

Join Our Board of Directors

ABOUT OPEN ARMS

Open Arms is a nationally-recognized, locally loved community-based organization that supports, educates, and empowers pregnant people and their families from pregnancy to birth and into early parenting to nurture healthy foundations that last a lifetime. We improve maternal and infant health and pave the way for early learning for over 300 clients annually, who are primarily families of color. If you or someone you know might be interested in our agency and its mission, we hope you will consider board service.



ABOUT OUR BOARD

Members of the Open Arms Board of Directors believe in and are willing to support the mission of Open Arms, advocate and promote the organization to their personal network and others, and engage meaningfully in board meetings, organizational events, and fundraising opportunities. Board work includes:

- Serving as a thought partner and sounding board to senior staff in developing organizational strategy and making high-stakes decisions
- Building relationships with our stakeholders and inviting people to join Open Arms as volunteers and donors
- Budget approval and quarterly financial health check-ins
- Executive Director annual performance appraisal and support
- Continuing to learn and stay on top of emerging issues in maternal health, early childhood, and equity

In addition to monthly board meetings, members serve on one committee or project area. Current project areas include: finance, staff partnership, fundraising, board recruitment, racial equity learning, and navigating our COVID-19 response.

The Open Arms Board of Directors is composed of members from varied personal and professional backgrounds. We are committed to sustaining a diverse board membership that can provide a variety of perspectives that help guide and support the organization. We seek to have a membership that brings openness, respect, and enthusiasm to engagement with each other and Open Arms staff. Our board emphasizes the importance of maintaining connections to our diverse clientele and staff through an explicit commitment to furthering racial equity and social justice. This also includes understanding the impact of race, poverty, trauma, immigration status, and other lived experiences of our clients.

MISSION

Open Arms provides community-based support during pregnancy, birth, and early parenting to nurture strong foundations that last a lifetime.

VISION

Thriving children. Healthy families. Powerful communities.

VALUES

- 1. Respect: Holding complexity for people and cultures**
- 2. Family: Relationships are at the heart of what we do**
- 3. Justice: Boldly disrupting oppression**

PROSPECTIVE NEW BOARD MEMBERS

We encourage the application of candidates from any background who possess valuable skills to contribute to our board. We have a specific interest at this time in considering candidates who bring:

- Professional experience in the fields of healthcare (including but not limited to doula/birthing services), human and social services, human resources, financial management, and public advocacy
- Lived experience in the areas of navigating social services or healthcare, child rearing, early childhood development, immigration, and advocating for one's family and personal health
- Experience building private partnerships that support social service programs
- An interest in building community support, external visibility, and increasing our network of supporters

We seek three to four new members who want to support under-served pregnant and parenting people and their families primarily in Seattle, King County, and increasingly in Pierce and Snohomish Counties. Current board members find that their involvement with Open Arms provides them opportunities to engage with a diverse group of mission-focused individuals from a variety of backgrounds and fields of expertise. Board members: stretch themselves to develop new skill sets and experiences; leverage their volunteering to have a greater impact in our community; and become deeply involved in birth justice and helping to make tangible differences in the lives of children and families.

APPLICATION

We hope to onboard new board members by October, 2021 and conduct initial conversations during July and August. If you are interested, please contact angela@openarmsps.org or 206.788.8842 to arrange a time to have an initial conversation with a current board member.

MORE ABOUT OPEN ARMS

Open Arms was founded in 1997 by a small group of community members who envisioned a future where no one would have to give birth without support. They imagined a world that cherishes birthing women, their babies, families, and communities. Today, that vision translates into a powerful community-based organization with a staff of 40 and over 20 contract doulas serving over 300 women and their families annually who qualify based on income. Open Arms primarily serves the Black, American Indian Alaska Native, Somali and Latinx communities. Like our clients, over 90% of staff identify as people of color, and some are former clients. We are highly-regarded for providing culturally responsive and appropriate support. Today, Open Arms has an annual operating budget of over \$3.7 million dollars through a combination of funding from public institutions, private foundations, as well as individual donors. We are poised for more growth. We weathered and grew during the COVID-19 crisis thanks to careful planning, talented staff, and financial reserves.

