

Advisory Group Application

Step 1

Application for Appointment to Whatcom County Advisory Groups

Public Statement

THIS IS A PUBLIC DOCUMENT: As a candidate for a public advisory group, the information provided will be available to the County Council, County Executive, and the public. All advisory group members are expected to be fair, impartial, and respectful of the public, County staff, and each other. Failure to abide by these expectations may result in revocation of appointment and removal from the appointive position.

Title	Mr.
First Name	Markis Dee
Last Name	Stidham
Today's Date	1/6/2026
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you live in Whatcom County?	Yes
Do you have a different mailing address?	<i>Field not completed.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Step 2

1. Name of Advisory Public Health Advisory Board

Group

Public Health Advisory Board	I have expertise, career experience, or lived experience in one of the areas listed above., I represent a stakeholder, such as a nonprofit organization, the business community, or those regulated by public health.
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2. Do you meet the residency, employment, and/or affiliation requirements of the position for which you're applying?	Yes
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3. Which Council district do you live in?	District 1
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4. Have you ever been a member of this Advisory Group	No
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5. Do you or your spouse have a financial interest in or are you an employee or officer of any business or agency that does business with Whatcom County?	No
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6. Have you declared candidacy (as defined by RCW 42.17A.055) for a paid elected office in any jurisdiction within the county?	No
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You may attach a resume or detailed summary of experience, qualifications, & interest in response to the following questions	<i>Field not completed.</i>
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7. Please describe your occupation (or former occupation if retired), qualifications,	The following is a brief synopsis of my pertinent activities in Whatcom county, as I believe they may relate to this position. Firstly and in general, i have been working tirelessly as a homelessness, advocate primarily in the greater bellingham area, but also across the county.
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professional and/or
community activities,
and education

- April 2018, operating within leadership at the fledgling tiny home provider, HOMESNOW Not Later, and lacking support from local government in providing a space for us to built a tiny home village., I , along with volunteers, built and operated our county's first public shower truck.

(ShowersNow)

With this effort, we brought much needed hygiene products, other supplies, and literally thousands of hot showers. for folks who we're relegated to living on our streets and in our woods. This effort was pivotal for both homes. Now, and of course, the folks we were serving.

The database we collected on the individuals experiencing homelessness in our community was extensive, and thorough, cataloging names, needs, and mental health, addiction, and other challenges relating to being unhoused.

This work was pivotal in not only tangibly demonstrating to government leaders, our ability to do it to serve impeccably to this very needy demographic, but also in developing personal relationships with literally thousands of individuals living in our community, suffering from homelessness.

- January 2019 homes now was granted its first temporary tent encampment behind city hall, completely self funded and in partnership with the city, sheltering and stabilizing about 20 people through the winter.

- February 2019 as a blizzard blew into our county, which was to last for 6 weeks, myself and my fiance at the time, developed a massive network of a boots on the ground, Citizen Outreach Team

(COT), which served hundreds of people who were failing in our streets, with life saving supplies, rides to shelters, and a citizen funded hotel program.

Where we sheltered about two hundred people. With absolutely no shelter, beds available in our county, we formed partnership with the seventh day adventist church, on smith road, where we together served about 30 people per night, for about two weeks. This is work that I have continued in various forms ever since.

- April 2019 homes now established its second tent encampment again, in partnership with the city of bellingham, located in the sunnyland neighborhood, on the "what com" 911 center parking lot.

- July 2019 I was encouraged by seated county council members, to apply for the newly formed " Homeless advocate" position on the Whatcom county homeless strategies work group, where I received strong support from the council in a 5 to 1 vote. Also at this time, homes now had Begun construction of it's first tiny home village in Fairhaven at post point.

This facility could house twenty three people.

- October 2019, after a scandal related to embezzlement by leadership at homes. Now, i was asked into leadership there on the board where I served as vice chair for the group, and spent

four nights a week, in residence at the village personally, continuing through 2020.

Notably through that first summer, and during the pandemic, we managed to stabilize and shelter over twenty people, for an astounding \$1600.00 per month.

- July 2020, I was unanimously reappointed to my homeless advocate position on the homeless strategies work group, which later disbanded in april of 2020.

- November 2020 as there were no shelter beds available in the county, a group of campers presented themselves on the lawn at city hall, asking for amnesty from a hostile policing policy of displacement.

Over the next few months, i participated in several negotiation meetings with the leadership of the city of bellingham.

My sole goal being getting these people sheltered.

