

## 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 Makela

Last Name Alem

Today's Date 2/17/2026

[Redacted] [Redacted]

[Redacted] [Redacted]

[Redacted] [Redacted]

Do you live in Whatcom County? Yes

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

[Redacted] [Redacted]

[Redacted] [Redacted]

[Redacted] [Redacted]

### Step 2

1. Name of Advisory Child & Family Well-Being Task Force

Group

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Child & Family Well-Being Task Force

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Yes

2. Do you meet the residency, employment, and/or affiliation requirements of the position for which you're applying?

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Yes

3. Which Council district do you live in?

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District 2

4. Have you ever been a member of this Advisory Group

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No

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?

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No

6. Have you declared candidacy (as defined by RCW 42.17A.055) for a paid elected office in any jurisdiction within the county?

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No

You may attach a resume or detailed summary of experience, qualifications, & interest in response to the following questions

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Attached

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

Currently I work for Roots of Empathy, an international organization with a local chapter, which teaches an empathy-based curriculum in local public schools. In addition to my responsibilities running the program, I teach the program in a 2nd grade at Blaine Elementary. We focus on teaching and practicing emotional literacy skills with the children, and there is a special

and education

focus on celebrating diversity and embracing inclusion throughout the curriculum.

Previous to this role, I have had a range of professional experiences serving my community at both the state and local levels. Most recently, I worked for Washington Department of Commerce as a racial equity performance specialist. My role involved tracking statewide homelessness data for racial disparities, generating performance measures for improving equitable access and outcomes, and providing technical assistance to grantees across the state.

I also worked in housing and homelessness services at two non-profits here locally, Opportunity Council and Catholic Housing Services. In these positions I supported clients who were living with challenges faced by many families in Whatcom County; homelessness, food insecurity, mental health challenges, substance use disorder, abuse and more.

Outside of my professional experience, I also stay engaged with my community in a variety of ways. I volunteered with Roots of Empathy 2024-2025 before my employment, hosted and facilitated a community wide Equity Learning group from 2021-2023, and have participated in various projects supporting houseless individuals such as The Point in Time Count, Project Homeless Connect, and mutual aid meal trains.

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

I am a lifelong resident of Whatcom County and very dedicated to pouring into the cup that nurtured me through my own childhood. I am a new parent to an 18-month-old, and bringing my skills and background specifically to the betterment of child and family wellbeing feels especially relevant to this next chapter of my life. I am very inspired to be part of supporting the good work being done in the community to support my child, his friends, and his future classmates.

I think serving on the advisory group would also be a great opportunity for me in this next step of professional development. I have served on various committees as part of my prior professional roles and have engaged in different WA state level legislative advocacy opportunities, but this would be my first time serving on a county advisory group.

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References (please include daytime telephone number):

Emily Beszhak [REDACTED]  
Gina Shannon [REDACTED]

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Appointment Requirements

I understand and agree

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Signature of applicant:

Makela Alem

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Place Signed /  
Submitted



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(Section Break)

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# Makela Alem



## Professional Experience

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### Roots of Empathy

*Whatcom County Program Coordinator*

*September 2025-Current*

Conducts volunteer recruitment and administrative support for Roots of Empathy, a program delivering an empathy based curriculum in local public school classrooms.

### WA State Department of Commerce

*Racial Equity Performance Coordinator*

*November 2022-September 2025*

Analyzed statewide data to review for potential racial disparities and developed state racial equity performance measures to promote equitable access and outcomes of complex homeless crisis response systems.

### Opportunity Council

*Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Inclusion Coordinator*

*February 2021-February 2022*

Developed and facilitated training for staff related to racial equity and other DEI related topics.

Additionally, supervised agency hiring to recruit a diverse workforce through representing the agency at in-person recruitment events and developing marketing materials for recruitment through social media campaigns.

*Affordable Housing Compliance and Leasing Coordinator*

*April 2019-February 2021*

Managed an 80 unit scattered site, multi-source funded, permanent supportive housing program for chronically homeless families experiencing disabilities including behavioral health challenges, mental illness, and substance use disorders.

### Catholic Housing Services

*Business Manager*

*December 2016 - August 2019*

Managed an 84 unit low income tax credit building primarily serving families including those living with disabilities and/or mental illness. Provided case management to clients in crisis to promote housing stability by connecting clients to resources.

*Property Assistant*

*August 2016 - December 2016*

Assisted three business managers in the property management of four low income tax credit buildings each with a variety of funding sources and requirements serving vulnerable populations.

## Education

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Western Washington University, Bachelor of Arts

*Human Services, Racial Histories, and Law*

*January 2013 - June 2015*

Whatcom Community College, Associates Degree

*Liberal Arts Studies*

*September 2010 - June 2012*

## Relevant Training and Projects

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Certified Crisis Prevention and Intervention Trainer, SHRM/PSYCH HUB Workplace Mental Health Ally Certificate, SHRM Talent Acquisition Certification, Facilitator for The Equity Learning Collective 2021-2023, Roots of Empathy Parent Volunteer 2024-2025