



Association of Washington
Public Hospital Districts

AWPHD Commissioner Guide

Welcome to the Public Hospital District Community!
This guide is meant to help you navigate your new role as a publicly elected or appointed Commissioner.



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Association of Washington Public Hospital Districts

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 we look forward to working together.

Matthew Ellsworth
Executive Director

Joanna Castellanos
Director, Membership Experience



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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.



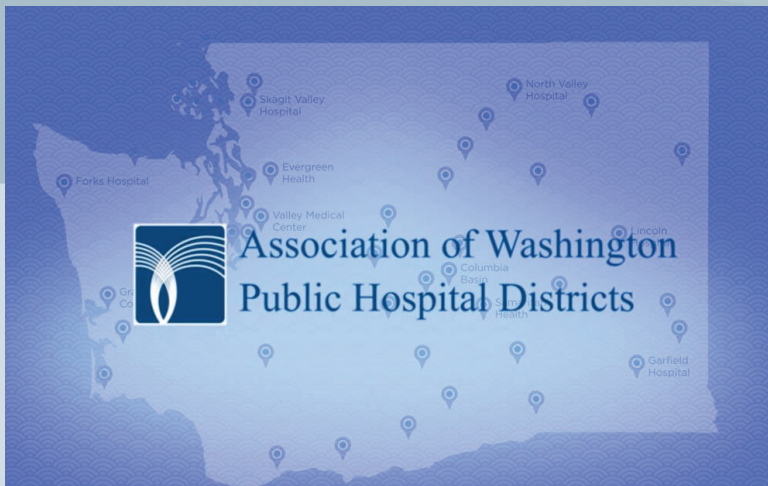
Elise Cutter
Island Health,
Board Chair



Matthew Ellsworth
Executive Director

Joanna Castellanos
Director, Membership Experience

Rebecca Bowen
Executive Assistant



57 Public Hospital Districts

40 Hospitals

(31 Critical Access Hospitals)

17 Non-Hospital Services

7 Clinics

6 Emergency Medical Services

3 Long-term Care



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 deliver direct financial benefit to our members. In addition, AWPHD provides access to qualified, independent legal support on those issues unique to PHDs.





Commonly Used Web Resources



AWPHD has developed a series of webpages with resources to help answer commonly asked questions.

Click on the links below:

- [Commissioner Resources](#)
- [AWPHD Legal Manual](#)
- [Public Hospital District Resources](#)
- [What is a Public Hospital District?](#)
- [Rules of the Road Webinar](#)

Governance Education for Public Hospital Districts

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 the Washington State Hospital Association (WSHA) to offer a Governance & Executive Education Certification through our shared Governance Education portal. This allows commissioners to watch live and recorded education sessions.

[Click here to access the Governance Education portal and see upcoming Governance sessions](#)

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.

[Click here to see upcoming in-person events](#)



AWPHD & WSHA GOVERNANCE EDUCATION VIDEO SHORTS

Under 20 minutes, governance education video shorts are designed to provide you with need-to-know education on a narrow topic. They are easy to use as an addition to your Board meeting agenda which help Board members learn together.



Harbor Regional Health Board

Each short counts as 1 point toward your AWPHD & WSHA Health Care Governance Certification. All shorts are available in the Governance Education Portal.

See available shorts by category below



Business & Finance

- Update on Hospital Finances through 9.30.2024
- Understanding Hospital Financial Statements
- Three Major Sources of Payment for Hospitals
- New Hospital Workflows to Respond to Federal Changes



Governance Best Practices

- Board Ethics & Conflict of Interest
- Board Fiduciary Duties
- Eight Areas of Diligence for Board Members
- Board's Role in State and Federal Regulatory Requirements



Public Hospital Districts

- Executive Session Basics
- Roles Defined (Policy vs Administration)
- How to be a High-Functioning Board
- Managing a Crowd during OPMA
- Set up your Framework: Learn from an Experienced Public Records Officer
- Best Practices to Process Public Records Requests
- Key Takeaways OPMA and PRA
- Procurement for PHDs



Safety & Quality

- Hospital Board's Responsibility for Safety & Quality
- Engaging Your Board in Its Role of Safety & Quality
- Board's Role in Credentialing & Privileging
- Board's Responsibility in Critical Measures
- Board's Responsibility for QAPI and CQIP

To access Governance Education Shorts,
the Governance Education Portal and more please click
here: [**Governance Education | AWPHD**](#)

www.AWPHD.org



Required Training for Commissioners

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).

