



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

APPLICABILITY
PRISON
FACILITY/SPANISH MANUALS

REVISION DATE
11/1/22

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POLICY

TITLE
FAMILY COUNCILS

REVIEW/REVISION HISTORY:

Effective: 8/1/15
Revised: 8/10/18
Revised: 2/13/20
Revised: 11/1/22

SUMMARY OF REVISION/REVIEW:

Major changes. Read carefully!


APPROVED:

Signature on file

CHERYL STRANGE, Secretary
Department of Corrections

10/30/22

Date Signed

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REFERENCES:


DOC 100.100 is hereby incorporated into this policy; [Family Council Resource Guide](#)

POLICY:

- I. The Department will work collaboratively with local and statewide family councils to problem solve and address relevant issues that lead to improving the lives of incarcerated individuals and their families.
- II. For the purposes of this policy, family is broadly defined to include immediate, extended, and elected family members (e.g., loved one, romantic partner, friend, neighbor, clergy).
- III. All participants will demonstrate commitment, integrity, honesty, good judgment, cooperation, professionalism, respect, courtesy, and work within Department rules, regulations, and policies.
- IV. Exceptions to the content of this policy requires the approval of the Secretary.

DIRECTIVE:

- I. General Responsibilities
 - A. The Department will maintain and support:
 1. One Local Family Council (LFC) at each Prison to address issues and concerns related to that specific facility.
 2. A Statewide Family Council (SFC) to address statewide Prison-based issues.
 - B. The SFC and LFCs will each conduct council meetings at least 6 times annually, with LFC meetings held during even months and SFC meetings held during odd months.
 1. Meetings will be in-person, scheduled by the Department as virtual, or a combination when available.
 - a. Virtual meetings will be conducted using the Department-approved platform (e.g., Microsoft Teams). Employees will not use the chat function.

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C. Non-elected family council participants will not identify themselves as or speak on behalf of the family council, in writing or verbally, without an approved motion from the majority of elected council representatives.

D. LFC/SFC co-chairs will address behavior that is outside of the values agreed upon by the council members and may cancel a meeting or remove anyone for unprofessional or disruptive behavior that directly interferes with legitimate family council business.

II. Participation

A. The Department encourages all family and friends of incarcerated individuals housed in a Prison to participate in family council meetings.

1. Family elected representatives will participate in meetings as part of their roles and responsibilities.
2. For LFC meetings, family members may attend meetings where their loved one is housed.
3. SFC meetings are open to all families and friends.

B. Where appropriate and approved by the Superintendent/designee, incarcerated individuals may attend LFC meetings.


1. If attendance is not an option, individuals may provide input through the tier representative process.

C. LFC/SFC Department co-chairs and co-secretaries will participate in meetings.

1. If the Department Co-Chair or Co-Secretary are not available, another manager/secretary from the Prisons Division will be designated for the meeting.
2. Whenever possible, the elected Family Co-Chair will be notified in advance.

D. Additional Department employees may participate in meetings to address agenda items regarding their specific areas of responsibility.


1. The appropriate Department Co-Chair will work with employees to schedule their appearance for agenda items or find a suitable alternate to address agenda items.

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- E. Each Superintendent will attend LFC meetings at their facility at least 2 times per year.
- F. Each Superintendent and their facility's Visit Sergeant will attend at least one SFC meeting per year.
- G. SFC elected representatives driving more than 120 miles roundtrip to attend an in-person meeting may request mileage reimbursement on [A19-1A State of Washington Invoice Voucher](#).
 - 1. Requestors must provide supporting documentation and meet requirements to receive reimbursement.

III. Nominations and Elections


- A. Nominations and elections for the LFC will be conducted annually during the month of October.
 - 1. Annual elections will be held for the following positions:
 - a. Local Family Co-Chair
 - b. Local Family Co-Secretary
 - c. Facility SFC Representative
 - 2. Family members who are nominated will be given the opportunity to provide a verbal or written statement before participants cast their votes.
 - 3. Elections will be by majority vote of LFC participants in attendance at the October election meeting.
- B. Nominations and elections for the SFC will be conducted annually during the month of November.
 - 1. Annual elections will be for the following positions:
 - a. Statewide Family Vice-Chair
 - b. Statewide Family Co-Chair position, if there is no seated Statewide Family Vice-Chair to move into the position from the previous year
 - c. Statewide Family Co-Secretary
 - 2. Facility SFC Representatives from each LFC, current Statewide Family Co-Chair, and Statewide Family Co-Secretary are the voting representatives for the SFC positions.

