



Washoe County Information Technology Policy Manual

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Washoe County Information Technology Policy Manual

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Section 1 - Introduction

This policy manual has been designed to provide a ready reference to County policies and procedures on information technology. This policy manual contains the official directives established by the Board of County Commissioners and the Information Technology Advisory Committee. These information technology policies apply to all County Departments.

These policies are the governing principles that mandate, constrain or provide guidance to actions, which are needed to provide County services in accordance with state and federal legislation, prudent administrative practices and the information technology strategic plan approved by the Board of County Commissioners. These policies are designed to facilitate achieving the County's mission and reducing the risk inherent in the acquisition and use of information technology. Implementation of the policies are to be accomplished by the procedures articulated in this manual. Those procedures elaborate on specific policies as well as describe the standards, criteria, and processes for the acquisition and use of information technology. A quick overview of these policies can be found in Appendix A, Information Technology Policy Manual Roles & Responsibility Matrix.

The five information technology policies included in this manual focus on key organizing principles and are designed to provide direction to Washoe County's Departments and employees for the management and use of information technology resources. These policies are an expression of the underlying values contained in the principles and goals established in the 1997 Information Technology Strategic Plan. The policies adopted by the Board of County Commissioners address five areas: purpose, responsibility, standards, budget, and data. After each policy statement the specific implementation procedures are described. These procedures provide a more detailed understanding of the policies as well as defining the standards, criteria and processes to be used in the acquisition and use of information technology in Washoe County. Additionally these procedures specify responsibilities for the management of that technology.

Additional specific technology architecture, acquisition and security standards are published in the Washoe County Standards and Procedures for Information Technology Manual. Additional planning resources include the Washoe County Information Technology Service Agreement and the Washoe County Department Information Technology Planning Policies and Standards.

Section 2 - Purpose

- Policy** The primary purpose for using information technology in Washoe County is to support the wide range of services which the County delivers to its residents, to its businesses, and to other government agencies and to do so efficiently and effectively as possible. The County's information technology policies, goals, standards and processes will reflect this primary purpose.
- Procedures** This policy describes the general intent of the Board of County Commissioners in adopting the information technology policies and procedures. In analyzing and applying these individual policies and procedures, the Board direction on the purpose of using information technology will often provide the needed guidance in deciding issues on the acquisition and use of that technology.

Section 3 - Responsibility

- Policy** County Departments are responsible for planning, acquiring and using information technology in support of their mission and goals, consistent with the County's information technology strategic plan. The County will collectively manage the use of information technology to support and ensure Countywide planning and interagency collaboration on systems for common services and functions, and facilitate collaboration between workgroups. The County will maintain a business practice that ensures all Departments are able to rapidly, effectively and efficiently acquire, receive, implement, and use information technology.
- Procedures**
- Organizational Responsibilities*
- 1A. The Board of County Commissioners is responsible for:
 1. Approving the County's Information Technology Strategy as recommended by the Information Technology Advisory Committee.
 2. Approving expenditures on major information systems, human resources and applications (which must be consistent with the County's strategic direction and on availability of funding).
 3. Adopting policies and ordinances necessary for the implementation of the County's information technology strategy.
 - 1B. The Information Technology Advisory Committee (ITAC - membership appointed by the County Manager and includes elected and appointed Department heads) is responsible for:
 1. Recommending the County's information technology strategy to the BCC.
 2. Updating the County's information technology strategy as needed.

