



WHATCOM RACIAL EQUITY COMMISSION APPOINTED MEMBER APPLICATION



In October of 2022, Whatcom County Council, in partnership with the City of Bellingham, established the Whatcom Racial Equity Commission (WREC). This was the culmination of a two-year long process where community members crafted the establishing ordinance, conducted a qualitative study, and civically engaged alongside their neighbors to achieve a shared vision—

People of all races, in Whatcom County, live, thrive, and
belong for who they are, as they are. *Without fear. Every day.*

Whatcom County and City of Bellingham are now seeking the inaugural slate of members for the Whatcom Racial Equity Commission, with the support of Chuckanut Health Foundation and the guidance of community members serving on the WREC Appointment Committee. The Whatcom Racial Equity Commission, when seated, will serve as county-level advisory body providing recommendations on advancing racial equity locally.

If you're a dedicated and driven individual looking to make a significant impact on advancing racial equity at the local level, we invite you to apply for an open position on the Whatcom Racial Equity Commission.

Applications Close: March 15th, 2024, at 11:59pm (PST)

The Role of the Commission Members

Rooted in the Guiding Principles established in [Whatcom County Code 2.107.030](#), members will collaborate with community members, local government, and sector partners to fulfill the purpose of the Commission:

*As a conduit for ongoing community collaboration, engagement, and education, within the broader context of diversity and inclusion, the purpose of the Whatcom Racial Equity Commission is to gather, review, and evaluate data and to make recommendations on eliminating racial inequities, in all its forms, throughout Whatcom County.
(WCC 2.107.020)*

The first slate of members will play an additional, crucial role in the “start-up” phase of the Commission. They will create the foundation and set the precedent for how the Commission:

- Operates as a group and in collaboration with other entities,
- Makes its decisions,
- Elects its leadership,
- Determines what initial work it will engage in to meet its public charge.

For those interested in and dedicated to setting the strategic vision for the WREC, this is one of the best times to apply for membership.

Please note that as of December 5th, 2023, the qualifications for serving on Whatcom County advisory groups have changed and no longer requires that applicants are registered voters in Whatcom County or citizens of the United States.

2.03.090 Qualifications. [Advisory Groups]

A. To qualify for appointment on a County advisory group, a person shall live in Whatcom County and shall meet the requirements of the advisory group's enabling statute.

B. Individuals who have declared candidacy (as defined in RCW 42.L7A.005(8)) for a paid elected office in any jurisdiction within the county are not eligible for appointment while they are a candidate, but shall be eligible for: (A) appointment as the official representative of an entity they are currently elected to, or (B) reappointment to additional terms, as allowed by the Whatcom County Code, to the same advisory group they were on prior to declaration of candidacy.

Overview of the Commission's Capacity

Key Commission functions include but are not limited to:

1. Serve as an advisory board to local government agencies, other organizations committed to the aims of the Commission, and the county-wide community with regard to racial equity.
2. Serve as a community forum on racial equity and create mechanisms to identify issues, concerns, needs, and resources.
3. Gather and analyze disaggregated qualitative and quantitative data to identify racial disparities and disproportionalities in the areas of concern.
4. Develop and propose to local government a coordinated and comprehensive plan to address racial inequity in Whatcom County. This plan shall include measurable objectives and indicators by which progress toward racial equity in all its aspects is to be measured. The Commission shall review and update the plan as necessary.
5. Develop strategies for implementing the plan, including a proposed timeline to achieve each equity objective, together with recommendations for shared governmental and community accountability for addressing racial disparities in Whatcom County.
6. Provide recommendations to the Whatcom County Council and the Executive, to the Bellingham City Council and Mayor, and to relevant entities and jurisdictions concerning:
 - a. Revisions to organizational policies, procedures, and ordinances as may be needed to promote transparency and diminish racial inequities that may exist.
 - b. Budget priorities that may be necessary to mitigate and prevent the impacts of racial inequities in local government.
 - c. Other policies that promote racial equity in response to emerging needs that may require new policies and flexibility in revising earlier proposals.

For the full list of Commission Functions refer to [Whatcom County Code 2.107.040](#).

Time Commitment

The time commitment for members will vary, especially since this is the inaugural group performing start-up functions.

By Ordinance, Commission members will be asked to attend regular meetings with a minimum of six held each year. Members may also be asked to attend special meetings.

Commission Members serve two-year terms and may serve up to six years consecutively. Half of the first slate of Commission Members will be asked to serve three-years to stagger future terms and may serve up to seven consecutive years including this term.

Applicants are asked their preference for serving two or three years for their first term.

There will be opportunities for members to engage more deeply, which may increase the time committed. For example, a member serving as a Co-Chair of the Commission or one serving on a committee will have additional meetings.

Accessibility statement & considerations for seated Members:

The City of Bellingham, Whatcom County, their staff, and Chuckanut Health Foundation as stewards of this process, are committed to meeting members of the Commission where they are to the best of our ability. Recognizing that this will look different for every individual seated, members will be contacted by Foundation staff to identify ways to support their fullest participation. Examples include but not limited to:

- Translation and/or Interpretation Services
- ASL Interpretation
- Digital and technology access
- Printed materials access
- As the budget allows, stipends for participation may be made available to members who are not otherwise compensated for their role through another organization and/or reimbursement may be provided for expenses such as travel or childcare. This is to reduce potential financial barriers for community members serving on the Commission.

