



Association of Washington  
Public Hospital Districts

999 Third Avenue  
Suite 1400  
Seattle, WA 98104  
Phone 206-281-7211

# PUBLIC HOSPITAL DISTRICT COMMISSIONER GUIDE



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Dear Commissioner,

Thank you for your service as a Public Hospital District Commissioner. Your willingness to serve your community in this distinct way is an extraordinary gift. Thank you for doing so. As you serve in this role there are always many new opportunities to learn as you lead the healthcare future of your community.

The Association of Washington Public Hospital Districts (AWPHD) is here to assist you in all aspects of serving as an elected commissioner. Advocacy, governance education and convening with your colleagues are core commitments from us to you.

There is nothing you need to do but go to our [website](#), pick up the phone or email me personally to engage. You are already a member of AWPHD through the partnership of the district you serve.

Enclosed is a series of resources that you may find most helpful during your time as a Public Hospital Commissioner. If you have any questions or needs that are not addressed here, just let us know.

Thank you again for your service, and I look forward to working together.

Regards,

Matthew Ellsworth

Executive Director

[matte@awphd.org](mailto:matte@awphd.org)

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Program and Outreach Manager

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# Table of Contents



## About the Association of Washington Public Hospital Districts (AWPHD)

Who We Are/What We Do \_\_\_\_\_ Page 1 – 2

## Trainings/Commonly asked questions/Regulations for your PHD

Commissioner Resources \_\_\_\_\_ Page 3 – 4

## Education for elected officials on being an effective board member and regulations to manage a PHD

Governance Education \_\_\_\_\_ Page 5 - 6



# Association of Washington Public Hospital Districts

## Who We Are

Since 1952 the Association of Washington Public Hospital Districts (AWPHD) has been the voice for Public Hospital Districts (PHD) across the state of Washington. We are solely focused on the unique role that PHDs serve in communities.

At AWPHD we understand the special connection of our members to their communities that have made the choice and investments to keep care local. We strive to support the PHDs at all levels: the publicly elected commissioners, CEOs and staff. Our value is in our ability to advocate educate and convene all of the above to create a better environment to deliver publicly owned health care.

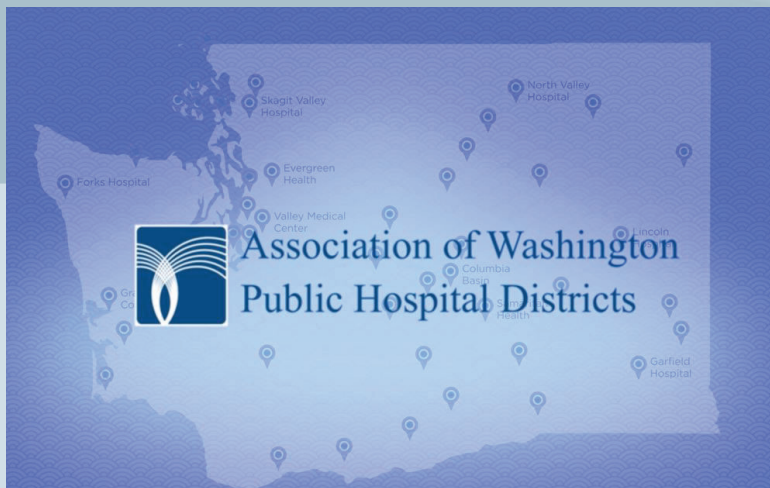
We are led by a professional, full-time staff and an all-volunteer Board of Directors.



Josh Martin  
Summit Pacific Medical Center  
Board Chair



Matthew Ellsworth  
Executive Director  
&  
Joanna Castellanos  
Program and Outreach Manager



**58 Public Hospital Districts**

**40 Hospitals**

**(32 Critical Access Hospitals)**

**7 Clinics**

**9 Longterm Care**

**19 EMS**

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# Association of Washington Public Hospital Districts

## What We do

### We Advocate

When it comes to influencing public policy, AWPHD is the voice of Washington Public Hospital Districts. Together, with our experience and members' collective voices we bring your needs and issues to the legislature, state and federal Agencies.

### We Educate

At AWPHD we offer tailored governance education to leaders and PHD Commissioners. In addition, we help our members navigate legal questions unique to PHDs.



### We Convene

We recognize the value to our members in gathering to learn and share. AWPHD sponsors multiple annual gatherings for PHD leaders. We also have forged strategic partnerships within the healthcare and public policy arenas that add value to our members.

### We Support

AWPHD administers Intergovernmental Transfer (IGT) and Nursing Home Pro-Share programs that delivers direct financial benefit to our members. In addition AWPHD provides access to qualified, independent legal support on those issues unique to PHDs.



