

2021 Public Records Committee Annual Report

August 15, 2022



King County

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II. King County Code

2.14.020 Public records committee - duties - reports - membership.¹

- A. King County is committed to managing its public records as a countywide resource and in a manner that:
 - 1. Is efficient and economical;
 - 2. Promotes open government and an informed citizenry;
 - 3. Protects individual privacy; and
 - 4. Meets county record retention and disposition standards.
- B. A public records committee is hereby established. The public records committee shall:
 - 1. Advise the council and the executive on county public records policies, including both paper and electronic records; these policies must include policies for posting records on county web sites;
 - 2. Provide guidance on the planning and implementation of a countywide records storage management plan and a countywide electronic records management system;
 - 3. Advise county agencies on their use of digital communication technology and serve as a forum for sharing and discussing information about the county's use of such technology; and
 - 4. Submit a report containing the following information by August 15 of each year in the form of a paper original and an electronic copy to the clerk of the council, who shall retain the original and provide an electronic copy of the report to all councilmembers, the council chief of staff, and the lead staff for the council's government accountability and oversight committee or its successor. The report shall include:
 - a. a description of the forms of digital communication that are in use by each county agency;
 - b. for each form of digital communication that is in use by an agency, a description of the methods used by the agency to retain records of digital communication to meet applicable record retention requirements; and
 - c. for each form of digital communication that is in use by an agency, a description of the methods used by the agency to search records of digital communication to meet applicable public record disclosure requirements;
 - d. the report required by the public records committee charter adopted by Motion 12511, which provides a summary of the activities of the public records committee in relation to the charter goals, and programmatic and policy recommendations as to how King County can best manage, preserve and provide access to its public records; and
 - e. all agency reports submitted to the chair of the public records committee required by K.C.C. 2.12.300 that describe each agency's performance in responding to public records requests during the preceding calendar year.
- C. The director of the records and licensing services division or the director's designee shall be the chair of the public records committee. The public records committee shall include representatives of a broad range of county departments and elected agencies, including at a minimum the following:
 - 1. The council;

¹ [Link to Title 2, Section 14](#)

2. The prosecuting attorney's office;
3. The sheriff's office;
4. The assessor's office;
5. The department of elections;
6. Office of performance, strategy and budget;
7. The executive branch's senior public records officer;
8. The department of information technology's director of web-based services technology; and
9. Each executive department.

III. Executive Summary

The King County Public Records Committee (PRC) is composed of representatives from each King County executive department, independently elected officials, and the Superior and District courts. The PRC serves as a collective body of expertise to consider public records and records management impacts associated with County business. In this role, the PRC promotes employee awareness of public records and records management responsibilities, and advises the King County Council, the King County Executive, King County Information Technology (KCIT), and others as appropriate on policy matters associated with the management of electronic and paper-based public records, including the development and maintenance of a comprehensive countywide records and information management (RIM) solution.

This report includes a summary of the activities of the committee for the 2021 calendar year, the digital communications technologies report, and the agency reports describing each agency's performance in responding to public records requests.

The PRC met eleven times in 2021. The committee's 2021 work plan addressed each of the six goals set out in its charter. The six goals are to:

1. Review, comment, and provide advice on County documents regarding public records management, including policies, public rules, ordinances, guidelines, best practices, etc.
2. Collaborate with County agencies and KCIT on technology-based communication tools as they are deployed to ensure matters associated with records creation and management are known and addressed.
3. Provide guidance on the planning and implementation of a countywide records storage management plan and a countywide electronic records management system.
4. Provide guidance on the development of policies and guidelines for the permanent preservation of the County's historical records.
5. Provide guidance for the development of policies and guidelines regarding posting records on County websites.
6. Provide ongoing, two-way communication across the County to ensure employees are aware of issues and responsibilities regarding records creation and management.

IV. Background

Department Overview: The Department of Executive Services (DES) includes the Records and Licensing Services Division (RALS). RALS consists of four operating sections: Regional Animal Services; Licensing Services; Recorder's Office; and Archives, Records Management, and Mail Services (ARMMS).

Key Historical Context: In 2006, the King County Council approved Ordinance 15608, which directs the RALS Division Director to chair the Public Records Committee (PRC) and established the required membership of representatives of all King County executive departments, independently elected officials, and the Superior and District courts.² On May 21, 2007, the County Council passed Motion 12511, approving the vision, guiding principles, goals, governance, and management structure of the PRC as outlined in the PRC Charter.³

Key Current Conditions: In 2019, Council adopted Ordinance 18635, which defined and described the three elements of the required PRC Annual Report.⁴

Report Methodology: Information about the work plan activities of the committee was pulled from committee minutes and the work plan by the PRC secretary. The Records Management Program team developed and administered a Survey Monkey survey to gather the information for the Digital Communications Technologies section. The Public Records Officers from the Prosecuting Attorney's Office, County Council, Executive Branch, and Sheriff's Office supplied their reports for the public records request section. The voting members of the PRC approved this report.

² [Link to Motion 15608](#)

³ [Link to Motion 12511](#)

⁴ [Link to Ordinance 18635](#)

V. Report Requirements

King County code 2.14.020 sets forth the reporting requirements for the PRC Annual Report.

A. Description of the Forms of Digital Communication That are in use by Each County Agency

The PRC used Survey Monkey to gather information for this report. Responses were requested to be consolidated by department or agency where possible. Responses were received from the following:

- Adult and Juvenile Detention
- Assessments
- Department of Community and Human Services
- Clerk of the Council
- District Court
- Executive Office
- Executive Services, Office of Risk Management – Public Records Program
- Executive Services, Records and Licensing Services, Archives, Records Management, and Mail Services
- King County Information Technology – Design and Civic Engagement Section
- King County Information Technology Department
- Judicial Administration
- Public Health – Seattle & King County
- King County Superior Court
- King County Sheriff's Office

The technologies reported as being used include:

AlertSense	PublicInput
Office 365	Snapchat
Microsoft Teams	LocalScape
Zoom	KCInform/Code Red
YouTube	Eventbrite
Facebook	Insight/Legisearch
GovDelivery	Instagram
Gov QA	KC Road Alerts
DoodlePoll	Periscope
WordPress	Prezi
Granicus	SiteCore
Nextdoor	Slido
KCTV	Skype
Yammer	Twitter
Flickr	Vimeo
CAD Messaging	WordPress
Proprofs	LinkedIn

Digital Communications Used in King County Government

County agencies use many digital communication methods in a variety of ways to engage with and provide services to community members. Specialized applications enhance service delivery by facilitating business processes, gathering customer input and feedback, and providing access and transparency to legislative materials and other public records. Some common communications tools, such as digital voicemail, email, and various software programs and technology resources are used to:

1. Communicate with, educate and inform residents, internal and external customers, partners and stakeholders;
2. notify residents and employees of emergency situations;
3. conduct County business;
4. engage the public and promote public involvement;
5. distribute general information, news, advisory messages, alerts, and emergency communications;
6. market County services;
7. facilitate media relations;
8. conduct investigations;
9. recruit for open positions; and
10. share photographs, historical documents, posters and graphics.

B. For Each Form of Digital Communication that is in use by an Agency, a Description of the Methods used by the Agency to Retain Records of Digital Communication to Meet Applicable Record Retention Requirements

Retention of Digital Communication Records

A variety of records retention methods are used to retain records generated by digital communications technologies, including social media. These methods range from contracting retention through a social media vendor, relying on tools native to the social media site or digital communication technology, storing copies of social media entries as electronic or paper copies, or using an off-the-shelf product or service like ArchiveSocial to capture daily snapshots of web and social media sites. Agencies that use the records management system, Content Manager, can and often do retain copies of social media and digital communications there.

C. For Each Form of Digital Communication that is in use by an Agency, a Description of the Methods used by the Agency to Search Records of Digital Communication to Meet Applicable Public Record Disclosure Requirements

Producing Records from Social Media and Digital Communications Technology Tools

To search for, gather, and produce records from digital communications technologies or social media sites, departments and agencies report either using the search functionality available on those sites, the tools native to the repositories used to store those records, or manually searching through the posts. In instances of enterprise-wide technology solutions, central searching is available using eDiscovery or Content Manager. Copies of web pages or social media communications stored in ArchiveSocial are either searched manually or using the system search functionality.

Records Management Program (RMP) staff continue to provide trainings, job aids, governance documentation, standard work documentation, and individual coaching and consultation on employing records management best practices when using digital communications technologies. The records retention issues identified in this report are being addressed on an ongoing basis through training and other educational materials used by the RMP and Executive Policy INF-15-4-1-EP, Management of King County Public Records.⁵ The survey results show a need for development of more guidance and clarity about responsibilities for retention.

