

Application Form

Profile

Dana J Castano
 First Name Middle Initial Last Name

[Redacted]
 Email Address

[Redacted]
 Home Address

[Redacted]
 Suite or Apt

[Redacted]
 City

[Redacted]
 State

[Redacted]
 Postal Code

What Ward do you live in? *

Ward 5

[Redacted]
 Primary Phone

[Redacted]
 Alternate Phone

State of Oregon, Early Learning
 Division
 Employer

Program Analyst
 Job Title

Grant Manager
 Occupation

Which Boards would you like to apply for?

Salem Public Library Advisory Board: Submitted

Which of the following City of Salem Board or Commission meetings have you attended? *

None

Interests & Experiences

What do you feel you can contribute as a board or commission member?

I see my community as a part of me, and not only does my community impact my life, but I can impact my community. As such, I seek to strengthen it through contributing in the ways that I believe will achieve the greatest utility. Through work experience and education, I have finessed both my communication and analytical skills in learning, analyzing, and writing on various public policy topics within the disciplines of economics, political science, and finance. Taking in and subsequently conveying complex information has been my strength in education, while my extracurricular activities serving on committees and councils has given me real-world experience in working with others to achieve concrete results. My current and prior employment experience taught me how to combine my own creativity with established policies, to lead teams, and to collaborate among multiple stakeholders. I aim to participate civically to solve problems and make decisions that positively affect my municipality. In the case of this board, I can provide first-hand experience and narrative from a resident perspective. I will also provide diversity, and as a new member, my perspective will be fresh and insightful. I believe that I have good ideas and I want to be part of the conversation. I always ask the “why” behind decisions, and through doing so, I feel that all parties will have a better understanding and the choices the Board makes will be fully vetted and can hold up to potential scrutiny.

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What prompted your interest in applying to serve as a board or commission member?

My interest in the library board member position initially stems from my love of books. As someone who regularly seeks learning opportunities, the library is one of my favorite places. Every time I go to the library, it's a positive experience. I want to use my knowledge and capabilities to continue the positive influence that the library has on our community. In this role, I can serve as an advocate for the library's mission to engage all of Salem in lifelong learning, accessing information, and making meaningful connections. I am analytical and tend to think of the results that decisions will have two or three steps down the line. In my thoughtful approach to every aspect as a library board member, from creating policies, making budget choices, to responding to the needs and concerns within our community, I will do so pragmatically with the goal of assuring that the mission of the library is being accomplished. As a Salem resident for most of my life, I have spent many hours at the public library, and more recently, using internet-based features now provided by the library. Cultivating connections within the community is important and I feel that my relationship-based approach would allow the ability to further the mission, vision, and values of the public library, which align with my personal interests and skills. My interest in serving on the North Gateway Redevelopment Advisory Board and Citizens Advisory Traffic Commission was spurred by a recent walk I took with my family, including my four-year-old son. I have lived in the Highland neighborhood for over eight years since my husband and I bought our first home. We have always loved walking and exploring the adjacent Grant and south Keizer neighborhoods. Nevertheless, apart from walking to the State Fairgrounds, we hardly ever venture to the northeast, which is where the North Gateway Urban Renewal area begins. On this recent walk, we took Pine Street to Portland Road where the train runs overhead, and a pedestrian tunnel serves as the only route to connect to the other side, where various restaurants and food trucks are located. However, the filth and lack of investment is obvious, both pedestrian tunnel and immediate areas surrounding it, including the vacant lots, sidewalks dangerously abutting oncoming traffic, and crumbling, disused warehouses where the air wafts with a tinge of desperation and waste as if forgotten by the society around it. As someone who has lived in Salem for nearly my entire life, this is not what I want for my city. I do not want to fear taking a walk with my child to a place so near my home yet so far away in every other aspect, lacking safety, basic sanitation, and a wasting of assets. Albeit this is not to say that the entire North Gateway Urban Renewal area reflects the small stretch of Portland Road that my story centers on, but I am concerned about where Salem is now and what is in store for the future. With the recent growth experienced in Salem, there is an opportunity for traffic improvements as well. Designing more walkable areas, equitable transit systems that adequately serve the population, and safe streets are important to me. I desire for my input as a resident to be heard and utilized by decision makers to foster growth while also respecting the land and our neighbors.

Please explain how your education, professional, personal, or volunteer experience and knowledge qualify you to serve on the board(s) or commission(s) for which you are applying.

I enjoy hearing other's perspectives, and I value the knowledge and insight that I can gain through working with those from diverse backgrounds. As a member of the Marion County Extension and 4-H District Budget Committee, I have had the chance to review budgets and review contracts. I have a better understand of civic duty thanks to the experience, and I am familiar with governmental processes. My involvement with Family Building Block's Parent Leadership and Policy Council has allowed me to gain experience working in a council-setting, as well as enhance my ability to think critically and share ideas verbally on the spot and in a public setting. In conjunction with my experience on committees and working for the State of Oregon, as a long-time Salem resident, I am confident that my insight would offer distinct insight. I would be thankful to serve as above all, I am passionate about helping my community be better and grow stronger. I have a robust educational background which considers the implications of public policy in economic terms, though as a citizen I also am intricately intertwined with the direct results made through the decisions of the board, and I want my voice heard. Regarding the North Gateway Urban Renewal Area: I love my neighborhood and I long for the day when I can feel safe and proud to walk about in any direction I please, and not neglect an entire quadrant. There are many areas in which I could see development that would increase economic activity and thereby represent positive investment to the community. My recent role at Bonaventure including exploring properties for development, which consisted of reviewing zoning regulations, building code, and other aspects of land-use planning, will facilitate my understanding and involvement with the North Gateway Redevelopment Advisory Board.