And with the city requiring a nonprofit or group to indemnify them to do that work, I (with partners) formed Serenity Outreach Services Bellingham, specifically to serve that need, and to subsequently provide mutual aid to the homeless community for the next several years.

- 2023

I initiated and engaged several community leaders and the drafting of a document called "Big Lift."

Big Lift is a holistic plan to end homelessness it's through sheltering, services, and a continuum of housing culminating in home ownership.

Big Lift was a key component in the discussion of homelessness and housing during the campaign of that year for many public officials, with most of them embracing or fully endorsing the plan. The document is prominently featured. Most recently, in the resolution from whatcom county council, drafted in the summer of 2024, recognizing the crisis of homelessness and housing insecurity in our county.

I was very happy to be able to attend meetings on that drafting, with the big lift team.

I am happy to have had the influence over the county board of health and a health department, in ensuring government run sheltering, when no partners come forward to do that work.

In short, i have saved many lives in our community, and continue to advocate to make that happen.

I continue to petition, government leaders and employees, to meet the our mutual goals in ending homelessness and providing affordable housing.

I enjoy partnerships with multiple advocacies that are intersectional with the health of whatcom county, and also enjoy personal relationships and friendships. With most of the county council, currently seated.

I've been glad to have your ear, and partnership.

you're interested in serving on this Advisory Group.

of, and intersectionality of homelessness and housing insecurity as it pertains to the health of all members of our county. When the unhoused are compromised, as we see right now in our streets during this winter event, it endangers the health of our entire community. I am so grateful to the leaders of our county. If we're working with me in the past, and feel that joining this committee is the obvious next step to help get our mutual goals met.

References (please include daytime telephone number):

As reference, and in short, i refer to my personal relationships with those serving on the board of health, sheriff tanksley, prosecutor richey, and the other numerous public officials who I have had the pleasure of working with in my endeavors.

Appointment Requirements

I understand and agree

Signature of applicant:

Markis D. Stidham

Place Signed / Submitted



(Section Break)

Subject:

Re: Additional Info requested for your application to the Public Health Advisory Board

Date:

Saturday, January 17, 2026 1:40:38 PM

Greetings Whatcom County Board of Health!

Let me firstly lead by thanking you for your service to our county!

I fully understand the reason for specificity in this case, and welcome the opportunity to elucidate on my skill sets as they pertain specifically, to your needs in filling these positions on the public health advisory board.

As it is, when I filled out my application, I literally did so in the 11th hour, before the deadline, and made several grammatical errors, in my rush to submit my application, with literally four minutes left on the clock!

Apologies.

In that rush, I'm afraid I left out some key qualifying factors for you to review.

I'm grateful for the opportunity to be able to share a fuller scope of my experience and qualifications for the position.

I will now go line by line, in response to your very specific request for more information:

i) having been in leadership at two different local nonprofits, and as a samaritan citizen, specifically serving the homeless population in our county, and recognizing that population as comprised of a disproportionate number of folks from protected classes, including those with mental, and physical disabilities, it is a regular part of my work to navigate health services for these folks and liaison them to the providers they need.

This is very hands-on work.

Arranging appointments and giving rides to those appointments, and helping providers assess the need of an individual.

While doing that work,

I've had the emergency department at St. Joe's hospital contact me several times, asking me to give transport to someone who was being discharged.

My line of work has also led me to specifically represent individuals within the system, through the ROI, release of information, system.

This requires that I maintain a knowledge and observance of HIPA rules, and burdens/blesses me with a more intimate representation of individuals as they navigate our health system.

As you can imagine, this is very challenging, and personal work.

ii) While I find that my chosen advocacy is intersectional with all of these minutia of qualification, this one is definitely in my kitchen.

Living alone on Lummi Island, throughout my early teens and until I was 29, I lived/ rented under a number of very challenging, environmental scenarios, including living in a very rundown, fisherman's village,

(The ghetto) comprised of "vintage" tiny homes, as well as variously rehabbing run down old shacks for me to rent and live in, I experienced the full spectrum of housing.

From very well appointed homes with all of the amenities, to hauling my own water and using an outhouse for a number of years.

My experience allows me to advise on health and hygiene issues related to rough living, and also, a fuller perspective from which I can advise our board of health.

Of course, my advocacy puts me directly into the most challenging environmental living situations, where my experience has really helped to bring better health to those folks who we traditionally do not help.

I've built and served among just about any variety of household living situations that you can imagine.

Including sanctioned, and unsanctioned, life-saving emergency sheltering.

