



**WASHINGTON STATE COMMUNITY CONNECTORS**  
**Connecting Families, Resources, & Ideas**

## Information for Applicants

**The mission of the WSCC is “Uniting Washington State family leaders in behavioral health care to strengthen children, youth, families, and community partnerships.”**

WSCC works together with family organizations, community and system partners, and individuals recruiting and mentoring families, encouraging collaboration toward mutual goals and organizing networks that will support, educate, and advocate for stronger, healthier families.

As you consider this opportunity, please familiarize yourself with this list of expectations:

### As a Board Member —

1. I will interpret the organization’s work and values to the community, and promote the organization.
2. I will commit to a 2-year term on the board.
3. I will attend at least 75% of board meetings (held monthly at 6-8 pm on the first Tuesday of each month either in person or remotely – phone or computer), work group/committee meetings, and special events. If I cannot attend, I will notify the board ahead of time.
4. I will actively participate in and lead one or more standing committees or work groups (rough time estimates: 2-4 hrs in addition to meetings per month for members – officers serve 4-6 hrs in addition to meetings per month).
5. I will act in the best interests of the organization, and excuse myself from discussions and votes where I have a conflict of interest.
6. I will take seriously the major legal responsibilities of serving on a board, including and especially the fiduciary/financial oversight role.
7. I will stay informed about what’s going on in the organization. I will ask questions and request information. I will participate in and take responsibility for making decisions on issues, policies and other board matters.
8. I will work in good faith with staff and other board members as partners towards achievement of our goals.

### From WSCC —

1. I will receive an orientation to the board by the Chair of the Board of Directors.
2. I will be sent, without request, quarterly financial reports and an update of organizational activities that allow me to act as a thoughtful and wise person in my legal responsibilities as a board member.



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3. Opportunities will be offered to me to discuss with the Project Director and the Board Chair the organization's programs, goals, activities, and status; additionally, I can request such opportunities.
4. The organization will help me perform my duties by keeping me informed about issues in the community- based human services and community in which we are working, and by offering me opportunities for professional development as a board member.
5. Board members and staff will respond in a straightforward fashion to questions I have that I feel are necessary to carry out my fiscal, legal and moral responsibilities to this organization. Board members and staff will work in good faith with me towards achievement of our goals.
6. If the organization does not fulfill its commitments to me, I can call on the Board Chair and Project Director to discuss these responsibilities.

## For Your Reflection

As you consider joining the board, here are some questions to consider:

Is the WSCC the right cause and organization for me?

Approach this decision as if you were planning to make a major donation: you would probably begin by thinking of areas where you have strong feelings – perhaps care for the elderly, or civil rights, or the elimination of poverty. After settling on a subject area, you might then learn about several different organizations working in that field, and investigate ones that seem to do what they say they will and are well managed. Only after you were fully satisfied would you make the donation.

The next time you consider joining a board, first ask yourself whether you truly feel strongly about the type of work that the organization does and the people it serves. Since, as a board member, you'll be investing not only money but time and energy, ask yourself whether the organization seems to be a pretty good risk as an investment.

Can I work with this organization and this board at this particular stage in its life?

At one time in an organization's life, board service may be fairly smooth with a few bumps, while at another time, board service may involve a hair-raising roller coaster ride (of course, an unexpected event can throw any board for a loop). What type of board seems right for you right now? What about the diversity of the board; does it represent the stakeholders in the community? You may want a board that really lets you roll up your sleeves and get to work with



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the other board members, or you may want a board that is stable and can let you learn about board work in a deliberate way.

### What can I, and what will I, contribute to this organization?

What skills, contacts, and perspectives do I have that will be useful to this organization? How, specifically, will the board use what I can bring? Often as board members, we find that some of our talents and contacts never seem to get utilized by the boards we're on. Perhaps you gave up a music career for accounting, or have writing skills that are not used at your job. Perhaps your network includes dozens of influential community leaders. Consider first what you bring to the table, and then, whether you are willing to give that to the organization. Look, too, for vehicles for your skills; if you can't see a specific vehicle (work on an event, help market a service, work with the Treasurer), your desire to contribute may well go unfulfilled. Ask yourself:

Do I believe in this organization enough to introduce my friends to it?

Can I make a commitment to attending at least 75% of the meetings? Can I volunteer with other board members at other times than meeting dates? Would I feel comfortable having my name on their letterhead or in their brochure? The right time to ask these questions is before, not after, you have joined the board.

