

# Policies and Procedures for Government Offices



**Rebecca Rein, LGS IV**

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, COMMUNITY, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

LeGIT Series 2025

7/3/2025

# Policies and Procedures

- Purpose of Policies and Procedures
- How to create policies and procedures that are easily understood
- Role of Elected Officials
- Different Types of Policies and Procedures



## Policies and Procedures for Government Offices

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

# What are Policies and Procedures?

Local government policies are the decisions and actions made by local governments to allocate resources and achieve specific goals, impacting residents' daily lives.

Policies are often enacted by ordinance or resolution.

Procedures are the specific steps or instructions to achieve the goals laid out by policies. They give clarity and ensure policies are carried out fairly and consistently.

An example of a policy: To balance the local water and wastewater budget by collecting user fees adequate to cover operational costs.

An example of a procedure: Step-by-step instructions on how to collect user fees.



## Policies and Procedures for Government Offices

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, COMMUNITY, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

# Policies

- Policies are a planned course of action.
- Policies identify goals.
- Policies provide direction.

Policies guide government action with a structured, consistent plan to achieve public goals.

A water utility policy sets the goal of ensuring safe drinking water by upgrading infrastructure and enforcing water quality standards.

Policies provide direction by guiding government actions and decisions toward consistent and effective outcomes.



## Policies and Procedures for Government Offices

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, COMMUNITY, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

# Procedures

Procedures are specific steps for reaching policy goals.

Procedures ensure:

- Everyone knows the rules
- Everyone follows the same rules
- Rules are applied fairly and consistently.



## Policies and Procedures for Government Offices

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, COMMUNITY, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

# Developing Policies and Procedures



## Policies and Procedures for Government Offices

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, COMMUNITY, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

# Key Steps to Writing a Good Policy

## ☐ Define the Purpose

- ☐ Clearly state *why* the policy is needed and *what* it aims to achieve.

## ☐ Identify the Scope

- ☐ Specify *who* the policy applies to (e.g., departments, staff, public agencies).

## ☐ Outline Responsibilities

- ☐ Clarify *who* is responsible for what, including implementation and compliance.

## ☐ Provide Procedures or Guidance

- ☐ If applicable, include how the policy will be carried out step-by-step or refer to separate procedures.

## ☐ Ensure Legal and Regulatory Compliance

- ☐ Align with laws, regulations, and existing policies.



# Writing a good policy- Continued

## ☐ Use Clear and Concise Language

- ☐ Avoid jargon; be direct and easy to understand for all readers.

## ☐ Format for Accessibility

- ☐ Use headings, bullet points, and numbering to improve readability.

## ☐ Consult Stakeholders

- ☐ Involve relevant departments, experts, or the public to get input and ensure feasibility.

## ☐ Include a Review Process

- ☐ Set a schedule for reviewing and updating the policy regularly.

## ☐ Get Formal Approval

- ☐ Ensure the policy is approved through appropriate governance channels (e.g., elected officials, executive leadership).



## Policies and Procedures for Government Offices

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, COMMUNITY, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



# Policy Example

## ◆ Policy Title:

*Water Conservation Policy*

## 📌 Purpose:

- Establish guidelines to reduce water use
- Promote sustainability across all municipal operations

## 📌 Scope:

- Applies to all city departments, employees, and contractors
- Covers all operations involving water use



## Policies and Procedures for Government Offices

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, COMMUNITY, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

# Policy Components



## Policy Statement:

- All departments must implement water-saving practices
- Includes upgrades, maintenance, and usage tracking



## Responsibilities:

- Dept. Heads:** Ensure staff compliance
- Facilities:** Conduct audits and maintenance
- Sustainability Office:** Track usage, report results



## Procedures:

- Follow the “Municipal Water Audit Guidelines” for steps
- Department-specific procedures may apply



## Policies and Procedures for Government Offices

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, COMMUNITY, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

# Compliance and Review



## Compliance:

- Regular audits and performance reports
- Non-compliance may lead to corrective action or budget adjustments