Public Records Disclosure/Production

As a result of training, guidance, and governance, there has been increasing awareness among King County departments and agencies of the responsibilities for properly organizing and retaining public records created using social media and digital communications technologies and for producing record responsive to requests made under RCW 42.56: the Public Records Act.⁶

Conclusions

King County departments and agencies have increasingly relied on digital communications to engage with and provide services to the community we serve. A continued emphasis on the importance of retaining, managing, and making accessible public records that are created on social media platforms is needed. The annual report is a form of reminder to bring awareness to the importance of managing digital records created and/or distributed using social media platforms.

D. A Summary of the Activities of the Public Records Committee in Relation to the Charter Goals, and Programmatic and Policy Recommendations as to how King County Can Best Manage, Preserve and Provide Access to its Public Records

The PRC 2021 work continued to shift toward enterprise information management and governance, continuing and completing some work in progress, while also responding to rapidly shifting priorities associated with workplace changes as the County continued adapting to telework and other impacts of COVID-19.

1. Policies

2021 concluded the complete overhaul of the Executive Policy System, which was initiated in 2016. All Executive Policies and Public Rules enacted prior to January 2016 were set to expire on January 11, 2021, per Executive Order INF-7-3-EO Rescinding Executive Policy System.⁷ PRC members provided updates to their home departments or agencies to help them stay on track with the review and reissuance or rescission of policies in place prior to January 2016.

The PRC worked on no policies in 2021 having just updated or issued them in 2020 in advance of the system overhaul.

2. Email Management Improvement Plan

⁵ [Link to INF-15-4-1-EP Management of King County Public Records](#)

⁶ [Link to RCW 42.56: the Public Records Act](#)

⁷ [Link to Executive Order INF-7-3-EO Rescinding Executive Policy System](#)

Continuing work started in 2020, the Records Management Program worked with Public Health and KCIT to plan for a pilot automated email management plan to be launched by Public Health. The plan envisions setting retention at the user level based on role and automating deletion. This plan is currently on hold by Public Health to accommodate other priorities, but will be continued in 2022, either with Public Health or with another department or office.

3. King County Records and Information Governance Group (KCRIGG) - Information Governance Evolution

In 2020, work begun on developing an information governance structure to document multi-disciplinary recommendations on issues that intersect Information Technology and Records Management and Disclosure, as well as Human Resources, Risk Management, and the Privacy Program. By the end of 2021, KCRIGG members had developed a Charter and a proposed process for the work. KCRIGG is co-sponsored by the Director of the Records and Licensing Services Division of DES and the KCIT chief of staff. The PRC secretary serves as the project lead, and 2021 membership included the Public Records Program Manager, County Records and Information Manager, the Privacy Program Manager, KCIT Governance Representative and the County Archivist.

4. PRC/KCIT Working Group

The work of the PRC and KCIT working group that was formed in December 2018 has been integrated with KCRIGG and PRC. KCIT has a standing item on the PRC monthly meeting agenda, and KCRIGG is co-sponsored the KCIT chief of staff as noted above.

5. Database Guidance

The effort to develop guidance about records management and disclosure for databases began in 2020 and was completed in 2021. This guidance can be found at: [Records Management Guidance \(kingcounty.gov\)](https://kingcounty.gov/records-management-guidance).

6. Standardization of Human Resources Records Management

Work to digitize and standardize the management of the County's personnel, protected leave, and employment verification records continues as the need for remote access to records increases. 2021 saw the implementation of the enterprise-wide electronic content management system, Laserfiche, by the Department of Human Resources for these records. Use of Laserfiche increases security, standardization, and one-stop management of personnel files. Governed by the recently-published Official Personnel File policy, records retention schedules, Disposition After Digitization agreements, and system configuration requirements, the Laserfiche implementation team began developing training materials, automated workflows, user/security governance procedures, and department onboarding plans. The project goal is to have all King County departments onboarded to the system by the end of 2022.

7. PRC Communications

The PRC member representing the Department of Local Services led work on the development of a newsletter-style communication to highlight PRC activities and guidance. The PRC chair,

vice-chair, secretary, and PRC member Ellie Rhodes collaborated on this effort and came up with a template and content for the first issue of the newsletter.

