

Sunday, October 20, 2024



City of Olympia Boards and Commissions Committee Application

DEADLINE FOR APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Friday, December 13th at 5:00 PM PST

Advisory committees are a structured way for individual community members to share their opinions and perspectives, study issues, and develop recommendations in a focused small group. Their primary purpose is to provide judicious advice, from a community member's perspective, to the Olympia City Council.

Committee activities may include study of critical issues, hearing public testimony, independent research, and reviewing staff reports and recommendations - all of which is intended so that the committee is prepared to discuss, formulate, and forward well-developed, thoughtful recommendations to the City Council in a timely manner.

The City of Olympia values participation from all perspectives and life experiences and looks for equity and inclusion in advisory board appointments.

To reduce barriers to community member participation, the City offers stipends of \$25 per meeting attended to Advisory Committee members. Those members who certify as low income are eligible to receive stipends of \$50 per meeting attended. Advisory Committee members may waive the stipend upon request.

The Olympia City Council's Community Livability and Public Safety Committee recommends appointments to the full Council. Recommendations are made following review of applications and interviews of qualified candidates.

All of this careful consideration takes time, please be aware that you will not be notified until February of 2025 of any next steps in the process.

The City of Olympia is committed to the non-discriminatory treatment of all persons in employment and the delivery of services and resources. Questions? Contact Dawn Carvalho, Executive Services Assistant, 360.753.8065, dcarvalh@ci.olympia.wa.us

If you saved or submitted an application and did not receive a confirmation, please check your spam folder. When filed with the City, your application and attachment documents are public records and may be subject to public release.

Name	Shawna Mershon
Email	[REDACTED]
Primary Phone Number	[REDACTED]
Address	[REDACTED]

Some appointments require that applicants reside within Olympia city limits. Even though your mailing address may be Olympia, you may reside in the County or another jurisdiction. Are you a resident of the City of Olympia?

Yes

Select your residential area (Olympia residency is not required; however, it is a primary consideration.)

Eastside

Which Boards and Commissions would you like to apply for?

Arts Commission

Planning Commission

Social Justice and Equity Commission

If you applied for Multiple Boards and/or Commissions, please rank them in order of interest below:

Social Justice and Equity

Arts Commission

Planning Commission

Interests & Experiences

Please keep answers concise and informative. You are introducing yourself to the Olympia City Council and sharing with them why you are interested in being considered for appointment. You may attach a resume.

Attach a Resume



Resume for Shawna M.docx

Briefly describe why you wish to serve on this/these Advisory Committee(s).

As a member of the Leadership Thurston County class of 2025 I am looking for ways to support my community in meaningful ways. By serving on one of the commissions I will be able to use my education and personal experience to uplift our community and create ways to get more of our community members engaged.

Describe your experience, qualifications, and/or skills which would benefit the advisory committee(s) you are applying to.

I became well connected to many of the unions, nonprofits, business owners, and community leaders during my internship with the City of Olympia. This has allowed me to expand my network, collecting ideas from many people. I also love to work collaboratively with others who are making a difference.

Share the ways you've been involved or have volunteered in the community.

I was an intern on the Olympia Strong Project with the economic development department. This created my networking web and taught me the importance of strategic planning. I have also volunteered with the YMCA and the Special Olympics as a soccer coach. My favorite place to volunteer has been ASHHO Cultural Community Center. We hand out hot meals to those in the community who are struggling financially.

List your educational and/or professional background and area of study.

I have a master's in public administration from The Evergreen State College and have worked for the City of Olympia, Morningside, and Thurston County Public Health and Social Services Department of

Developmental Disabilities. While my degree is in public administration my passion is supporting and advocating for our community members who have disabilities.

Appointment to an advisory committee will require your attendance at evening meetings, and undertake other work (reading, meeting preparation etc.). How many hours per month are you willing to commit as a volunteer?

I can commit to 25 hours a month unless more time is needed.

Question Applies to the Arts Commission: What art form resonates most with you and why?

I love all types of art forms. I use many methods to express myself such as writing, singing, and painting. I can find the beauty in all art as I can imagine how freeing it was for the artist to create it.

Question Applies to the Arts Commission: Describe your own engagement with the Olympia arts community?

I love to attend the plays that are performed at the venues located in Olympia. I have many friends who take part in the development of the plays, and I make sure that I support them. I also run a drama activity for participants who have disabilities at the Olympia Family Theater and find great joy in doing this.

Question Applies to the Planning Commission: In your own words, describe the role of a Olympia Planning Commissioner?

An Olympia Planning Commissioner is responsible for engaging with the community to bring information back to the council. They also review development plans and guide long-term planning. Finally, they are able to recommend policy and make sure that we are using sustainable development that follows the laws we have in place.

Question Applies to the Planning Commission: What interests you the most about community planning?