This final question is one that potential candidates should ask themselves and one that active board members should periodically re-examine during their board service:

### What do I want to get out of being on this board?

An all-too-common experience for board members at the ends of their terms is a feeling that they didn't, after all, really get deeply involved and don't, as a result, feel that they either contributed as much or got as much as they had hoped when they first joined. Board members who plan and ask for what they want in the board will contribute more as well as gain more. For example, if you don't have a finance background but wish you knew more about finance, consider asking to be appointed to a financial work group or committee. If there's a community leader on another committee who you would love to get to know, ask to be on that committee, and put in the time to be sure you get to know all the members well. If one of your reasons for joining the board was to meet new people, volunteer to help any way that makes sense.



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## Board Committees

### Governance Committee

The governance committee examines how the board is functioning, how board members communicate, and whether the board is fulfilling its responsibilities and living up to the objectives and goals set for itself and the organization. While all board members should understand the organization's mission and goals, the governance committee must consider them with an eye on the board's responsibility to guide the organization and what is required of the board to best accomplish that. The governance committee must be able to articulate the board's vision for the board and find the board members who can put it into action.

**Committee responsibilities can be grouped into distinct categories.**

#### Find, keep, and/or get rid of board members

- Develop board member job descriptions.
- Create a board profile of what skills and expertise the board and the organization need.
- Identify potential board members and maintain information about each candidate.
- Cultivate and recruit new members from beyond the board's traditional circles.
- With the board chair, help assess and maintain board members' individual commitment, support, and participation in governance duties.
- Observe and nurture potential leaders within the board.
- Evaluate board members' eligibility for re-election.

#### Educate board members

- Orient new board members to ensure that they have adequate materials and understand their roles and responsibilities.
- Involve board members in "continuing education." The governance committee can update board members (about new programs, legislative action, and so forth) and continue to improve their skills as board members.
- Establish an effective communications network to keep board members apprised of activities through newsletters, board and committee minutes, media reports, phone calls, and thank you notes.
- Evaluate the board's performance.
- Annually lead the board in its self-assessment and develop recommendations to the board for self-improvement.
- Discuss with the staff leaders (and perhaps other staff) their views of the board's performance and ways to strengthen the board in both its governing and supporting role.



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These particular tasks are only the outline of the governance committee's job. The spirit of the committee is to ensure that the board is doing its job and doing it well, and if not, come up with suggestions to remedy that.

## Internal Business Committee

The internal business committee focuses on all internal and operational matters coming before the board. These include issues related to finance, grants, organizational infrastructure development, strategic planning, and human resources. The internal business committee acts as an anchor for the board, monitoring ongoing process and making recommendations for future actions.

### **Committee responsibilities can be grouped into distinct categories.**

Assist the board in monitoring ongoing organizational finance processes

- Fiscal policy & budgeting
- Risk management
- Financial management & reporting
- Long range financial plans
- Compliance with reporting & other legal requirements
- Adequacy of internal financial controls
- Compliance with conflicts of interest & other code of conduct policies
- Review and recommend to the Board annual operating & capital budgets
- Selection & supervision of auditors

Future planning and recommendations

- Strategic planning
- Oversight of staff hiring process

Oversight of specific, temporary workgroups that have specific tasks to accomplish in a specific timeframe dedicated to any internal organizational tasks

These particular tasks are only the basic outline of the internal business committee's job. The spirit of the committee is to ensure that the board has the organizational infrastructure development information it needs to continue doing its job and doing it well.



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## External Business Committee

The external business committee focuses on all external issues, including fundraising, public relations, publications (brochures, annual report) and marketing. These issues often overlap. Public relations efforts should be crafted to help fundraising and vice versa.

**Committee responsibilities can be grouped into distinct categories.**

### Public relations and marketing

- Develop marketing plan that shares information about WSCC throughout the state
- Create brochures and other printed and social media information that is standardized across all platforms (printed and using technology)
- Develop fundraising plan in collaboration with internal business committee and present to board

### Developing ways to improve and foster statewide communication

- Create innovative communication plans to include all WSCC membership and collaborative partners
- Research and determine communication technology that meets the organization's and its membership needs
- Develop annual communication and marketing budget in collaboration with internal business committee and present to the board

Oversight of specific, temporary workgroups that have specific tasks to accomplish in a specific timeframe dedicated to any external business organizational tasks

These particular tasks are only the basic outline of the external business committee. The spirit of the committee is to ensure that the board has the public relations, marketing, and communication development information it needs to continue doing its job and doing it well.