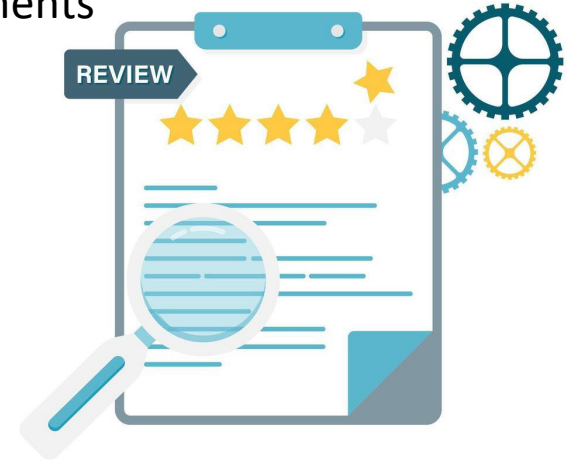
## References:

- City Code Chapter 12: Utilities
- State Water Conservation Act (SB 606 / AB 1668)



## Review & Updates:

- Reviewed every 2 years
- Led by the Sustainability Office with input from departments



## Policies and Procedures for Government Offices

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, COMMUNITY, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



# What Are Procedures?

## **\*\*Definition:\*\***

- Procedures are step-by-step instructions for carrying out policies or specific tasks.

## **\*\*Purpose:\*\***

- Ensure consistency
- Improve efficiency
- Promote accountability and compliance

## **\*\*Examples:\*\***

- How to request equipment
- Steps to report a water main break
- Emergency evacuation process



## Policies and Procedures for Government Offices

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

# Key Elements of a Good Procedure

1. Clear Title – Reflects the task (e.g., “Submitting Budget Requests”)
2. Purpose Statement – Briefly explains \*why\* the procedure exists
3. Step-by-Step Instructions – Numbered, concise, action-oriented
4. Roles & Responsibilities – Clarify who does what
5. Required Forms/Tools – Link to templates or reference materials



## Policies and Procedures for Government Offices

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## Best Practices for Writing Procedures

- ✓ Use plain, direct language
- ✓ Keep steps short and logical
- ✓ Include only essential information
- ✓ Test the procedure – is it easy to follow?
- ✓ Review regularly for updates
- ✓ Format for clarity: headings, bullets, and white space



## Policies and Procedures for Government Offices

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



# What Is a Task Outline?

## **\*\*Definition:\*\***

➡ A task outline is a clear, organized list of steps to complete a specific task.

## **\*\*Purpose:\*\***

- ➡ - Break down complex tasks into manageable actions
- ➡ - Improve understanding and reduce errors
- ➡ - Standardize work across teams



## Policies and Procedures for Government Offices

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, COMMUNITY, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



# How to Write a Step-by-Step Task Outline

1. Identify the Task – Define what needs to be done
2. List Materials or Tools – Include anything required to complete the task
3. Break Into Logical Steps – Use clear, numbered instructions
4. Use Action Words – Start steps with verbs (e.g., ‘Check’, ‘Submit’)
5. Keep it Simple – Avoid jargon and keep steps short



## Policies and Procedures for Government Offices

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, COMMUNITY, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



## ✓ Tips for Clear Outlines

- ✓ Use consistent formatting
- ✓ Test the outline by performing the task
- ✓ Get feedback from others who use it
- ✓ Update it regularly to stay relevant
- ✓ Use visuals if needed (diagrams, screenshots)



## Policies and Procedures for Government Offices

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, COMMUNITY, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

# The Role of Elected Officials

Elected officials play a key role in establishing policies and procedures by setting priorities and approving laws that guide government action.

They achieve this by:

- Proposing legislation
- Voting on policy measures
- Approving budgets
- Ensuring enforcement of procedures and local laws.



## Policies and Procedures for Government Offices

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, COMMUNITY, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

# Types of Policies and Procedures

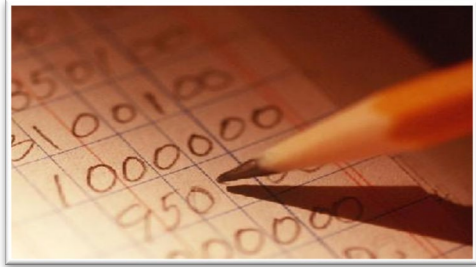
Personnel



Safety



Administration



Accounting &  
Finance



Facilities &  
Equipment



Collections



## Policies and Procedures for Government Offices

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, COMMUNITY, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

# Personnel Policies

What values do Personnel Policies bring to an organization?

