

### WREC SEATING PROCESS INFORMATION:

Community members serving as the Appointment Committee drafted the application for the Whatcom Racial Equity Commission. Applications opened on February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024. More than 30 applications were received by the initial February 29<sup>th</sup> deadline. Because of community feedback, the deadline was extended until March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

APPLICATIONS WERE MADE AVAILABLE IN THE FOLLOWING 6 LANGUAGES:

- English
- Spanish
- Punjabi
- Russian
- Traditional Chinese
- Vietnamese

***Applicants could self-identify as applying for multiple roles for consideration by the Appointment Committee.***

Applicants were asked to respond to three prompts. These applicant statements could be submitted in 3 ways:

- As written statements with the application.
- As audio or video recordings by the applicant.
- Utilizing the technical assistance available from the Chuckanut Health Foundation staff, as summarized or recorded materials prepared for them by staff.

*All materials submission mechanisms were used in the process.*

Applications were reviewed by the Appointment Committee on March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024. After lengthy discussion, written recommendations were prepared for Executive Sidhu and Mayor Lund.

**TOTAL # OF APPLICANTS:** 43 Whatcom County Community Members

**POSITIONS AVAILABLE:** 19 roles

### APPLICANTS BY COUNTY COUNCIL DISTRICT:

District	# of Applicants	Recommended Members
District 1 (Galloway)	11	4
District 2 (Donovan)	10	7
District 3 (Byrd)	9	2
District 4 (Stremler)	8	4
District 5 (Elenbaas)	5	2

Recommendation	Applicant Name	County Council District	Summary
<p><b>Up to seven community members, which group shall include at least one of the following: 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;</b></p>			
Community Member	Rika Valladares	4	<p><b><i>Community Member Student Youth/ Young Adult ages 16-24</i></b></p> <p>Valladares is 18 years old, grew up in Lynden, speaks both Spanish and English, and has been serving on the Northwest Youth Services Youth Action Board for 10 months. Valladares has experience with public speaking, event planning, and working collaboratively on an advisory group within a local nonprofit service provider to address disparities and inequities in the housing system.</p>
Community Member	Erik McFrazier	1	<p><b><i>Community Member Experience caring for a student that currently attends a Whatcom County public school</i></b></p> <p>McFrazier identifies as a father and husband in a multicultural, multinational home; a Black man, and a business owner. His two children attend school locally—his son attends Fairhaven Middle School and his daughter attends WWU. McFrazier is the CEO of Pacific IT and has extensive experience serving on boards of and engaging local</p>

			community organizations. McFrazier is in the process of co-founding the United Professionals of Color.
Community Member	<b>Gabriela Montenegro</b>	<b>4</b>	<p><b><i>Community Member Immigrant, Migrant, Refugee</i></b></p> <p>Montenegro identifies as a Central American immigrant and speaks multiple languages whose educational background is in Criminology. Montenegro works as a Housing Resource Access Coordinator for the Opportunity Council and has served as co-chair for the Whatcom Center for Early Learning because of this, Montenegro also has extensive experience working with community members to address barriers in accessing care and service systems.</p>
Community Member	<b>J. Manuel Reta</b>	<b>5</b>	<p><b><i>Community Member Business Owner, Manager, Contractor</i></b></p> <p>Reta identifies a Latino father, grandfather, and community leader. His family immigrated from Mexico and he grew up in Whatcom. He speaks both Spanish and English. Reta founded the Northwest Washington Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Chicas Reinas or Chicos Dance Group, and has served as a Washington State Commissioner on Hispanic Affairs. Reta is a Vietnam veteran, father, husband, grandfather, cancer survivor, and has a stream radio station <i>La Voz De Whatcom</i>.</p>

Community Member	<b>Khushdip Kaur Brar</b>	<b>4</b>	<p><b><i>Community Member</i></b></p> <p>Brar has experience supporting youth in Punjabi community by providing systems navigation support and identifies as a youth leader in the faith community. She has experience with multiple faith communities and Sikhism is her current practicing faith. Her family is part of the agricultural community and is an advocate for small scale farms. Brar was born in 1994 and was raised in the Philippines. Brar currently serves on the Lynden School Board and Lynden Planning Commission.</p>
Community Member	<b>Terrance “TeeJay” Morris</b>	<b>1</b>	<p><b><i>Community Member</i></b></p> <p>Morris identifies as a Black, Afro-Caribbean, openly gay, disabled, immune-compromised man and preacher. He speaks Bajan, English, and Akan. Morris holds a degree in Theology from Howard University, is a member of a historical Black fraternity, and has extensive experience working in various sectors including juvenile corrections, housing, and non-profit organizations with a focus on diversity equity and inclusion. He has worked as a consultant for racial equity, diversity, and inclusion initiative. He a co-founder of Bellingham Unity Committee and participated in the development phase of WREC and holds lived experiences of violent discrimination including surviving gun violence/ gay bashing. Morris has extensive</p>