Application Review & Next Steps:

Deliberation – Whatcom County Code 2.107.070 requires a group of community members seated by the County to serve as the WREC Appointment Committee to:

1. Review applications for the appointed Commission Positions.
2. Evaluate an applicant's eligibility for appointment – confirming that applicants meet the requirements for serving on the Commission as outlined in the establishing ordinance.
3. Provide written recommendations for appointment to the County Executive and Mayor of Bellingham.

Currently, fifteen out of the nineteen Appointed Member roles are open for community members to apply and are listed in the full application. Please note, at this time, the positions for subject matter experts/ people with expertise in the Commission's areas of concern are not open. These positions shall remain vacant until the seated Commission is able to determine its areas of concern.

The WREC Appointment Committee may contact applicants as follow up to their application. This is to ensure that the recommendations they bring forward are accurate.

The County Executive and Mayor of Bellingham will bring forward member recommendations for approval by their respective Councils. Once an applicant has been approved by both Councils, they will be officially seated on the Whatcom Racial Equity Commission.

Chuckanut Health Foundation staff will be in contact with appointed members about onboarding and support for their role.

Pending the approval of membership slates from both Whatcom County Council and Bellingham City Council, **the first Whatcom Racial Equity Commission meeting is projected for April of 2024.**

Looking for more information?

For additional information or questions, please contact our team at

WREC@ChuckanutHealthFoundation.org



Application

Please demonstrate your interest in serving by completing the application below. We recognize there may be barriers to completing a written application. Please contact the Foundation Staff for assistance in identifying alternatives.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ Zip Code: _____

Mailing Address (if different from street address): _____

Preferred Telephone Number: _____

Preferred Email Address: _____

(if you may not be reached via email, we will work with applicants to contact them in different ways)

If appointed, would you prefer to serve a 2- or 3-year initial term? ☐ 2-year ☐ 3 year ☐ Open to either

In our pursuit that each applicant is given the greatest opportunity to join the WREC, **we are asking applicants to self-identify ALL the roles they would be eligible for and comfortable representing** on the Commission. Please check all roles you would like to be considered for:

1. ☐ Community Member (Up to 7 members)
 - ☐ A student living in Whatcom County;
 - ☐ A community member with experience caring for a student currently attending a Whatcom County public school such as parent, foster parent, grandparent, caregiver, or guardian;
 - ☐ An immigrant, migrant, or refugee;
 - ☐ A business owner, manager, or independent contractor;
 - ☐ A youth or young adult aged 16 to 24 at the time of appointment;
2. Diversity officers or staff members engaged in DEI work in educational institutions (2 total members)
 - ☐ Working in local higher education institutions
 - ☐ Working in local K-12 schools;
3. ☐ Human service providers, including, but not limited to, victim or offender services, housing or houseless services, and mental health services;
4. (Not being seated at this time) Subject matter expert, individuals with expertise in, and/or specialists in the commission's areas of concern;
5. ☐ Social justice advocate or activist whose area of focus is racial equity;
6. ☐ Philanthropic organizations;
7. ☐ Faith leadership;
8. ☐ Multilingual health care provider.

All candidates under this section shall have an interest in or have been impacted by racial equity issues. (2.107.060 Additional Appointed Members.) It is not required that members of the Commission speak a specific language and translation/interpretation services can be made available to members.

Please note that the 2.107.060 (4) *Up to Four subject matter experts, individuals with expertise in, and/or specialists in the commission's areas of concern* are not being seated at this time. As the seated Commission determines its "areas of concern", the seats will be open for individuals with expertise in those areas.

Applicant Statements

In addition to the information above, we will use responses to the prompts in our evaluation of potential candidates. To reduce barriers, we are offering various ways to respond.

Please respond to the following 3 prompts:

- Describe your lived, community activity related, professional, educational, and/or personal experiences that may support and advance the work of the Commission. You may include a list of experiences if needed in this response to capture additional information.
- Please describe why you're interested in serving on this commission.
- Please describe one goal you would have for the Commission, one challenge in reaching that goal, and how you envision the Commission achieving the goal.

Response format options:

- **Attach a document.** We recommend a length of up to 3 pages, but the page count will not be a factor in determining who to appoint.
- **Record your response.** We will be accepting recorded audio or video in response to these prompts. We recommend 2-3 minutes per prompt. We want to emphasize that in assessing this audio or video essay, we will prioritize the content over production quality. The depth of your ideas and the message you convey are of utmost importance to us.
- **Work with Foundation Staff.** We recognize there may be barriers to completing a written version of this application for a variety of reasons. The Foundation Staff is available to provide technical support in completing the written application and, utilizing transcription software, summarize responses to the prompts for applicants.

Please do not submit a resume, letters of recommendation, or personal references for this process. Please be detailed and specific in your responses. The Committee will be considering both lived and learned experiences in this process. The prompts and application have been designed to support the deliberation and recommendation drafting by the Appointment Committee. Should additional follow up be needed with an applicant, that individual may be contacted by the Chuckanut Health Foundation Staff and the Appointment Committee.

Application Submission:

If you are preparing your materials personally, you may submit materials via email to
WREC@ChuckanutHealthFoundation.org

If you are submitting materials while working with the Foundation Staff, the staff member will ensure your materials are submitted.