- Establish fairness
- Provide clarity
- Promote consistency
- Reduce conflict
- Define rules/consequences
- Assure compliance
- Protect rights
- Reduce potential liability



## Policies and Procedures for Government Offices

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, COMMUNITY, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

# Compliance with Law is crucial

Personnel Policies and procedures must comply with the following laws:

Equal Opportunity Employment (EEO)

Alaska Employment Security Act

Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)

Alaska Worker's Compensation Act

Social Security Administration (SSA)

Drug-Free Workplace Act

Civil Rights Act

American with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Occupational Safety and Health  
Administration (OSHA)

Others



## Policies and Procedures for Government Offices

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

# Personnel Manuals

Key components of a personnel manual:

Organizational chart

Job descriptions

Conditions of employment

Compensation and benefits

Rules and regulations

Evaluations

Travel

Discipline and termination

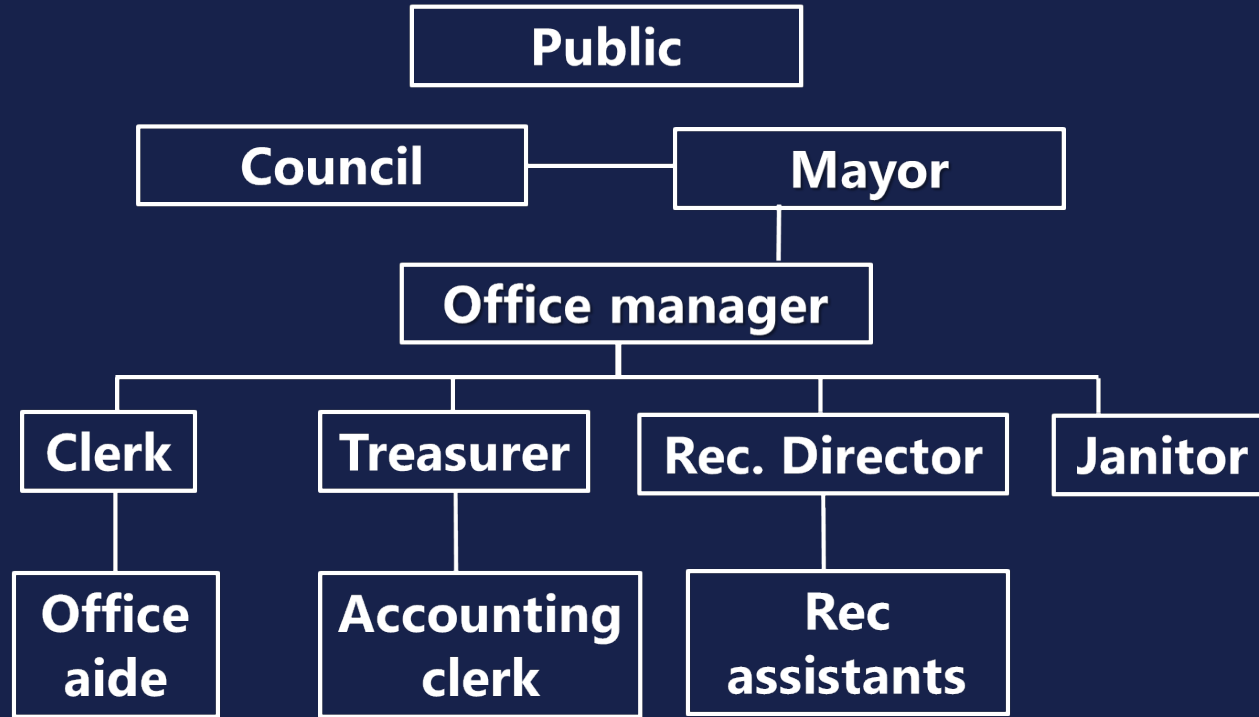
Grievance procedures



## Policies and Procedures for Government Offices

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

# Organizational Chart



## Policies and Procedures for Government Offices

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

# Accounting and Finance



**Protect assets**



**Comply with regulations**



**Ensure accuracy**



## Policies and Procedures for Government Offices

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, COMMUNITY, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



