

Barbara Lee Biography

Barbara Lee was elected Mayor of Oakland in a historic Special Election conducted on April 15, 2025.

Prior to her election, Mayor Lee represented the people of Oakland as the community's award-winning California State Assembly Member, California State Senator, and U.S. Congressional representative for nearly three decades.

As Oakland's Congresswoman, Mayor Lee secured billions of dollars to improve Oakland's neighborhoods and quality of life – including funding for local police officers, firefighters and community safety programs; money for safer and greener streets; resources to uplift small businesses; and hundreds of millions to expand and green the Port of Oakland. She is the first Black woman to be elected Mayor of Oakland.

Mayor Lee has historically been a strong advocate for ethics reform and budget accountability, common sense gun reform, the expansion of home ownership opportunities and effective solutions to homelessness – experience she will use in her executive position as Oakland's Mayor.

During her years as a graduate student, Mayor Lee founded the Community Health Alliance for Neighborhood Growth and Education (CHANGE), a community-based mental health center and is also a former small business owner. A clinical social worker by profession, Mayor Lee received her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from Mills College and her Masters in Social Welfare from the University of California, Berkeley.