

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 | Field not completed. |
|-------|----------------------|

| | |
|------------|---------|
| First Name | Heather |
|------------|---------|

| | |
|-----------|----------|
| Last Name | Flaherty |
|-----------|----------|

| | |
|--------------|----------|
| Today's Date | 1/2/2026 |
|--------------|----------|

| | |
|--|--|
| | |
|--|--|

| | |
|--|--|
| | |
|--|--|

| | |
|--|--|
| | |
|--|--|

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Do you live in Whatcom County? | Yes |
|-----------------------------------|-----|

| | |
|---|----------------------|
| Do you have a different mailing address? | Field not completed. |
|---|----------------------|

| | |
|--|--|
| | |
|--|--|

| | |
|--|--|
| | |
|--|--|

| | |
|--|--|
| | |
|--|--|

Step 2

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| 1. Name of Advisory | Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force/Law & |
|---------------------|---|

| | |
|---|---|
| Group | Justice Council |
| Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force Position: | Concerned Citizen |
| 2. Do you meet the residency, employment, and/or affiliation requirements of the position for which you're applying? | Yes |
| 3. Which Council district do you live in? | District 2 |
| 4. Have you ever been a member of this Advisory Group | Yes |
| If yes, please list dates: | 1st Term completed in 2025, applying to be considered and to fulfill my 2nd term if the Council approves. Have been following IPRTF since it was started, and applied to be on the IPRTF in 2020. |
| 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? | Yes |
| If yes, please explain | Sometimes the Chuckanut Health Foundation has been contracted with by Whatcom County to administer contracts. |
| 6. Have you declared candidacy (as defined by RCW 42.17A.055) for a paid elected office in any jurisdiction within the county? | No |
| You may attach a resume or detailed summary of experience, | Attached |

qualifications, &
interest in response to
the following questions

7. Please describe your
occupation (or former
occupation if retired),
qualifications,
professional and/or
community activities,
and education

I am the Executive Director of the Chuckanut Health Foundation, where I have served for seven years leading community-centered philanthropy and systems-change work in Whatcom County. My role focuses on building partnerships across healthcare, behavioral health, philanthropy, and local government to strengthen prevention, treatment, and community-based supports. I bring experience in nonprofit leadership, healthcare administration, and collaborative policy development, with a strong emphasis on centering community voice and lived experience. I hold a Bachelor of Science in Community Health and a Master's in Business from Western Washington University and approach this work with a practical, relationship-driven lens.

8. Please describe why
you're interested in
serving on this
Advisory Group.

I'm interested in continuing to serve on this Advisory Group because this work matters to me both personally and professionally. As a parent and longtime Whatcom County resident, I care deeply about the kind of systems we create and the ripple effects they have on individuals, families, and future generations. Through my work in community health, I've seen how unmet behavioral health needs and lack of prevention often surface in the justice system, and I believe this group's sustained, community-informed focus is essential to meaningful change. I also value the continuity and shared understanding that come with ongoing service and am committed to contributing thoughtful, collaborative input that helps move good ideas into real, on-the-ground action.

References (please
include daytime
telephone number):

Prosecutor Eric Richey, [REDACTED]
Jay Julius, Former Chairman Lummi Nation, number available
upon request
Teri Treat, Lynden Inn, number available upon request
Reverend Terrance TeeJay Morris, World Relief, number
available upon request
Tim McEvoy, Former President of McEvoy Oil, number available
upon request

Appointment
Requirements

I understand and agree

Signature of applicant:

Heather Flaherty

Place Signed /
Submitted

[REDACTED]

(Section Break)

Heather Flaherty is a mom, community builder, and nonprofit leader who believes that systems work best when they are grounded in compassion, dignity, and real human experience. For the past seven years, she has served as Executive Director of the Chuckanut Health Foundation (CHF), where she has helped grow the organization, expanding annual fundraising, building a strong team, and creating spaces where people across sectors can come together to solve hard problems.

Heather's path was shaped by lived experience and a deep respect for opportunities to work. She graduated from Western Washington University during the 2009 recession and worked wherever work was available: childcare, student affairs, direct service at The Chrysalis, and as a 2010 Census worker knocking on doors across Whatcom County. She went on to work in healthcare administration and philanthropy, including as Executive Assistant to the CEO of PeaceHealth Northwest, where she learned how complex systems, leadership decisions, and patient experience intersect in real time. Her subsequent work at the RiverStyx Foundation and a family business office further deepened her experience in philanthropy, policy strategy, human resources, and economic recovery efforts, alongside engagement in issues including criminal justice reform, behavioral health, climate change, and food systems.

A first-generation college graduate, Heather holds a Bachelor of Science in Community Health and a Master's in Business from Western Washington University. Her work blends hands-on community health values with practical governance and operational insight. She has consistently focused on policies shaped by community voice, especially those most impacted by inequitable systems. Heather helped establish the Whatcom Racial Equity Commission, working alongside women of color to draft county code and design an inclusive advisory process. She co-authored the Healthy Children's Fund, securing \$100 million over ten years for early childhood supports, and helped author the ordinance to govern the county's public safety and public health sales tax, ensuring long-term funding toward treatment, behavioral health services, and drivers of incarceration.

Through Chuckanut Health Foundation, Heather has focused not only on policy, but on connection and prevention. She helped launch All Hands Whatcom to respond to the opioid crisis through shared learning and coordinated action; supports grassroots organizations through rapid, trust-based grants; and led community-wide efforts to understand youth mental health during the pandemic by working directly with students, families, educators, and providers. Across initiatives like Aging Well Whatcom and Connecting Care, her work centers belonging, access, and care across the lifespan.

Heather brings to the Incarceration Prevention & Reduction Task Force a collaborative, systems-level perspective grounded in community relationships, policy experience, and a belief that accountability and care must go hand in hand. She is committed to reducing incarceration while strengthening the behavioral health, treatment, and community supports that help people, and families, stay whole.

Outside of work, Heather can usually be found with her husband and two children, Margot (5) and Booker (1.5), walking trails, taking far too many photos of sunsets, and savoring the ordinary moments that make life meaningful. She is grounded in family, humor, music, and a deep hope that communities can build a more just and caring future together.