# Key Accounting and Finance Procedures

Internal control

Control of receipts

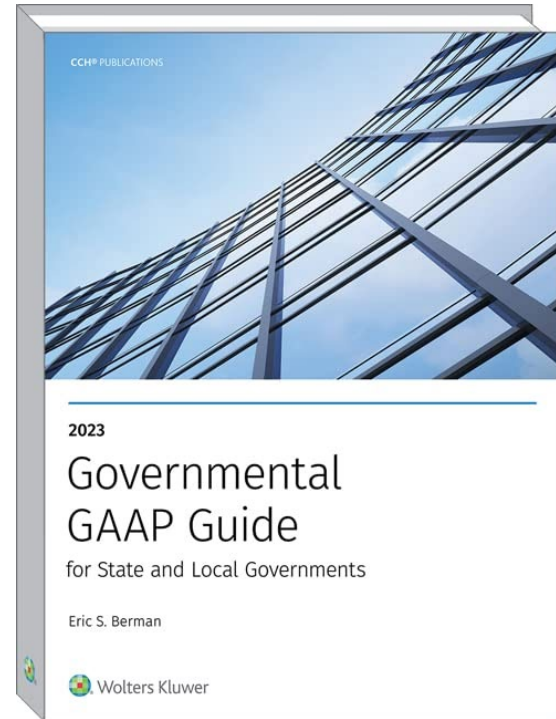
Control of expenditures

Petty cash

Payroll

Bank accounts

Financial reporting



## Policies and Procedures for Government Offices

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, COMMUNITY, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

# Administrative Procedures

- 🔧 Organization structure
- 🔧 Boards and commissions
- 🔧 Meetings
- 🔧 Departments
- 🔧 Communications
- 🔧 Records management



## Policies and Procedures for Government Offices

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, COMMUNITY, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

# Administrative Procedures Continued: Collections

Rates

Billing

Due dates

Delinquencies

Collection procedures

Positive strategies

Negative strategies



## Policies and Procedures for Government Offices

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, COMMUNITY, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

# Safety Policies and Procedures

Assess hazards

Prevent hazards

Safety equipment

Safety training

Safety responsibilities

Rules and guidelines

Evacuation plan

Communication plan

Small Community Emergency Response Plan (SCERP)



## Policies and Procedures for Government Offices

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

# Facilities, Vehicles, & Equipment Policies and Procedures

## Compliance

Identify hazards

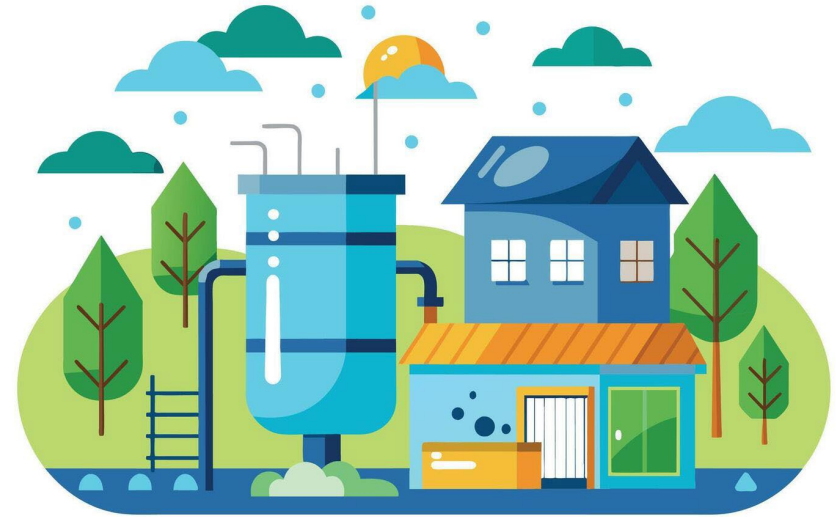
Risk management

## Maintenance

Inspection

Inventory

- Identify renovation needs
- Repair and replacement fund
- Capital replacement fund



## Policies and Procedures for Government Offices

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, COMMUNITY, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

# DCRA Resources

<https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/dcra/LocalGovernmentResourceDesk.aspx>

<https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/dcra/LocalGovernmentResourceDesk/WholsMyLGS.aspx>



## Policies and Procedures for Government Offices

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, COMMUNITY, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT