

**Subject:** Online Form Submittal: Advisory Group Application  
**Date:** Monday, January 5, 2026 10:35:45 AM

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## 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                                    | Ms.                  |
| First Name                               | Shu-Ling             |
| Last Name                                | Zhao                 |
| Today's Date                             | 1/5/2026             |
| <div></div>                              | <div></div>          |
| <div></div>                              | <div></div>          |
| <div></div>                              | <div></div>          |
| Do you live in Whatcom County?           | Yes                  |
| Do you have a different mailing address? | Field not completed. |
| <div></div>                              | <div></div>          |
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### Step 2

|                     |                              |
|---------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Name of Advisory | Public Health Advisory Board |
|---------------------|------------------------------|

## Group

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|------------------------------|--|
| Public Health Advisory Board | I have expertise, career experience, or lived experience in one of the areas listed above., I am a consumer of public health services. , 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 2 |
|---|------------|

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|---|-----|
| 4. Have you ever been a member of this Advisory Group | Yes |
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|----------------------------|-------------------|
| If yes, please list dates: | January 2023-2026 |
|----------------------------|-------------------|

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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 | I currently serve as the Community Advancement Director at Chuckanut Health Foundation, a locally rooted philanthropic |
|-------------------------|--|

occupation (or former occupation if retired), qualifications, professional and/or community activities, and education

organization that has supported community health and well-being in Whatcom County for more than 40 years. In this role, I help strengthen community health and well-being through collaborative, community-informed initiatives focused on access, equity, and system improvement. My work emphasizes meaningful public participation in health planning and building the local and statewide capacity needed to respond to complex public health challenges.

In this role, I support the Statewide Reimagining the Involuntary Treatment Act (ITA) Listening Tour, contributing to program design, statewide coordination across Behavioral Health–Administrative Services Organization (BH-ASO) regions, and facilitation of the Whatcom County pilot listening tour. This work centers qualitative study, lived experience, and cross-sector collaboration to inform behavioral health policy and practice. I also support All Hands Whatcom, a coordinated community response to the opioid and fentanyl crisis, and I serve as the patient- and applicant-facing lead for the Laurendeau Cancer Care Fund, which helps reduce financial hardship for community members receiving cancer treatment. In addition, I support the Whatcom Rural Health Equity Zone pilot (a community process where those who live in the Mount Baker School District design and implement strategies for addressing health inequities in their own community), steward scholarship programs for emerging health and public health professionals, and contribute to content and planning for convenings such as the North Sound Race and Health Equity Conference, All Hands Whatcom Opioid Summits, webinars, and Re-entry Simulations.

Before stepping into my current role with the Foundation, I worked as a community organizer. As a contractor with Chuckanut Health Foundation, I partnered with local leaders to develop and pilot a community-owned policy process that led to the creation of the Whatcom Racial Equity Commission, including co-designing a comprehensive qualitative study centered on lived experience. During this period, I also supported community engagement and action planning for youth mental health as part of the Healthy Whatcom Community Health Improvement Plan process.

In addition to my public health and organizing work, I served as President of Whatcom Women in Business during the COVID-19 pandemic, supporting women leaders and local businesses through an exceptionally challenging time while helping sustain connection, mentorship, and community resilience.

Beyond my professional experience, I bring a deep personal commitment to this community. I was born and raised in Whatcom County (District 4) and have chosen to raise my child

here. This is home, and that grounding shapes my sense of responsibility to listen deeply, support my neighbors, and help build systems that reflect compassion, equity, and shared care for one another.

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

Having served on the Public Health Advisory Board over the past several years, I have developed a deeper appreciation for both the board's potential and its responsibility to the community. PHAB is entering an important moment, particularly with the upcoming Community Health Assessment and Community Health Improvement Plan (CHA/CHIP) cycle and the ongoing work of shaping how PHAB partners most effectively with the Board of Health. Having been part of the board since its expansion to a 21-member body, I am invested in strengthening the board's structure, purpose, and impact so that it can best serve Whatcom County.

I see PHAB as playing a critical role in cultivating civic belonging, legitimacy, and community voice within local public health decision-making. I am interested in continuing to serve because I care deeply about ensuring that this board functions as a meaningful bridge between lived experience, community priorities, and public policy, and that it remains grounded in equity, compassion, and accountability.

My interest is also shaped by my direct experience with community health planning. As a member of the Healthy Whatcom team and a facilitator in the last CHIP process, I helped steward planning related to youth mental health and health equity. Over the last two years, I have served on the PHAB committee focused on identifying frameworks for the next CHA/CHIP cycle. I would welcome the opportunity to continue that work and support a thoughtful, community-centered approach as we move into the next phase.

Ultimately, I am interested in continuing to serve on PHAB because I believe in Whatcom County, I believe in the power of community-informed public health, and I want to contribute to a board that helps our county make thoughtful, responsive, and equitable decisions about health and well-being.

References (please include daytime telephone number):

Heather Flaherty, Executive Director, Chuckanut Health Foundation [REDACTED]

Amy Rydel, Health Planning Specialist, WCHCS [REDACTED]

Rachel Lucy, Director Community Health, PeaceHealth [REDACTED]

Ray Deck III, Founding Director, Skookum Kids [REDACTED]

Appointment Requirements

I understand and agree

Signature of applicant: Shu-Ling Zhao

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Place Signed /  
Submitted



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(Section Break)

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