

# CHAPTER 1 - SCOPE AND PURPOSE

## SECTION A PURPOSE OF THIS HANDBOOK

This policy handbook is provided as a reference source of general guidelines relating to the hiring, compensation, working conditions, promotions, transfers, discipline, and other matters affecting the status of employees covered by these guidelines. Employees' suggestions for change to the Manual can be submitted at any time to the Human Resources Department. Additionally, this Manual will be reviewed on a periodic basis to ensure that the purpose of the Manual is being met, the contents are current, and that it is consistent with the stated mission of the County. These guidelines shall not be interpreted as promises of specific treatment, and these guidelines shall not be deemed to create a vested contractual right in any employee. The County may amend, modify, delete, alter, supplement, suspend, or terminate any statements or policies in this handbook and any employee benefits at any time, with or without notice. The County also reserves the right to deviate from the statements or policies in this handbook in individual situations to avoid disruptions in the public employer function, or to achieve its primary mission.

## SECTION B SCOPE OF THIS HANDBOOK

1. Employees of Departments that Report to the Board of County Commissioners. The policies in this handbook apply to all employees of departments that report to the Board of County Commissioners, except as provided in [Appendix C](#) applicable to at-will employees, [Appendix M](#) applicable to Extra Help Employees, County ordinances, and policies adopted by individual departments.
2. Employees of the Assessor, Auditor, Clerk, Coroner, Prosecuting Attorney, Sheriff, Treasurer, and judges of the Superior and District Courts. For the purposes of this handbook, employees employed by Elected Officials other than the Board of County Commissioners have a dual status. They are employees of the Board of County Commissioners for wage-related matters, and they are employees of the Elected Official for non-wage related matters. The wage-related provisions of this handbook apply to employees employed by the Assessor, Auditor, Clerk, Coroner, Prosecuting Attorney, Sheriff, Treasurer, and judges of the Superior and District Courts. The non-wage related provisions of this handbook do not apply to employees of the Assessor, Auditor, Clerk, Coroner, Prosecuting Attorney, Sheriff, Treasurer, and judges of the Superior and District Courts unless expressly adopted by those Elected Officials.
3. Employees Represented by a Union. Whether the policies in this handbook apply to employees represented by a union or guild will depend in part on the collective bargaining agreement between the County and the particular union or guild. Employees should consult the applicable collective bargaining agreement for additional information. In the event of a conflict between a collective bargaining agreement and this handbook, the collective bargaining agreement will take precedence, regardless of which is more or less restrictive. The most recent versions of collective bargaining agreements can be viewed at [www.kitsapgov.com](http://www.kitsapgov.com).

## **SECTION C ABOUT KITSAP COUNTY**

Kitsap County was founded in 1857 and is a subdivision of the State of Washington. Although it is not an administrative agency of the state, Kitsap County often functions as an administrative arm of the state by maintaining records, providing courts and law enforcement, building roads, assessing property, collecting taxes, and conducting elections. In Kitsap County these functions, as well as others, are governed by full-time Elected Officials including a board of three County Commissioners, a Sheriff, Superior Court and District Court Judges, an Assessor, Treasurer, Prosecutor, Auditor, Clerk, and Coroner. The number of independent, elected County officers provided for in the constitution and state law is a distinguishing feature of County government.

## **SECTION D ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

The independent nature of County elected officers makes County government quite different from traditional municipal government forms with distinct legislative and executive branches. The Board of County Commissioners establishes the budget and functions as both the legislative and executive body. The Commissioners share administrative and, to some extent, legislative functions with the independently Elected County Officials: Assessor, Auditor, Clerk, Coroner, Prosecuting Attorney, Sheriff, Treasurer, and the judges of the Superior and District Courts. In addition to the various offices directed by independently Elected Officials, Kitsap County Government functions through various departments headed by appointed officials. The Department of Community Development, Department of Human Services, Department of Public Works, and the Department of Parks and Recreation report directly to the Board of County Commissioners. The Human Resources Department, Department of Administrative Services, Information Services and the Facilities Division report to the Board of County Commissioners through an appointed County Administrator. (See [Appendix A](#))

## **SECTION E KITSAP COUNTY VISION STATEMENT**

A unique and growing community, widely known for:

### Safe and Healthy Communities

People are protected and secure, care about their neighborhoods and are proud of where they live, work and play.

### Protected Natural Resources and Systems

Education, land use planning and coordinated efforts assure that the forests, clean air and water that Kitsap is known for are sustained for the benefit of current and future generations.

### Thriving Local Economy

A well-educated workforce and strategic investment in County infrastructure prompt businesses to expand or locate in Kitsap County, creating well-paying jobs and enhancing our quality of life.

### Inclusive Government

County government conducts all activities in a manner that encourages citizen involvement, enhances public trust, and promotes understanding.

### Effective and Efficient County Services

County government continuously assesses its purpose, promotes and rewards innovation and improvement, fosters employee development, and uses effective methods and technologies to produce significant positive results and lasting benefits for citizens.

## **SECTION F      KITSAP COUNTY MISSION STATEMENT**

Kitsap County government exists to protect and promote the health, safety and welfare of our citizens in an efficient, accessible and effective manner.

## **SECTION G      FUNCTION OF COUNTY GOVERNMENT**

Through elected representatives, the public determines the desired level of services and establishes the standards that it demands of public employees in providing these services. In its representative capacity, Kitsap County strives for an effective balance between accountability for the expenditure of public funds and responsiveness to the needs of the public. In its capacity as an employer, Kitsap County must balance the interests of the public employee with the interests of the public. Achieving this balance requires the County to maintain an effective and efficient governmental operation, including the efficient management of personnel, maintaining close internal working relations, enforcing adherence to standards of competence, and avoiding disruptions in the workplace and interference with work. Employees, in fulfilling their dual roles as citizens and public employees, have a unique personal stake in ensuring effectiveness, efficiency, and integrity in public service. Particularly in the performance of duties that are a matter of public concern, public employees must balance their interests as private citizens with their responsibilities and obligations as public representatives.

## **SECTION H      STANDARDS**

1. As an employer, Kitsap County strives for an environment in which all individuals can reach their full potential as efficient and effective employees so that the County can reach its full potential for public service. To achieve full potential, the County and its employees must strive to create a work environment that encourages attributes such as creative and independent thinking, inventiveness, and innovation. Work/life policies are important to that environment because the County recognizes the needs of its employees to balance both work and home in order for the employee to reach their full potential and the County to provide superior services to its citizens. The County and its employees must continuously examine, evaluate, challenge, streamline their methods and processes, and identify new ways of providing the best possible public services. The County and its employees must also maintain certain standards of conduct, including the following:
  - a. Conducting County business ethically, professionally, with pride, and with enthusiasm.
  - b. Providing quality services within available resources.
  - c. Treating the public and co-workers with dignity, respect, courtesy, fairness, and sensitivity.

- d. Providing timely and accurate information.
- e. Responding promptly to requests.

## **SECTION I SEVERABILITY**

If any provision of this Manual or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of this Manual or the application of the provisions to other persons or circumstances shall not be affected.

## **SECTION J REVISIONS, ADDITIONS, AND DISTRIBUTIONS**

As changes occur, departments shall receive electronic notification of the revisions and additions to this Manual. A copy of the Personnel Manual shall be maintained in the Office of the Board of County Commissioners, the Human Resources Department, and in each department. The Personnel Manual will be available online.