

# Early Learning Multnomah Governance Council Application

Thank you for your interest in serving on Early Learning Multnomah's Governance Council. We appreciate your willingness to contribute your time, perspective, and leadership in support of children and families in Multnomah County.

## Selection Process and Timeline

To be considered for participation in the initial meeting of the Governance Council, please submit your application by March 6. Applications received after March 6 will be reviewed on a rolling basis if openings remain.

Applications will be reviewed by United Way of the Columbia-Willamette staff the week of March 9 using criteria aligned with the Council's role and responsibilities. Selected applicants will be invited to participate in an interview with United Way of the Columbia-Willamette staff on March 11 or 12. These conversations are intended to learn more about each applicant's interest and readiness for shared governance.

The first meetings of the Governance Council are scheduled for March 19 and March 30.

## How Applications are Reviewed

We are committed to a fair, transparent, and equitable selection process. Applications are reviewed by a selection committee using consistent criteria. We look for people who bring experience and expertise in early learning, governance or community engagement with a focus on:

- Alignment with the Hub's mission and values
- Interest in shared governance and collective decision-making
- Ability to consider the wellbeing of the whole community
- Openness to learning and collaboration
- Readiness to help steward shared resources responsibly
- Lived experience, community connection, or expertise that strengthens the overall balance of the Council

There is no single "right" background for this role. Leadership may come from lived experience, community engagement, professional roles, or informal leadership. Our goal is to build a Governance Council that can lead collectively in service of children, families, and community wellbeing.



## About the Early Learning Hub

The Early Learning Hub works to strengthen and align the early learning system in Multnomah County so that children and families have equitable access to high-quality, culturally responsive supports from birth through early elementary years. The Hub brings together community partners, families, providers, and public agencies to improve access, coordinate services, and steward public resources responsibly.

The Governance Council is the Hub's strategic and decision-making body. The Council sets priorities, approves budgets, provides oversight, and ensures accountability to the broader community. Governance authority rests with the Council as a whole, and members are responsible for leading collectively in service of children and families.

United Way of the Columbia-Willamette serves as the Hub's backbone organization. As backbone, United Way of the Columbia-Willamette provides operational, financial, and administrative infrastructure, holds legal and fiduciary responsibility and provides professional development and overall support to the Hub Director and team.

The Hub Director leads the day-to-day work of the Hub, overseeing staff, managing contracts and budgets, and building partnerships. The Director works in close collaboration with the Governance Council and United Way of the Columbia-Willamette to carry forward the Hub's shared vision and priorities.

## Purpose of Governance Council Application

The Governance Council plays a shared leadership role in guiding the Early Learning Hub's work on behalf of children, families, and communities.

The Council brings together community members, partners, and system stakeholders to provide direction, insight, and accountability, helping ensure the Hub's work is responsive, inclusive, and aligned with community needs and expectations.

This application is designed to help us understand your interest in shared governance, your perspective related to supporting early learning systems and how your experience and values connect with the Hub's mission. It also helps us ensure that Governance Council members are prepared to thoughtfully and collaboratively steward public resources.

Prior board experience is not required. We recognize that leadership shows up in many forms. What matters most is a willingness to engage in collective decision-making and contribute to the wellbeing of the broader community.

# Governance Council Application

## Section 1: About You

**Name:**

**Pronouns:**

**Please provide one or more ways to contact you if selected:**

(This information is used only for communication related to Council participation.)

- Email: \_\_\_\_\_
- Phone (call or text): \_\_\_\_\_
- Another method (please describe): \_\_\_\_\_

### Language and Communication

This information helps support communication and participation. It is not used to evaluate applications.

**What language do you prefer to use for meetings and written materials?**

**Are there other languages you are comfortable using?**

(These may be spoken, written, or conversational.)

**Do you live or work in Multnomah County?**

## Section 2: Your Connection to Early Learning

This section helps us understand the different ways Governance Council members are connected to early learning systems and communities in Multnomah County. It supports building a Governance Council with a balance of experiences, roles, and perspectives.

This information helps us build a Council with a balance of lived experience, community connection, and systems-level perspective. No single role or identity is prioritized on its own.

