City Council
- Mediate disputes between Oaklanders
- Intervene in private disputes between neighbors (e.g., boundary disputes)

NLC Attorneys do not work on the following issues:

- Criminal activity that is not associated with a particular private property
- Illegal dumping complaints that have not been routed through 311
- Abandoned automobiles
- Illegal marijuana grow-operations
- Homeless encampments, including RVs
- Contract enforcement

Appendix A

Public Nuisance Reporting Guide

REPORTING PUBLIC NUISANCE PROBLEMS AND GETTING YOUR VOICE HEARD IN OAKLAND, CA



General Information on Reporting

- Retain your reference # for any report that you file and the contact information for any agency representative that you correspond with about your problem.
- Report the correct address/location involved.
- You can request a copy of reports that are public records at *Next Request* at <https://oaklandca.nextrequest.com/>.

Report to Oakland Police Department through the applicable mechanism listed below.

- Emergency call: (510) 777-3211 (direct to OPD); 911
- Non-emergency call: (510) 777-3333
- Non-emergency online report: <https://www.oaklandca.gov/services/report-a-crime-online>
- ***Suspected Prostitution and Sex Trafficking***: Call in anonymously at (510) 238-2373 or make an anonymous online report at <https://reportnow.typeform.com/to/FhMAED>.
- ***Suspected Illegal Drug Activity***: Leave a recorded message at (510) 238-3784 to report recurring illegal drug activity, including details about location(s), person(s) and/or vehicles involved. You always have the option to report anonymously.
- ***ABAT*** when you witness public nuisance issues connected with an alcohol or tobacco retail location: Call (510) 777-8682 or submit a complaint form available at <https://www.oaklandca.gov/topics/report-an-abat-location>.

Report to Planning & Building Department's Code Enforcement when you witness blight and other Building Code violations on private property.

- Call: (510) 238-3381
- Fax: (510) 238-2959
- Online: <https://aca.accela.com/oakland/>
- Email: inspectioncounter@oaklandca.gov
- Open Counters (closed until further notice): 250 Frank Ogawa Plaza, 2nd Floor, Oakland, CA 94612 (8:00am–4:00pm (Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri); 9:30am– 4:00pm (Wed))
- You can check on complaint activity with Code Enforcement by searching by address or complaint # here: <https://aca.accela.com/oakland/>

Report to Public Works Agency via OAK 311 when you witness public nuisance issues on public property, such as illegal dumping, abandoned vehicles, etc.

- Call: 311 or (510) 615-5566
- Online: <https://www.oaklandca.gov/services/oak311>
- Mobile application: Download the mobile application OAK 311 to submit complaints there. You will receive a reference # for your complaint.

Report to Alameda County Vector Control Services when you have vermin issues, such as cockroaches, bed bugs, and rats.

- **Call: (510) 567-6800**
- **Online: <https://acvcgsd.org/request-service/>**

Report to Oakland Animal Services for issues related to barking dogs, licensing issues, among others.

- **Emergency call: (510) 777-3333**
- **Non-emergency call: (510) 535-5602**
- For more information on OAS Services: <https://www.oaklandanimalservices.org/services/>

Other Tips for Getting Your Voice Heard

- Communicate with your neighbors to understand whether issues in the neighborhood are affecting others as well.
- Keep your Community Resources Officer (“CRO”) (formerly Problem Solving Officer) informed about criminal activity that affects you and any related request for assistance, e.g., additional surveillance in your neighborhood. Your CRO can also help give you guidance and resources to address safety issues. Find your CRO here: <https://www.oaklandca.gov/resources/find-a-police-area-or-beat>.
- Attend your Neighborhood Council (formerly Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council) meetings to discuss issues with your Neighborhood Services Coordinator (“NSC”), CRO, other government representatives, and fellow community members. Your NSC can give you guidance and resources to address safety issues. These meetings generally happen once per month. Find your Neighborhood Council meeting schedule here: <https://www.oaklandca.gov/topics/neighborhood-councils>.
- Attend local business association meetings. Some such groups are a partnership among City representatives, business owners and/or residents.
- Contact your City Council member about your issue, especially as part of an organized group of residents and/or businesses. Find your City Council member here: <https://www.oaklandca.gov/services/look-up-your-city-council-district-and-representative>.
- When seeking assistance from the Neighborhood Law Corps (NLC) of the Oakland City Attorney’s office for potential legal action or follow-up on previously reported public nuisance issues, provide the NLC attorney with the reference #s for any reports that you have filed with a government agency. Find contact information for the NLC here: <http://www.oaklandcityattorney.org/Community/NLC.html>.