Open Arms recognizes that the earliest experiences impact brain development, and we work with families to give our next generation the best beginning. Social justice and racial equity permeate all that we do. We work in true partnership with the communities we serve, listening to their hopes and dreams for pregnant people, babies and new parents, and providing resources to help transform those dreams into reality. Ninety percent of the world's wealthiest countries surpass the United States on measures of maternal and child health and well-being. This impact is felt disproportionately by American babies born into poverty, whose mothers too often suffer from stress, social isolation, domestic violence, food insecurity and unstable housing in addition to insufficient health and parenting resources. In King County today, American Indian Alaska Native and Black infants are twice to four times more likely to die within the first 28 days of life than white infants. Open Arms' services work to address and mitigate these risk factors, so that pregnant people and babies receive the best possible start and avoid poor outcomes that can have negative consequences possibly lasting a lifetime.

Open Arms provides services to families through the following programs:

- **Birth Doula Services** partners parents with doulas who offer support during the last trimester, throughout the labor and birth, and for six to eight weeks after delivery. Doulas also provide mothers with education, resources, emotional support and appropriate referrals. Screening and case management help ensure connections with other resources.
- The **Outreach Doula Program** is a long-term home visiting program from early pregnancy up to baby's 2nd birthday. Open Arms provides cultural and language specific services by pairing mothers with doulas from their own community. Outreach Doulas develop lasting relationships with families that help bridge cultural barriers, foster parent-child bonding, reduce social isolation, and improve early learning outcomes. Open Arms currently serves the Black, American Indian Alaska Native, Somali and Latinx communities with Outreach Doulas.
- A **Perinatal Collaborative** of over six community-based organizations that provide Supportive Pregnancy prenatal care classes and culturally-specific programs to reach Black, Latinx, American Indian Alaska Native, and Pacific Islander families.
- A **Lactation Support Program** that uses lactation peer counselors of and from these same focus communities to provide individualized lactation support that can span nine months and includes virtual lactation support classes and trainings.
- **Family Support Services** provides wraparound support and referrals to resources for all families served by Open Arms. In late 2021, this program will also house Help Me Grow Community Connectors, as part of King County's pilot of this innovative model for referrals and support for children ages zero to five.



Open Arms' services and community-based approaches are working. Open Arms is the first community doula program in the nation to be nationally accredited through HealthConnect One, a national leader in advancing equitable, community-based, peer-to-peer support for pregnancy, birth, breastfeeding, and early parenting. Our families' outcomes exceed local and national measures. The agency has won several local awards including the Seattle Human Services Innovative Programs Award, as well as SOAR's Community Achievement Award. Our current funding partnerships with Best Starts for Kids, the Department of Children Youth & Families, the City of Seattle, and the Perigee Fund demonstrate that Open Arms has earned the support and respect of the local philanthropic community.

The need for Open Arms' services remains greater than our current capacity to serve, primarily because community demand continues to exceed our capacity. Our current strategic plan prioritizes increasing funding, communication, and continuing to replicate our approach in other regions of the state. The organization is well-positioned to take advantage of the many opportunities that lie ahead for Open Arms. This includes being well-loved and regarded for our work, financially healthy with clean audits, and an operating reserve. We hope you will consider this opportunity to join our leadership, learn about and support our work.

Note about COVID-19 work environment: Since March 2020, Open Arms quickly adjusted to a remote-work model for all office support staff and an adapted visit model for home-visiting doulas. We anticipate keeping a remote-work schedule until further notice and the leadership team is carefully evaluating options for a safe reopening with input from staff. Board meetings and interviews are all conducted virtually. Open Arms encourages our board and staff to flex their schedules to accommodate for children being at home and we support adjustments that parents need to make to juggle this complicated time. Feel free to discuss any concerns you have during the interview process. If you have any technology needs or questions during the virtual interview process, please let us know.