8. Continuation of Privacy Work - Collaboration with KCIT's Privacy Program

Membership in the Privacy Working Group was expanded in 2019. By the end of 2020 there were 20 members, including agency records officers, agency and department privacy officers, and public records officers. Lorre Wijelath was hired in 2020 as the Privacy Program Manager, and she continues in this role, where she leads the Privacy Working Group. The linkage between the Privacy Working Group and the PRC is maintained through a standing item on the agenda for the PRC's monthly meetings. Topics reported in 2021 included ICE audit recommendations responses, Privacy Maturity Assessment development and procurement effort, development of privacy principles, and refining definitions of Personally Identifiable Information (PII).

E. All Agency Reports Submitted to the Chair of the Public Records Committee Required by K.C.C. 2.12.300 That Describe Each Agency's Performance in Responding to Public Records Requests During the Preceding Calendar Year

Ordinance 18949 revised Public Records Officer's reporting requirements to mirror those in RCW 40.14.026(5).^{8,9} The PRC received reports from the Public Records Officers of these four agencies:

- [Prosecuting Attorney's Office](#)
- [County Council](#)
- [Executive Branch](#)
- [Sheriff's Office](#)

As of 2020, the manager of the Public Records Program and vice-chair of the PRC provided regular updates to the PRC regarding Public Records Act impacts. In 2021, the most significant updates included:

- Oversight of a multi-agency public records request submitted on behalf of the Washington Citizens for Open Government, associated with records of the Public Records Committee, as well as with King County Council, related actions to establish by King County Code definition separate agencies within King County for the purposes of Public Records Act compliance.
- Continuing work on the analysis of equity impacts to charging for public records request fulfillment and exploration of charging structures that improve access for all. The pace of this work was slowed due to COVID-19 priorities. The Committee committed to continue this work.

⁸ [Link to Ordinance 18949](#)

⁹ [Link to RCW 40.14.026\(5\)](#)

VI. Next Actions

Using the collective body of expertise and perspective brought by its members, the PRC will continue to work toward accomplishing the tasks set out in its 2022 work plan. These tasks include:

- Continuing to engage with the Privacy Program and the County's Privacy Officer.
- Continuing to collaborate with KCIT to identify and implement enterprise-wide email management governance.
- Improving awareness of and enhancing existing guidance regarding email management best practices, managing database records in place, and managing records in O365 products, including Microsoft Teams.
- Integrating more fully with the King County Records and Information Governance Group's work and recommendations.
- Informing and supporting the work of the Records Management and Public Records Programs as needed.

VII. Appendices

Appendix A
Public Records Committee
Membership List
Current as of December 31, 2021

Organization	Name[s]	
	Voting Member	Alternate
Adult & Juvenile Detention	Andrea Williams	
Assessor's Office	Rich Watson	Alicia Warren
Community & Human Services	Amber Hebert	Eva Haney
Council	Janet Masuo	
District Court	Troy Brown	Peggy Wang
Elections	Janice Case	
Executive Services	Cindy Cawaling	
Executive Services/RALS	Norm Alberg (Chair)	
Executive Services/RALS/ARMMS	Cynthia Hernandez (Secretary)	Danielle Boucher; Ellie Browning
Executive's Office	Kaitlyn Wiggins	
Human Resources	Jeff Scheeringa	
Information Technology (KCIT)	Syrena Ogden	
Judicial Administration	Danielle Anderson	Denise Fuseini
Local Services	Cheryl Binetti	Margo Christianson
Natural Resources & Parks	Sara Fitzgibbons	
Prosecuting Attorney	Kristie Johnson	Meghan Moore
Public Defense	Alex Harris	
Public Health	Tyler Entrekin	
Public Records Office	Shelby Miklethun	
Sheriff's Office	Kimberly Petty	
Superior Court	Linda Ridge	Malinda You
Transit	Tiffani Duncan	

Committee Resources

Chair: Norm Alberg, Director, RALS, DES

Vice-Chair: Shelby Miklethun, Public Records Program Manager, Office of Risk Management, DES

Secretary: Cynthia Hernandez, Archives, Records Management and Mail Services Manager, RALS, DES

Minutes and agendas along with the meeting schedule are available on the PRC website, [Public Records Committee](#).