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## Commonly used web resources:

- AWPHD has developed a series of webpages with resources to help answer commonly asked questions:
  - [Commissioner Resources](#)
  - [Public Hospital District Resources](#)
  - [What is a Public Hospital District? Video](#)
  - [Association of Washington Public Hospital Districts \(AWPHD\) Intro Video](#)
  - [AWPHD Catalog of Services](#)
- AWPHD offers tailored education to publicly elected officials focused on the unique challenges, regulations and high-functioning governance it takes to run a Public Hospital District (PHD). We partner with [Washington State Hospital Association \(WSHA\)](#) to offer a Governance & Executive Education Certification through our Governance Education portal. This allows commissioners to watch live and recorded education sessions.
  - To access the portal or learn of upcoming Governance sessions click: [Governance & Executive Education](#)
- AWPHD also offers governance education through our in-person events. These events allow commissioners an opportunity to learn from and connect with their PHD peers.
  - To see upcoming in-person events click: [Annual Events](#)
- [RCW 70.44.050](#) requires that the board's business be conducted by resolution or motion. This provision also requires that resolutions be adopted by most of the entire board of commissioners. AWPHD, with the help of [Municipal Research Services Center \(MRSC\)](#) has compiled a list of required resolutions. Please note this list may not be complete and we will work on updating it as other statutory mandates become known.
  - To access the list click: [List of Required Resolutions for Board Actions](#)

## Attorney General Office:

- All public hospital district commissioners must, within 90 days after taking the oath of office, receive training on the requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA) and Public Records Act (PRA). Please see below an option to fulfill this requirement by taking the training through the Attorney General's office.
  - [Open Government Training](#)



## **Washington State Legislature:**

- To access the Governing Legal Authority over PHDs
  - [Chapter 70.44 RCW](#)

## **Municipal Research Services Center (MRSC):**

AWPHD partners with MRSC, a legal consultant firm, to help our member PHDs navigate their local government regulations. As a service of AWPHD, commissioners can receive personalized answers from trusted attorneys, policy consultants and finance experts at MRSC. Their staff also helps us deliver pertinent education to our members and offers a library of resources to help navigate the public and local government nature of your position.

- To access these personalized responses, click: [ASK MRSC](#)
- AWPHD in partnership with MRSC has created an easy-to-read and easy-to-understand legal manual to provide commissioners with a basic source of information about the legal requirements affecting Washington's Public Hospital Districts (PHDs).
  - To access or print the legal manual, click: [AWPHD Legal Manual](#)
- As a local government entity, there are laws set forth by Washington State outlining how governance conducts public hospital district business, known as Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA). The Public Records Act (PRA) for PHDs in Washington State sets regulations including what records are public, what records are exempt and basic procedural requirements. See dedicated resources created by MRSC below:
  - [Open Public Meetings Act \(OPMA\)/Public Records Act \(PRA\) Training](#) (This also meets the training requirement)
  - [Executive Session Basics](#)
  - [Executive Session FAQs](#)
  - [Expectations of Confidentiality and OPMA Executive Sessions](#)
  - [OPMA & PRA Basics with practice tips & checklists](#)

## **Washington State Archives:**

- Provides schedules on records retention and records management tips.
  - [Managing Public Hospital Records](#)

# Governance Education



AWPHD in partnership with WSHA offers its members educational opportunities to increase their knowledge and understanding of hospital governance in Washington State. This education assists executive leadership and board members in assessing and enhancing hospital operations and board effectiveness. Register for upcoming courses and access the OnDemand library of content through the [AWPHD and WSHA Governance Education Portal](#). For more information on how to create an account and register for an upcoming session, use this [how-to](#). Any further questions, please email [govedu@wsaha.org](mailto:govedu@wsaha.org).

**See commissioner specific recorded sessions below (Click on title to access recording OR log into the [Governance Education portal](#) to get credit for watching a recording):**

## [2024 New Commissioner Welcome & Training](#)

This webinar walks through the tools and resources available to public hospital district commissioners. Followed by the Rules of the Road – Governance Best Practices training.

Learn how high-functioning boards and high-functioning public hospital districts fit within their governance structure.



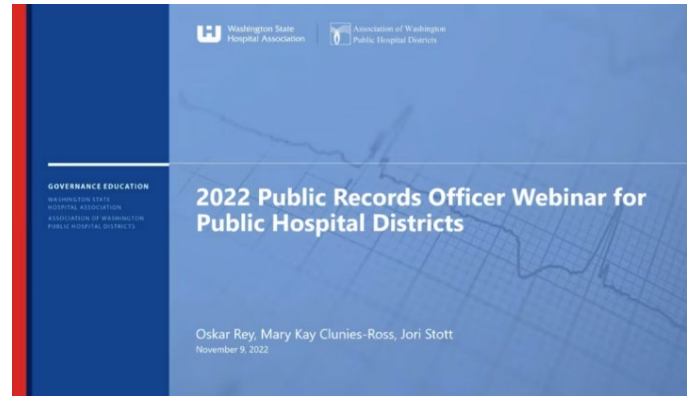




## 2022 Public Records Officer Webinar Part I

### Agenda:

- Managing & retention of public records
- Common pitfalls
- Documenting the process for obtaining records
- Hear from a member public officer about their experiences



## 2023 Public Records Officer Webinar Part II

### Agenda:

- Build a foundation
- Stages of a reasonable search
- Next Steps
- Tools for putting your PRA house in order
- What is a public record?
- Difficult public records topics
  - Requests by and about employees
  - Frequent fliers
- Work through scenarios