			experience as an activist, advocate for housing success.
Community Member	<b>Rachel Rosalinda Rodriguez</b>	<b>2</b>	<p><b><i>Community Member</i></b></p> <p>Rodriguez has extensive experience navigating services and supporting others in doing so. She has lived experience with the criminal legal system and the civil legal system, housing instability and homelessness, with loss related to gang violence, drug overdose, &amp; suicide which has made her an incredible advocate for and support of underserved populations. She has demonstrated experience with systems change in higher ed, started Synergy Collective, works for the North Sound Accountable Community of Health, has worked in education, and experience in the nonprofit sector.</p>
<b>Two diversity officers or staff members engaged in DEI work in educational institutions: one working in local higher education institutions and one working in local K-12 schools</b>			
K-12	<b>Brett Muskavage</b>	<b>2</b>	<p><b><i>Educational Staff Advancing DEI work in K-12 schools</i></b></p> <p>Muskavage is a counselor at Meridian Middle School. He identifies as a “white cisgender male.” In his role, he supports the “Social Justice League” a student-driven club engaging in this work through projects like cultural heritage celebrations on campus. He has presented research on BIPOC student experience with school counselors at the Washington School Counseling Association</p>

			Conference and continues to pursue his own education and professional development related to equity work.
Higher Ed	<b>Eric Scott, J.D.</b>	<b>2</b>	<p><b><i>Educational Staff Advancing DEI work in Higher ed.</i></b></p> <p>Scott currently works at WWU as a Civil Rights &amp; Title IX investigator. In addition to that, he serves as a Coordinator for the athletic department's Justice, Equity, Diversity &amp; Inclusion Committee, and both the University's Threat Assessment Committee and Violence/Sexual Violence Committee. Scott is also a member if the Campus Police Public Safety Advisory Council. Outside of Whatcom, he as additional experiences advancing these initiatives on college campuses. He also received a certification in International &amp; Comparative Human Rights Law from Drake Law School and while in Des Moines was a Human Rights Specialist for the City of Des Moines' Civil and Human Rights Commission.</p>
<b>Two human service providers, including, but not limited to, victim or offender services, housing or houseless services, and mental health services;</b>			
Human Services Provider	<b>Frank Lee</b>	<b>2</b>	<p><b><i>Human Services Provider</i></b></p> <p>Lee works within the Whatcom County Juvenile Justice System as a Juvenile Court Probation Officer with over 30 years of experiences in the criminal justice system. He grew up in Tacoma's East Side and</p>

			specifically in the Salishan Housing Projects. He has lived experiences of both facing poverty and a long history of youth mentorship. He is a graduate of WWU and while on campus was the Vice President of the Black Student Union and on campus initiatives. Lee's current role involves supporting youth and families with accessing community-based resources and interventions.
Human Services Provider	<b>Jason McGill</b>	<b>1</b>	<p><b><i>Human Services Provider</i></b></p> <p>McGill is the Executive Director of Northwest Youth Services. He has 15 years of professional experience and has been serving in his current role for 2 years. McGill has consistently advocated for equal rights, opportunities, and treatment for individuals who are historically under-resourced and vulnerable. McGill engaged in the development phase of the WREC. He led the implementation of a healing centered engagement model for the work of his organization.</p>
<b>One social justice advocate or activist whose area of focus is racial equity</b>			
Social Justice Activist/ Advocate	<b>Lance Edward Jones</b>	<b>3</b>	<p><b><i>Social Justice Activist/ Advocate</i></b></p> <p>Jones moved from Atlanta, GA to Whatcom County. Following the fatal shooting of Rayshard Brooks, Jones supported organizing Townhalls in 2020 in College Park and supported 3-month long education series in College Park. This demonstrated his</p>

			experience engaging elected officials, law enforcement, community leaders, and community members in shared dialogue resulting in the development of collaborative agendas and the implementation of those agendas.
<b>One representative from a philanthropic organization</b>			
Philanthropy	<b>Zeenia Junkeer</b>	<b>2</b>	<b><i>Philanthropy</i></b>  Junkeer identifies as a multiracial, multicultural woman and is the Executive Director of the Mount Baker Foundation. She speaks both Spanish and English. She holds Bachelor of Science in Justice Studies and Social Inquiry, is a Naturopathic Doctor, has extensive experience doing international NGO work, experience with policy change and advocacy, co-led the Decolonizing Data Council in Oregon, held positions in State-level advisory groups in Oregon including the Governor’s Racial Justice Council’s Health Equity Committee, and the Universal Access to Care Taskforce which she also co-chaired.
<b>One faith leader;</b>			
Faith Leader	<b>Yazil A. Dhilpe Castro</b>	<b>4</b>	<b><i>Faith Leadership</i></b>  Dhilpe Castro moved to Whatcom 8 years ago. Her parents immigrated from Mexico and she is a 1st gen American. She worked at New A Ministries in Lynden. She is a member of Amor Viviente Church where the congregation is primarily asylum seekers and



