THURSTON COUNTY *Washington* Est. 1852 **THURSTON COUNTY** WASHINGTON SINCE 1852 **POLICY**	**Policy Title** Policy Framework	
	Number 010	**Effective Date** 04/13/2021
	Latest Approval Date 04/13/2021	**Approved by the Board** *[signature]* Commissioner Tye Menser Chair of the Board
	Next Review Date 05/01/2024	**Policy Owner Title** County Policy Coordinator

POLICY INTENT

Purpose	This Policy describes the Thurston County Policy Framework and the principles for developing, managing, and reviewing County Policies, Standards, Procedures, and Guidelines.
Scope	County-Wide – All Offices/Departments ☒ Internal Only ☐ Direct Impact to Citizens
Are Office/Department Documents on this subject permitted?	☐ Yes, however Office/Department Documents must be consistent with this County-wide Document. ☒ No

POLICY STATEMENT

Thurston County is committed to adopting a consistent, transparent, and standardized approach to the development, review, and repeal of policies, standards, procedures, and guidelines. The County's goal is to improve its ability to achieve business objectives by simplifying Policy and Procedure information, where possible, in order to provide more timely, cost-effective, flexible, and quality services to its constituents.

1. The County Policies, Procedures, Standards, and Guidelines support compliance with new and existing legislation, regulation, standards, statutes, codes, or rules, and encourage consistency with community and professional expectations.

2. All staff must comply with all County-wide policies and their Office/Department policies. Failure to do so may result in a range of consequences, including disciplinary action.

3. Compliance with guidelines is not mandatory, however all staff are strongly encouraged to comply with them to support delivery of the County's requirements and expectations.

4. Development, review, and repeal of Policies, Procedures, Standards, or Guidelines must be authorized in accordance with this Policy Framework Policy.

5. The County Policies, Procedures, Standards and Guidelines must be available to all staff and content should be written in clear and concise language.

6. Where a County-wide Document and an Office/Department Document cover the same or similar subject-matter, the Office/Department Document must be consistent with the County-wide Document.

7. The County Policy Framework is an operational structure for managing and maintaining the County's policies, procedures, and guidelines. The Policy Framework includes:

   7.1. This Policy Framework Policy.

   7.2. A Policy Framework Procedure that describes a development, review, and repeal process for County-wide Documents.

   7.3. Delegations of authority to establish Office/Department Documents.

7.4. An online Policy repository with access to approved County-wide documents managed by County Policy Coordinator.

7.5. Policy resources, including templates, flow-charts, checklists, and toolkits to support a standardized and consistent approach to the development of County-wide Documents.

7.6. The County Policy Coordinator or designee will publish and maintain the Policy Framework on the County Policy website.

8. The *Policy Framework Procedures* describe the development and approval steps for an Office/Department to create a local Policy, which is appropriate unless the Policy is:

8.1. duplicative or a corresponding County-wide Policy already exists,

8.2. prohibited by an existing County-wide administrative Policy, or

8.3. inconsistent with or less restrictive than County-wide administrative policies.

9. The overarching goal of this Policy framework is to simplify and minimize the number of policies county staff, management, and stakeholders must manage, learn and follow.

DEFINITIONS

County-wide Documents	Policies, Procedures, Standards or Guidelines that apply to the entire organization.
Executive Team	Appointed Directors and Elected Deputies within the County.
Guidelines	Guidelines are general, non-mandatory recommendations. Guidelines tend to be informal and leave room for flexibility. They could be providing direction where there isn't a Policy in place.
Office/Department Documents	Office/Department Policies, Procedures, Standards, or Guidelines that suit the specific needs of a County Office/Department.
Policy	Policies are formalized statements that convey what an employee can expect from the organization. Policies are mandatory and ensure compliance. Employees who violate a Policy may be disciplined.
Policy Exceptions	When County Commissioners make an informed decision on whether to grant approval of a request for an exception to a particular policy by understanding the risk and alternatives involved.
Policy Exemptions	A person, group, or business process that has been explicitly exempted from a particular policy as stated in the Policy or Procedure Intent Scope section.
Procedures	Procedures list the step-by-step instructions involved.
Stakeholder	County offices/departments, programs, advisory boards, or other interested parties which are affected by the Policy being developed.
Standards	A Standard provides a level of quality or a measure for comparative evaluations; a model

RELEVANT LAWS AND OTHER SUPPORTING INFORMATION

County Code **State Law** **State Rule** **Other Sources**	RCW 36.32.120 County Commissioners/Powers of Legislative Authorities RCW 36.32.340 Coordination of county administrative programs—Duties incident to. RCW 36.40.100 Budget constitutes appropriations—Transfers—Supplemental appropriations. Title 42 RCW PUBLIC OFFICERS AND AGENCIES (Basic statutory law for conducting public business)