[Click here to access the required OPMA/PRA training](#)

WA State Regulations for Commissioners

Washington State Legislature:

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 here: [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](#)

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 the majority of the 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.

[Click here to access the list : List of Required Resolutions for Board Actions](#)



Open Public Meetings Act Resources

Familiarizing yourself with the Open Public Meetings Act procedures will help create more efficient board meetings.

OPMA Resources:

- [Open Public Meetings Act Basics](#)
- [Basic Procedural Requirements for All Meetings](#)
- [Notice Requirements for Regular and Special Meetings](#)
- [Board Agendas](#)
- **Governance Education Video Shorts:**
 - [Key Takeaways from Open Public Meetings Act and Public Records Act](#)
 - [Managing a Crowd during OPMA](#)

Executive Session

A governing body subject to the OPMA is permitted to enter executive sessions only for the reasons specified in [RCW 42.30.110](#).

Some of the most common reasons for doing so are to discuss:

- The purchase or sale of land;
- Claims (or potential claims) against the agency for property or other damage;
- The qualifications of a potential appointee to fill an elected or appointed position; or
- Complaints or charges against a public official or employee.

Executive Session Resources:

- [Executive Session Basics](#)
- [Executive Session FAQs](#)
- [Expectations of Confidentiality and OPMA Executive Sessions](#)
- **Governance Education Video Short:** [Key Takeaways for Executive Session](#)

AWPHD Catalog of Services

We look forward to assisting you and your public hospital district. Find out what kind of resources and services are available through your AWPHD membership.

Funding Sources:

- **Member Benefit Inter-Governmental Program**
 - This program began by AWPHD in 2018 as an investment to promote innovative, sustainable, and systematic changes that improve the overall care delivered to Washingtonians by public hospital districts. Member funds are released twice a year (in June and December) directly to PHDs.
- **Focal Area Grant Funds**
 - AWPHD provides small grants directly to its members. At AWPHD, we are intently focused on providing members with strategic support as they navigate the challenges that come with operating a public hospital district.
 - If you have questions about the Focal Area Grants, please reach out to Joanna Castellanos (joannac@awphd.org)
- **Scholarships for PHD Staff Education**
 - We at AWPHD actively recognize the importance of ongoing education and skill development. We offer one scholarship per public hospital district towards the Washington Hospital Services Education Programs.
 - To learn about the available programs, [click here](#).

AWPHD Catalog of Services

We look forward to assisting you and your public hospital district. Find out what kind of resources and services are available through your AWPHD membership.

Education Opportunities

- **Governance and Executive Education**
 - AWPHD offers tailored education for public hospital districts at no additional cost to your PHD. This education is delivered in 1-hour live and recorded webinars, previously recorded video shorts and in-person sessions at annual events.
 - To learn about upcoming sessions, please visit: [Governance Education | AWPHD](#)

Convening Opportunities

- **In-Person Events:** AWPHD hosts annual gatherings for members to learn from one another, gain best governance practices, and network with their peers. To check out upcoming events, please click here: [Events | AWPHD](#)
- **Virtual Roundtables:** AWPHD convenes smaller groups, including board chairs, new CEOs, new commissioners, non-hospital PHDs, and more, virtually to connect, share resources, and problem-solving tips. These are invite-only.
- **In-Person Member Visits:** AWPHD staff attend board meetings and provide in-person governance education, as well as personalized check-ins with staff at various levels at member hospitals.

If you have questions about convening opportunities, please email Joanna Castellanos (joannac@awphd.org).