

**Document Code No.: INF-7-4-2 EP**

**Title:** Drafting and Implementing Executive and Department Policies

**Affected Agencies:** All Executive Branch Agencies of King County Government

**Authorities:** King County Charter Sections 320 and 350

**Keywords:** Policies, Guidance, Guidelines, Communications

**Sponsoring Agency:** Department of Executive Services, Records and Licensing Services Division



**King County**

**Executive signature:**   
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**Effective Date:** 3/11/2026

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**I. Purpose**

This policy provides a standardized approach to policy development, including required content; the elements review and approval process; and an approach for centralized coding/indexing, maintenance, and distribution of all King County Executive Policies and Department Policies.

**II. Applicability and Audience**

This policy applies to the Administrative Offices and Executive Departments that are organized under the direction of the King County Executive. The audience may include King County offices, departments, officials, employees, boards, commissions, committees, or similar entities as well as contractors and grantees.

The Department of Human Resources and Department of Information Technology (KCIT) may also develop Executive Policies; additionally, both have authority to enact policies independent of the executive policy structure.

**III. Definitions**

**Administrative Offices:** The administrative offices shall consist of those agencies of the Executive Branch that provide administrative services for the various agencies of King County government.

**Agency:** For the purposes of this policy, “agency” means administrative offices and executive departments that are organized under the direction of the King County Executive.

**Communications:** Communications that support policies or guidelines such as announcements or accompanying statements of principles.

**Department Policies:** Policies that have applicability and consequences that are limited to a single department of King County’s Executive Branch.

**Executive Departments:** The Executive Departments consist of those agencies of the Executive Branch that are primarily engaged in the execution and enforcement of ordinances and statutes concerning the public peace, health and safety and which furnish or provide governmental services directly to or for the residents of King County.

**Executive Policies:** Directives approved by the County Executive, for broad purposes and intended to achieve or reinforce compliance with established mandates and are comprehensive in scope.

Policy Drafter: the lead staff person who is coordinating policy development, including drafting and all the required steps for policy creation.

#### **IV. Policy**

##### **A. Developing Policies**

1. King County's work is directed by King County Code, Washington State law, federal law, and other legal considerations. Development and revision of policies should be done with great care, and resulting policies must:
  - a) Refer to relevant King County Code, state law, federal law, or other legal considerations;
  - b) Not conflict with existing Executive Policy, King County Code, state law, federal law, or other legal authorities;
  - c) Clearly establish necessary actions, responsible parties, consequences for noncompliance, and implementation and maintenance plans.
2. Department Policies must also meet the criteria in subsection 1 of this section, but they cover required actions and related consequences that have applicability to a single department.

##### **B. Coding/Indexing**

Staff of Records and Licensing Services Division, Archives, Records Management, and Mail Services Section (ARMMS), or any successor agency shall code and index Executive Policies and Department Policies.

##### **C. Review and Enactment**

Policy drafters must engage key stakeholders in the development of King County Executive and Department Policies.

1. Review by policy drafter(s): Policy drafters shall perform a review of the policy prior to sharing it with stakeholders, taking into consideration equity, financial and environmental impacts.
2. Review by the Key Stakeholders: drafters shall first route proposed policies (whether Executive Policies or Department Policies) to key stakeholders for substantive review and comment. There is no required timeline for this part of the review process, but ten business days is recommended. Proposed changes should be documented either by revisions made to the policy or by inclusion on a list of proposed revisions.
3. Review by ARMMS: After the key stakeholder review process is complete, the policy drafter shall route the draft policy to ARMMS, or its

successor agency, to be coded and reviewed to ensure proper format. ARMMS staff shall complete the review within ten business days.

4. Review by the Executive Policy Review Group: Once the ARMMS review process is complete, the policy drafter shall package Executive Policies for distribution to the Executive Policy Review Group. The distribution should include a comment form, a brief description of why the policy is proposed and a summary of the policy development process to date. The Executive Policy Review Group must be given a minimum of ten business days to conduct its review. Proposed changes should be addressed either by revisions made to the policy or by inclusion on a list of proposed revisions that were considered but not incorporated. If substantive revisions are made to an Executive Policy, this review step should be repeated.
5. Enactment: Executive Policies become effective after completion of the reviews by the key stakeholders, ARMMS, and the Executive Policy Review Group, and upon signature by the County Executive.
6. Department Policies become effective after completion of the reviews by the key stakeholders and ARMMS and upon signature by the Department Director.

**D. Maintenance**

1. The original signed policy shall be transmitted to ARMMS for processing, preservation, and publication.
2. Executive Policies and Department Policies must be maintained as current in order to remain relevant and meaningful. All Executive Policies and Department Policies shall expire not later than five years after the effective date, though they may be reenacted at any point prior to the expiration date.
3. The agency that drafts a policy (whether an Executive Policy or Department Policy) is responsible for maintaining it, including:
  - a. Tracking the expiration date for the policy;
  - b. Preparing any revised or replacement policy as needed;
  - c. Providing any necessary communications about the policy change; and
  - d. Ensuring that appendices to the policy are kept current and are accessible.

**E. Implementation**

All policies must include an implementation plan, to include appropriate communications.

**F. Consequences**

Policies shall include a statement of consequences or impacts for noncompliance.

**V. Implementation Plan**

- A. This policy becomes effective for Executive Branch agencies on the date that it is signed. Department Directors are responsible for implementation of this policy.
- B. Department Directors are responsible for communicating this policy to the management structure within their respective departments.

**VI. Maintenance**

- A. This policy will be maintained by ARMMS or its successor agency.
- B. Changes to this policy may be proposed by ARMMS or by the Public Records Committee.
- C. This policy will automatically expire five years after its effective date. A new or revised policy will be initiated by ARMMS prior to the expiration date.

**VII. Consequences for Noncompliance**

- A. Executive Policies that do not conform with this policy will not be recognized as official directives of the Executive and as such will not have the same force and effect of Executive policies.
- B. Department Policies that do not conform with this policy will exist outside of the indexing, maintenance, and preservation of the Executive Policy System.
  - 1) Departments developing policies outside of the Executive Policy System shall bear the responsibility for indexing, maintaining, and preserving those policies.
  - 2) Policies that exist outside of the Executive Policy System may bear risks of disorganization, duplication of effort, or other negative consequences.

**Appendices:**

None