	MSRC County Commissioner Guide - http://mrsc.org/Home/Explore-Topics/Governance/Offices-and-Officers/Your-Responsibilities-as-a-County-Commissioner.aspx
Superseded Documents	This policy supersedes and replaces Thurston County Administrative Manual (TCAM) Update Process and Guidelines.
Supporting Documents	010-01 Policy Framework Procedure 010-02 Policy Template 010-03 Procedure Template 010-04 Policy Assignment Form 010-05 Policy Owner Checklist 010-06 County Policy Repository in SharePoint
Related Policies, Standards, Procedures	As of October 2018, there are 13 existing guidance documents across six different Offices/Departments regarding policy and procedure management. These will need to be reviewed to ensure consistency with this County-wide Document.
Communication and Implementation Strategy	County Policy Coordinator will: • send a County-wide email describing the new Policy Framework; • work with the Public Information Officer (PIO) to put an article in the employee newsletter; • present the policy and procedure at the Elected Official meeting, Executive Management meeting, and meetings of committees that will be included in the policy review process; and • coordinate the review of the 13 Office/Department Documents regarding policy and procedure management to ensure consistency with this County-wide Document.

POLICY ADMINISTRATION

Contact Person	County Policy Coordinator	
Roles and Responsibilities	**Employees**	May propose to create, change, or repeal a Policy. Responsible for understanding and following County policies.
	Policy Owner	A high-level official (signing authority) or their designee with authority to create or update policies. Is responsible for keeping the Policy current and accurate. Coordinates with appropriate stakeholders. Administers the Policy and its related Standards, Procedures, and forms.
	County Policy Coordinator	Responsible for oversight of the County's Policy program and governance. Provides advice and makes recommendations to Board of County Commissioners and County executive management on Policy matters. Provides support and guidance throughout the County Policy process.

	Office/Department Managers and Supervisors	Advises the Board of County Commissioners and County and Office/Department executive management on Policy matters.
		Reviews proposed Policies as needed and serve as a forum to discuss Policy matters and the County and/or Office/Department impacts.
	Financial Management Committee (FMC) **Finance Committee** **Human Resources** **Information Technology Committee**	Advises the Board of County Commissioners on policy matters and provides recommendations regarding fiscal, finance, human resources, and information technology issues, decisions, and actions.
		Reviews assigned proposed policies.
	Executive Team	Advises the Board of County Commissioners and County and Office/Department executive management on policy matters.
		Reviews proposed Policies as needed and serves as a forum to discuss policy matters and the County and/or Office/Department impacts.
	Legal Review	Advises the Board of County Commissioners on policy matters and provides recommendations.
		Reviews all proposed policies and policy updates.
	Board of County Commissioners	Can repeal or modify this framework Policy.
		Approves all County-wide policies.
		Can delegate approval to make future updates to a policy.
		Grants exceptions or exemptions to County Policy.

REVISION HISTORY		
Effective Date	**Approved By**	**Modifications**
04/13/2021	Board of County Commissioners _____ Name/Title	Policy Created
Reviewers of the Current Revision	_____ Name/Title _____ Name/Title _____ Name/Title	_____ Name/Title _____ Name/Title _____ Name/Title

RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND GUIDELINES AS OF OCTOBER 2018

There are currently 13 existing guidance documents across six different Offices/Departments regarding policy and procedure management. These will need to be reviewed to ensure consistency with this County-wide Document.

Pol / Proc	Responsible Office/Dept	Policy #	Title	Last Updated
Policy	CPED	ADMN.96.POL.601	Establishing Policies and Procedures	2/15/96
Policy	CPED	ADMN.97.POL.102	Program, Policy, and Regulation Implementation Policy	7/11/97
Policy	CPED	ADMN.96.POL.602	Policies and Procedures Manual Format	1/9/98
Policy	CPED	PREV.04.POL.800	Policy Administration	7/1/04
Guideline	ITCG		Defining Policies, ITC Guidelines, and IT Standard Operating Guidelines and IT Standard Operating Procedures	7/27/05
Policy	Treasurer	400.040	Manual Maintenance	12/14/06
Policy	PHSS	11-402	Review of Existing Policies and Procedures	6/15/10
Policy	TCAM		Policy, Procedure, and Guideline Development	8/17/10
Policy	TCAM		TCAM Update Process and Guidelines	8/17/10
Policy	Public Works	009	Policy & Procedure Updates	9/12/11
Procedure	PHSS	11-402A	Review of Existing Policies and Procedures	9/27/11
Policy	CPED	DECM.12.POL.803	DDECM ERRATA, Policies, and Administrator Memoranda	8/20/12
Policy	Public Works	001	Formulating Departmental Policy and Procedures	1/13/15