3. Reviewing and approving information technology standards.
 4. Technology planning for the County.
 5. Based upon the strategic direction of the County, recommend IT priorities and funding to the BCC.
- 1C. The Information Technology Standards Committee (ITSC - membership appointed by ITAC and includes County IT managers and professionals) is responsible for making recommendations to ITAC regarding:
1. Information systems architecture standards.
 2. Information technology security standards.
 3. Standard system development tool kit for application development.
 4. Standard set of Countywide desktop applications.
 5. Other technical issues regarding the County's Information Technology Strategy.
- 1D. Information Technology Department is responsible for:
1. Assisting the ITSC in developing system architecture and security standards.
 2. Assisting ITAC in developing and maintaining the County's Information Technology Strategy.
 3. Assisting County Departments in developing their IT plans.
 4. Countywide mission critical IT applications as described in the IT Department IT plan.
 5. Report recommendations on innovations in information technology to ITAC and to ITSC in order to support the rapid and effective deployment of new technology for customer services.
 6. Mission critical Departmental applications which the Department and IT have identified in the Information Technology Service Agreement.
- 1E. Departments are responsible for:
1. Defining Departmental IT needs.
 2. Development of Departmental IT plans.
 3. Managing the use of Departmental IT, including mission critical applications as described in the Department IT plan.
 4. Quantify the use of IT to serve Departmental customers.
 5. Adhering to established information technology standards.
- 1F. Service level expectations of the IT Department are managed by:
1. Establishing and adhering to Department IT plans which include IT and Departmental service agreements.
 2. Adhering to established information technology standards.
 3. IT's annual work program developed from Departments IT plans based upon ITAC's endorsed priorities.
 4. IT's annual budget.

*Mission Critical
Applications and User
Support*

An Information Technology Service Agreement between IT and a County Department (see section 1F) is the instrument for describing the allocation of support responsibilities.

- 2A. Departmental mission critical applications are defined as:
 - 1. Services provided to public, business to public (i.e. Marriage system, tax system, Social Services, elections, jail management, building permits, etc.)
 - 2. Services to other Departments, business to business (i.e. Payroll, personnel, fund accounting, disaster recovery, etc.)
 - 3. Specialized applications identified in the Information Technology Service Agreement and used by a Department that is required by an entity outside of the County (NOMADS, CJIS, UNITY....)
- 2B. Countywide mission critical applications are defined as:
 - 1. Network infrastructure resources (wiring, operating systems, application servers, internet services.)
 - 2. Desktop/groupware applications (email, word processing, spreadsheet.)
- 2C. IT is responsible for Countywide mission critical applications as well as coordinating the installation of network infrastructure resources consistent with the policies, standards and processes established pursuant to sections 1A through 1F, 4A through 4E and 5A through 5E and coordinating the installation of network infrastructure resources.
- 2D. Departments are responsible for their mission critical applications consistent with policies, standards and processes established pursuant to sections 1A through 1F, 4A through 4E and 5A through 5E.
- 2E. Responsibilities for mission critical applications include:
 - 1. Ownership.
 - 2. Trained personnel, including the development of necessary skill levels.
 - 3. Success or failure of the system.
 - 4. Business resumption plan.
 - 5. Data integrity and backup.
 - 6. Data and system security.
 - 7. Maintenance and updates.
- 2F. Departments are responsible for the “first tier” support for their employees use of mission critical applications. First tier support includes:
 - 1. Establishing IT Coordinators, who will have knowledge of their business process, work flows and tools.
 - 2. Application security through administrative authority for access rights.

3. Basic trouble shooting at the desktop to verify connections, operator error problems, basic software use, etc.
- 2G. By written agreement between each Department and IT, either IT, an identified commercial entity, or the Department is responsible for the “second tier” support for their employees use of mission critical applications. Second tier support includes:
1. Help Desk support.
 2. Hardware and software support at the desktop.
- 2H. The Information Technology Department is responsible for all “third tier” support used in all County applications. Third tier support includes: 1) all network equipment (hardware and software) and 2) County-wide software application development and support unless otherwise noted in a service agreement with all affected departments and the IT Department. The IT Department will be responsible for all third tier support for all County developed applications.
- 2I. The criteria that will be used to analyze and determine if and under what conditions a Department will assume responsibility for second and third tier support include:
1. Criteria to determine if a Department should assume responsibility for second tier support of the Department's mission critical applications:
 - a. A demonstrated need of the Department to manage its information technology, which includes:
 - (1) The need for at least two (2) full-time employees knowledgeable about the mission critical application. Various options could be used to meet the necessary back-up staffing requirement (i.e., one FTE in each of two different Departments supporting the same application) as described and agreed to in the Information Technology Service Agreement to meet the necessary back-up staffing requirements (i.e., one FTE in each of two different Departments supporting the same application).
 - (2) The use of unique information technology that is critical to achieving the mission of the Department.
 - (3) The degree of integration of information technology into the operations of the Department (e.g., how many employees use the technology; how often employees use technology during the workday, etc.)
 - (4) The amount of interaction with other County Departments and/or other agencies/entities by means of information technology.
 - b. A commitment by the Department to develop, maintain, and implement an information technology plan.
 - c. A commitment by the Department to adhere to the County’s information technology standards.