List any experience you have with volunteering for the City of Salem or other organizations.

Volunteer Experience: June 2023— Present: CASA of Marion County Office Volunteer Sworn-in Court Appointed Special Advocate, assist with hosting booths at community outreach events, research special projects including new program implementation, create a grant database. Oct 2020 — Present: Policy Council and Parent Leadership, Family Building Blocks Ongoing role, currently serving as the Chair, former Vice-Chair. As a member of the council, I make and second motions, ask questions, and voice concerns regarding the current or future FBB practices as they may affect member children and the community. May 2021 — Present: Chair, Marion County Extension & 4-H Service District Budget Committee Served as 2022 Chair. Role is to facilitate annual budget committee meeting and to discuss and present the proposed budget to the Marion County Commissioners. Served as a member in 2021 and attend the regular governing body meetings for the service district throughout the year.

Briefly explain any experience you have working with your neighborhood association or other public bodies or committees.

Public body experience: State of Oregon employee, working directly with grantees of early learning grants to provide grant management services and technical assistance. Collaboration with other state agencies. Frequent communication ensures that the State is listening to the grantees' needs, experiences, and challenges to better inform our process. Includes navigating various associations that represent the grantees' interests, as well as union bodies, and the public at large. Oct 2020 — Present: Policy Council and Parent Leadership, Family Building Blocks Ongoing role, currently serving as the Chair, former Vice-Chair. As a member of the council, I make and second motions, ask questions, and voice concerns regarding the current or future FBB practices as they may affect member children and the community. May 2021 — Present: Chair, Marion County Extension & 4-H Service District Budget Committee Served as 2022 Chair. Role is to facilitate annual budget committee meeting and to discuss and present the proposed budget to the Marion County Commissioners. Served as a member in 2021 and attend the regular governing body meetings for the service district throughout the year.

Can you commit to attending a minimum of 75 percent of scheduled meetings? (Please refer to the City's website for the meeting schedule. Failure to meet the attendance requirement may result in removal from office.)

Yes No

Please list up to three (3) references whom we could contact to learn more about your qualifications (name/email address or phone number/relationship).

Teresa Waite, Director of Grants Management at the Oregon Early Learning Division, Current Supervisor, 503.798.7698 Kayla Stockdall, Former SME/Loss Mitigation at IBM Seterus and Former Coworker, 503.884.6458 John Eld, Director of Development at Bonaventure and Former Direct Supervisor, 541.274.0923

Question applies to Citizens Advisory Traffic Commission

Briefly describe your experience in transportation planning or traffic engineering.

None, but as a resident, I have concerns about the safety of taking my family on a walk as well as navigating the streets by car, foot, and bike.

Question applies to North Gateway Redevelopment Advisory Board

Select the following positions for which you are applying: *

Representative of the residential areas within and adjacent to the North Gateway Urban Renewal Area.

Question applies to Salem Public Library Advisory Board

When did you last visit the Salem Public Library? Tell us about your experience during that visit.

I visited the library last month on a weekday evening. As always, the library was welcoming and pleasant. I checked out a few books, after spending about an hour perusing the shelves. Usually, I frequent the library on Saturday mornings with my four-year-old son and spend most of the time upstairs in the children's area and the Discovery Room, but this time I was on my own. There is an innate quality to the library which always brings me joy, whether I am on my own or there with my family. When I approached the librarian to check out, I had a great experience. Even though I discovered that one of the books checked out under my son's card was missing, I received great customer service. I inquired about a few titles that I couldn't locate, and the librarian showed me how to use the interlibrary loan feature. He took the time to walk with me to one of the computers and show me the process. Now I know where I would go to pick it up and how it all works. Although I had been using the Libby app for some time, this was new information to me, and I found it extremely helpful considering I gained access to quite a few books on my reading list. All in all, I always look forward to a trip to the library.

In your opinion, what role does the Salem Public Library play in making Salem a livable community?

Libraries build social capital, which increases the productive capabilities of the population. Building these capabilities leads to better economic outcomes for everyone. This is a basic, economics-based explanation for what role the SPL plays in making Salem a livable community, but it is true. More so, there is data showing that public libraries support building healthy communities. The SPL also helps citizens find resources and navigate unknowns of life. The library even offers special services, activities, and resources, which create openings for social connections, support, literacy and education. The library broadens opportunities for community members to learn new ideas and gain insight into other perspectives, which help fuel societal innovation and foster a dynamic culture, all of which are components to a livable community. In addition, the SPL offers early literacy services for the youngest in our community. There is little else more important than investing in our youth. Moreover, I see the SPL as a beacon of hope to those less fortunate. With low barriers and without monetization, the SPL gives everyone the chance to be part of something in their community and share in the benefits and offerings. Despite all the positives of the library, there is more that Salem could be doing. Exploring the idea of a bookmobile, satellite library, increasing access to translated materials, or other ways to increase community access and language equity are important to me.

I live in the Highland Neighborhood, just blocks away from the southwest edge of the North Gateway Urban Renewal area.

Demographics

Some boards and commissions require membership to be racially, politically or geographically proportionate to the general public. The following information helps track our recruitment and diversity efforts.

Ethnicity



Gender