Community planning gives us space to imagine what could be. Working with a team to build our communities future allows us to partner with our community members and really learn what it is that people need. I thrive in environments that can sometimes be intense and become a mediator, letting people feel heard.

Question Applies to the Planning Commission: What skills would you bring to the work of the Planning Commission and what do you hope to learn?

My strengths for this commission would include my networking skills, dedication to our community to develop a cohesive plan, and be a mediator during harder conversations by using my active listening skills. I want to learn more about the laws that we have in place when it comes to developing in our community.

Question Applies to the Planning Commission: Have you ever taken a Short Course in Local Planning, read an Olympia Planning Commission meeting packet or attended a meeting?

I have attended multiple meetings while working for the city. While at Evergreen I took many courses on planning and learned how important it is to strategically plan for the future while at the same time breaking down the boundaries that make it hard for some of our community members to thrive.

Question Applies to the Social Justice and Equity Commission: What is your understanding of, or experience in, issues related to social justice, human rights, racial and/or other forms of discrimination?

I live by the notion of treat people how you would want to be treated. I background in social justice and equity began with becoming an advocate for people with disabilities and while in school I started developing a bill that would place a special education advocate in every school in Washington State and ending the pattern of not supporting kids with disabilities properly until 2nd grade.

Question Applies to the Social Justice and Equity Commission: What lived experiences or skill sets would you bring to the Commission?

As a woman who grew up in a lower socioeconomic family, I know what it's like to struggle with paying bills, having food to eat, and having a place to live. I was always looked at as the bad kid in my friend

groups and had many parents who blamed me for my friend's behavior. These experiences are what kept me furthering my education because I felt like I had a duty to end the stigma against people who weren't as well off and show those around me that they could do it too.

Question Applies to the Social Justice and Equity Commission: Describe a time when you experienced a personal bias and how you worked through that bias; or describe a time when you worked with someone with different viewpoints than yours and how you worked through those differences?

During my time at Evergreen State College, I had times where my opinions did not align with my classmates or professors. I took time to really process the different opinions of the issues we were discussing. I learned to step out of my comfort zone to find how our ideas matched and how they were different so that my perspective could grow.

Question Applies to the Social Justice and Equity Commission: Describe what a "just and equitable Olympia for all people" looks or feels like to you and how would you include all marginalized people into this vision.

From the work I have done in the past I know that we as a community are doing the work needed to make big changes in how the systems that create obstacles for those of us who experience them. I think a just and equitable Olympia feels like there is a sense of engagement and having spaces for everyone to share their ideas and opinions. In order to do this, we have to continue reaching out and partnering with our community leaders and advocates, sometimes having tough conversations but remaining respectful.

If you are not appointed to a Board or Commission at this time:

Do you wish to be considered for appointment to another Board or Commission?

Yes

Do you wish to be considered for future appointment to your preferred Board or Commission?

Yes

If you wish to be considered for another Board or Commission, please identify others you would be interested on being considered for in order of interest:

I would be interested in working on any of the boards, the three I chose for now were ones that I feel very connected to.

Thank you for your interest in serving on a City of Olympia Advisory Committee!

Please hit the "submit" button below when you have completed your application .

SHAWNNA MERSHON

Highly organized and results-driven office management professional with skills from my work experience and education background that make me efficient in overseeing administrative operations, streamlining office processes, and leading support staff. I am committed to delivering exceptional support and fostering a productive work environment.

EXPERIENCE

2022-PRESENT

SPECIALIZED RECREATION LEAD, THURSTON COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

- Coordinated and executed inclusive events for people with disabilities, ensuring accessibility and accommodation for diverse needs.
- Developed partnerships with local organizations and businesses to secure sponsorships, resources, and venues, enhancing the quality and reach of events and fostering community support.
- Provided personalized support and advocacy for attendees, addressing individual concerns and promoting an inclusive environment.

2022-2023

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT INTERN, CITY OF OLYMPIA

- Facilitated effective communication between the organization and community stakeholders, conducting regular meetings, surveys, and forums to gather feedback and address concerns, leading to improved community relations and trust.
- Designed and executed outreach initiatives to educate and inform the public about key programs and services, resulting in heightened awareness and support from diverse community groups.

EDUCATION

JUNE 2024

MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, THE EVERGREEN STATE COLLEGE

Focus: leadership, project management, and budgeting

JUNE 2019

ASSOCIATE OF ARTS, SOUTH PUGET SOUND COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Focus: special education

VOLUNTEER

ASHHO COMMUNITY CENTER

- Supported in preparing and handing out hot meals to families in need
- Coordinated events for multiple occasions

BRIGGS YMCA SOCCER COACH

- Coached and mentored a youth soccer team, developed age-appropriate training programs, and fostered teamwork and physical fitness