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- a. Elections will be by majority vote of SFC representatives in attendance during the November election meeting.
 - b. Representatives may not have a substitute/designee vote on their behalf during elections.
- C. Newly elected representatives will be introduced during the November SFC meeting and assume their position January 1st of the upcoming year.
- D. If an elected representative term cannot be completed, an election will be held to fill the position for the unexpired term.
1. LFC interim elections will be held at the next regularly scheduled meeting prior to starting the agenda. Any delay must be agreed upon by the LFC Department and Family Co-Chair with notification provided to families so they can participate in the nomination process.


IV. Elected Representatives

- A. Expectations for roles and responsibilities for all elected positions are available in the Family Council Resource Guide.
- B. Elected family representatives must be a visitor in good standing at the facility where their loved one is housed and be able to meet roles and responsibilities.
 1. If an elected representative is unable to attend a meeting, the representative will notify the appropriate Department Co-Chair of who will substitute for them.
- C. Except for the Statewide Family Vice-Chair, LFC/SFC elected representatives will serve a one-year term.
 1. The Statewide Family Vice-Chair will be considered an “in-training” position, shadowing the Statewide Family Co-Chair to learn and gain experience to fill the role the following year as the new Statewide Family Co-Chair.
- D. When possible, elected representatives should only serve in one local or one statewide elected position.
 1. Exceptions may be granted by the Department Co-Chair at facilities that are unable to comprise a full council.

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V. Council Schedules, Agendas, Minutes, and Action Items

- A. Each LFC/SFC meeting will follow an agenda developed and mutually agreed upon by the Department and family co-chairs and published 2 weeks before the meeting.
 1. The LFC agenda will focus on local issues, concerns, and ideas that impact a broad range of families and their loved ones housed at that facility. Reoccurring LFC agenda items will include:
 - a. Action items and updates
 - b. Family-friendly topics
 - c. Facility Incarcerated Individual Betterment Fund expenditures
 - d. Other topics requested by families and agreed upon by co-chairs
 2. The SFC agenda will contain items submitted to the Family Co-Chair for review, including items elevated from Facility SFC Representatives and approved by the Department and SFC Co-Chairs.
 - a. Issues added to the SFC agenda will focus on statewide issues, concerns, and ideas that impact a range of families and their loved ones housed at multiple facilities. Reoccurring SFC agenda items will include:
 - 1) Action items and updates
 - 2) Secretary/Deputy Secretary Time
 - 3) Public forum periods
- B. The Department and Family Co-Secretaries will work together to document meeting minutes on DOC 03-513 Family Council Meeting Minutes per the Family Council Resource Guide.
- C. The Department Co-Secretaries will track action items on DOC 03-514 Family Council Action Items.
 1. A review of previous action items and updates will be shared at meetings.
 2. New items will be added or closed as approved by both co-chairs, whenever possible. The Department may move to close an item that has no actionable resolution.
- D. Links to meeting schedules, agendas, minutes, and action items will be posted on the Family Councils page of the Department's external website.

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1. Meeting minutes will also be posted for viewing in:
 - a. Public Access areas and visit rooms for families and friends, and
 - b. Living units, recreation areas, and libraries for incarcerated individuals.

VI. Local Facility Tours

- A. Each Superintendent/designee may provide facility tours for LFC elected representatives twice per year.
 1. Other LFC participants may be approved to attend on a case-by-case basis with Superintendent approval.
 2. Elected SFC representatives may participate in facility tours at the facility where their loved one is located
 3. Tours will not substitute for an LFC meeting.
 4. Tours may be cancelled due to facility concerns or emergencies.

DEFINITIONS:

Words/terms appearing in this policy may be defined in the glossary section of the Policy Manual.

ATTACHMENTS:

None

DOC FORMS:

DOC 03-513 Family Council Meeting Minutes
 DOC 03-514 Family Council Action Items