I mentioned before that my outreach through nonprofits, and through my previous government role on the hsw, which allowed me to go on, ride alongs with the bellingham police department, specifically during the pandemic, where my focus was specifically, on finding adherence to cdc recommendations, gives me a unique, and trauma informed perspective.

My experience on the hsw also put me into a number of conversations, and making recommendations about public health as it pertains to homelessness and those it impacts.

(All of us)

I could go on at length, but I feel confident that everyone on the board of health is aware of, and fully knowledgeable of my qualifications, in this category.

I would be more than happy to elucidate, at your leisure, and make myself available to you for any questions you might have in this, or any of the other categories here.

iii) Interestingly, this category is obviously even more "in my kitchen" than the previous one.

I believe that my unique experience again, working with our houseless community in the woods, in the streets, and specifically, having been one of the people who brought tiny home villages to our community, my work there was not only in making sure these people were safely sheltered, but indeed, pivotal to moving these folks into rapid rehousing, education, employment, and reuniting them with family, through a number of methods.

Navigating social and economic barriers, and the stigma, related to this demographic, which, again I remind you, is comprised of an inordinate amount of a protected class peoples, makes me an absolute expert in this category.

iv) In this category I also have some extensive experience.

Working with nonprofits has led me to deal one on one, with many philanthropic and business communities, while seeking and obtaining their support.

And also in community meetings where we were trying to place services within their neighborhoods.

I've come to understand the constraints under which many of them operate, their reservations, and moreover, through my advocacy, have become educated on what their expectations are, in their giving.

It has been an absolute pleasure working with these folks.

And they are, indeed the backbone of my advocacy.

My own unaffiliated volunteer work, also makes me, by default, a philanthropist.

v) Ironically, if the previous two categories, were within my "kitchen"

This category is where the rubber meets the road.

My sweet spot.

And because of the previous categories, and my description of their intersectionality with my chosen advocacy, this category is most descriptive of the fullest scope of my work, which touches on all of these categories very heavily.

It's fair to say that I have chosen to serve the very most inequitably compromised community members in our county.

Nationally, the mortality risk among the houseless, is 3.5% - 4.5% higher than that of the housed population, with a life expectancy of 20 years less than those who are housed.

I am definitely very experienced in trying to navigate these health inequities within our communities.

Committed.

vi) Government.

I know that I have spoken at some length about my experience on the homeless strategies work group. Appointed by county council in 2019, and unanimously reappointed in 2020. This is a point of pride for me.

I learned a lot about how government operates there.

On how to operate within a work group.

Procedures.

Methods.

Rules.

I forgot to mention in my previous application, that I'm also currently serving on the Whatcom County Ferry Advisory Committee.

This experience also has given me much better perspective on a very unique and individual community within our county, with very specific and unique needs, including navigating conundrums, like home healthcare, as it pertains, to ferry ridership, and the prolonged service outages endemic within that transportation mode.

I enjoy personal relationships with most of those in our county's leadership positions, and have extensive experience with liaising to the health department.

It's work that I already do, and I believe phab will allow us to have better conversations, and with better outcomes.

Efficacy.

vii) As a longtime Lummi Island resident, and as a local commercial fisherman there, and also as a home builder, I have had extensive relationships with the members of the Lummi Nation, where I worked by their sides, and have longstanding relationships within the tribe.

Also, some experience there, with leadership, as when I was with HomesNow, we helped to navigate the first specific tiny home encampment along lummi shore drive.

My work in placing people into shelters over the years has occasionally led me to their doors as well.

I believe that the Lummi Nation is actually leading our county on homelessness solutions, and we would do well to listen to them.

Living twenty years just outside of Deming, has also put me into more personal working relationships among the Nooksack Nation, and likewise availing our mutual clients of their services.

These relationships are key to my ability to serve this greatly compromised community within our greater community.

Again, we could learn a lot from these native nations, on how community can heal and reunite society.

To that end, as is expressed through county code, I too agree, that it would be most beneficial to have a member native community to represent a specific position on phab.

I do also know that it is difficult to fill these positions from these communities.

With that, I offer my limited experience with these local nations, as, perhaps in small part, meeting some expectation of representation of their needs, to the board, and perhaps even meeting the requirements of code.

With that, I conclude the qualifications, though not in their entirety, which, I believe pertain to your specific questions, and whether or not I am chosen for this position, it is my fullest intention to help with this work.

It's my sincerest hope to attain this position, to give more clarity to all of us, and hopefully, working together, we can come up with great policy to serve the entirety of Whatcom county's health related needs.

Warmly,