			migrants. She has extensive experience as a human service provider and lived experiences of navigating immigration systems so she provides systems navigation support to church members. She has previously worked at Lighthouse Mission where she also provided translation support. She is a member of the Racial Unity Now Board in Lynden.
<b>One multilingual health care provider.</b>			
Multilingual Healthcare Provider	<b>Julieta Garcia Suarez</b>	<b>3</b>	<b><i>Multilingual Healthcare Provider</i></b>  Garcia Suarez has extensive experience as a healthcare provider. She has lived experiences of immigrating from Mexico to Nooksack, attending migrant school programs, and as a young person being default family medical translator. In 2021 and 2022 she supported FEMA survey process following floods in East County. In addition to identifying as a health care professional, she identifies as the daughter of migrant farm workers and the mother of a small child.
<b>Up to four subject matter experts, individuals with expertise in, and/or specialists in the commission's areas of concern</b>			
Public Health & Safety	<b>Scott Ryckman</b>	<b>5</b>	<b><i>SME/ Individual with Expertise/ Specialist</i></b>  Ryckman is EMS Division Chief for City of Bellingham. He also teaches EMT classes and is Program Director for Paramedic Training at BTC. He has extensive experience as a first responder and expertise related to systems of public health and safety.

			Ryckman has a Graduate degree in Jazz studies and plays the saxophone which has allowed for additional lived experiences engaging with communities through arts and culture. Ryckman is a Be the One mentor at Ferndale High School.
Health & Healthcare	<b>Chao-ying Wu, MD</b>	<b>1</b>	<b><i>SME/ Individual with Expertise/ Specialist</i></b>  Dr. Wu has practiced Primary Care Medicine in Seattle, the Navajo Nation, New Zealand with a primarily Maori population, and in Whatcom County. Additionally, he has engaged in Aging Well Whatcom, a community initiative that aims to make Whatcom County a place with the culture, physical infrastructure, social supports, and services for all of us to age well. He identifies as a 66-year-old Chinese American male, child of immigrants. His extensive experience providing care to individuals, especially Whatcom County residents, and his community work would significantly support the work of the Commission.
Human & Civil Rights	<b>Lucia Zamora Chamorro</b>	<b>2</b>	<b><i>SME/ Individual with Expertise/ Specialist</i></b>  Zamora Chamorro currently works in the Washington State Department of Children, Youth and Families. Prior to coming to Washinton she served on the Supreme Court of El Salvador for 8 years and completed her Master's degree in Environmental Law in Madrid. In 2019 she volunteered as a human rights defender leading to she and her family

			<p>seeking refuge in the United States. She is UN refugee from El Salvador. She worked with Human Rights Watch addressing violations. Her experience as a Human Rights attorney who has navigated international legal, community based organization, and refuge systems is unique and speaks directly to supporting Whatcom growing population of refugees in addition to her experience supporting children and families would help advance the work of the Commission being relevant to current Couty projects and other intersecting work.</p>
Community Research & Planning	<b>Martha L. Lopez, Ed.D.</b>	<b>2</b>	<p><b><i>SME/ Individual with Expertise/ Specialist</i></b></p> <p>Lopez has demonstrated expertise in completing community research, planning, and the development of improvement strategies. Her specific expertise working with Latinx, Asian, and migrant populations on needs assessments and addressing nutrition programs in early learning environments in California would support some of the core work of the Commission.</p> <p>Lopez grew up as a migrant farmworker, has extensive experience as researcher and educator focused on population health. She is currently retired but over her career has worked in higher ed, has done community engaged research and development of programs to support children and families, and has served as a wellness consultant.</p>

**LIST OF ALL APPLICANTS:** Atul Deshmane, Batool Abdi, Benny Musonda, Blanca McCreary, Brett Muskavage, Bruce Thames, Catalina Hope, Chao-ying Wu, MD, Cleveland Harris II, Crystal Thompson, Deanna Lane, Eric Scott, J.D., Erik McFrazier, Eve Smason-Marcus, Frank Lee, Gabriela Montenegro, Hedy Rochelle Hollowell, Isaac Evans, J Manuel Reta, Jason McGill, Jean Lee, Jennifer Quigg, Jeremy Dorrrough, Jordan Gustafson, Judith Katalina (Kati) Bogdan, Julieta Garcia Suarez, Kamaldeep Singh Bhachu, Khushdip Kaur Brar, Lance Edward Jones, Lee Mozena, Lucia Zamora Chamorro, Maria Rockwell, Martha L. Lopez, Ed.D., Mei Timberlake, Rachel Rosalinda Rodriguez, Raven Hicks-Ott, Rika Valladares, Scott Ryckman, Shawn A. Fincher, Stephanie Moore, Terrance "TeeJay" Morris, Yazil A Dhillpe Castro, Zeenia Junkeer



## 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 15<sup>th</sup>, 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 5<sup>th</sup>, 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](mailto:WREC@ChuckanutHealthFoundation.org)**