**We recognize that people often hold multiple roles and experiences. Please select all that reflect your connection.**

- Parent or primary caregiver of a child who is currently age 0–6
- Early learning provider
- Family advocacy or family leadership group
- Community-based organization serving families or children age 0-6
- Health or social services
- Education system (K–12, higher education, or related)
- Tribal or culturally specific organization
- Lived experience navigating early learning systems (as a parent, caregiver, family member, or community member)
- Other relationship to early learning (please describe): \_\_\_\_\_

## Section 3: Your Experience and Areas of Knowledge

Please check any areas where you have experience or knowledge. Experience may come from lived experience, professional roles, volunteer work, or community involvement.

- Early childhood education or care practice
- Parent/caregiver leadership
- Community organizing, outreach, or engagement
- Governance experience (board, advisory council, steering committee, etc.)
- Budget review, financial oversight, or resource allocation
- Public policy, advocacy or systems change work
- Program evaluation, research or data use
- Equity, racial justice, or culturally grounded leadership
- Facilitating conversations or group decision-making
- Strategic or long-term planning
- Other relevant experience: \_\_\_\_\_

## Section 4: Purpose, Vision and Systems Leadership

The questions below help us understand how you think about shared leadership, systems-level responsibility, and collaboration. You do not need to have formal governance experience to respond. We welcome responses based on lived experience, community leadership, or how you would approach these situations.

Responses may be brief. We are more interested in how you think than in how much you write.

### 1. About You and Your Interest

Tell us a bit about yourself. Please share your background, your connection to early learning or families, and why you are interested in joining the Early Learning Multnomah (ELM) Governance Council.

## **2. Systems-Level Vision**

What role do you think an Early Learning Hub can play in improving opportunities and outcomes for children and families in Multnomah County? How would your experiences, relationships, or perspectives help the Governance Council move toward that vision?

## **3. Working in Shared Leadership**

The Governance Council works in partnership with the Hub Director, who is responsible for the day-to-day work of the Hub. Please share:

- Any experience you have working in partnership with organizational leadership OR
- How you think a governing body and organizational leadership should work together.

## **4. Stewardship, Shared Decision-Making, and Ethics**

Governance Council members help set priorities, make decisions about limited resources, and act in the best interests of the broader community.

Please describe how you approach decision-making when resources are limited and multiple perspectives are involved.

You may draw on professional, volunteer, or lived experience. If relevant, you may also share how you think about fairness, tradeoffs, or situations where a decision could affect you or an organization you are connected to.

## 5. Values in Practice

The Early Learning Hub and United Way of the Columbia-Willamette are guided by the following values:

- Equity and racial justice
- Accountability and transparency
- Collaboration across systems
- Centering children and families

Please choose one value that resonates most with you and share how it shows up in your leadership in community involvement. If helpful, you may include a brief example.

## 6. Conflict of Interest

Governance requires members to disclose potential conflicts of interest and act in the best interest of the broader community.

Conflicts of interest may include, but are not limited to financial interests in organizations that do business with or compete with ELM; service on boards or committees of organizations with conflicting missions or interests; personal relationships with vendors, contractors, or other organizations that may create bias; opportunities to personally benefit from insider knowledge of organizational activities; and any situation where personal, professional, or financial interests may compromise independent judgment.

How would you approach a situation where a decision before the Council could affect you personally or an organization you are connected to?

## 7. Capacity and Readiness

Governance Council members are expected to attend meetings (virtual and in person), review materials in advance, participate in committees as needed, and engage in ongoing learning.

We recognize that people balance many responsibilities. How many hours per month realistically do you have available to work on Governance Council matters, including meetings, prep, committees, learning?

## 8. Additional Information:

Is there anything else you would like the selection committee to know about your experiences, perspective, or readiness to serve on the Governance Council?

## Thank you so much!

Please share your completed application with ELM Hub Director, Smirla Ramos Montañez at: [smirlar@unitedway-pdx.org](mailto:smirlar@unitedway-pdx.org)

We appreciate your time and dedication to serving children in Multnomah County!