- d. The financial feasibility of transferring control to the Department.
- e. If the Department or IT Department cannot mutually develop a Service Agreement, per Section 2I.1.a(1) above, of responsibility for second tier support, Departments should present their IT Plans to ITAC for an appeal.
- 2. The County's network and County-wide developed software applications are considered a mission critical application necessary for the success of all departments and should not be dependent upon the priorities/needs of one particular department. Consequently there are no criteria in which a department can assume responsibility for this level of support.
- 2J. Information Technology support levels and Washoe County's personnel classifications are grouped within the following two categories:
 - 1. First tier support is provided by employees that have been designated as Departmental IT Coordinators. The skills, abilities and knowledge required of Departmental IT Coordinators are included in the requirements of existing personnel classifications. Designation as an IT Coordinator shall not be the basis for classification and/or compensation of the position.
 - 2. Second and third tier support is provided by employees holding existing application and network support personnel classifications (i.e., support technician, programmer, systems analyst, etc).
- System Development, Operation and Maintenance* 3A. Departments are responsible for:
 - 1. Statement of needs.
 - 2. Consulting with IT regarding the functional requirements of the system.
 - 3. Funding for hardware, software, and support (consistent with section 11C).
 - 4. Project management.
 - 5. Dedicate resources for project success.
 - 6. Training employees.
 - 7. Project proposal, which includes documenting the evaluation criteria listed in section 5E.
- 3B. IT or the contractor is responsible for:
 - 1. Provide consulting for conformance to standards.
 - 2. Infrastructure for data communications.
 - 3. Analyze for compliance for functionality and adherence to Department specifications.
 - 4. Consult on contract negotiations to provide for support and maintenance.
 - 5. Repair of IT supported computer equipment.

- 3C. Policy, process and criteria for Department to build own applications include:
1. Departments who build their own applications must adhere to County IT standards as described in the Service Agreement.
 2. Application development will follow the Method for Application Development protocol as adopted by ITAC pursuant to sections 9A through 9E.

Section 4 - Standards

Policy The County will acquire and maintain standards-based information technology that is founded on an open-systems strategy. The County's information technology will be designed to achieve the highest degree of manageability, applications portability and interoperability of the systems elements, and support the integration of different products acquired at different times for different purposes.

Procedures

*Countywide
Applications and
Workgroup
Productivity Tools*

- 4A. County IT applications will focus on client/server and web technology. An approved list will be maintained by ITSC of general purpose workstation, work group and application tools which :
1. Supports portability and collaboration of staff and systems.
 2. Ensures easy and rapid exchange of data objects such as formatted documents.
 3. Facilitates effective staff workstation training and support.
(See the Washoe County Standards and Procedures for Information Technology Manual for the current list of standard workstation, workgroup and application tools)
- 4B. Exceptions to the standard will require approval of ITAC if the County will support the technology.
- 4C. The IT Department will assist ITSC in reviewing new technology and developing recommendations to ITAC regarding the use of emerging technology.
- 4D. The IT Department will assist ITSC in reviewing and developing recommendations to ITAC regarding the standard set of Countywide general purpose workstation, work group and application tools.
- 4E. ITSC will establish and maintain a reference library of products and application technologies for use by County Departments.

*Type of Information
Technology Systems
that can be Acquired
or Built*

- 5A. Focus on open systems strategy including client/server and web technology to:
1. Achieve the highest degree of manageability, application portability and interoperability of the systems elements.
 2. Support the integration of different products acquired at different times for different purposes.
 3. Support a Countywide information technology infrastructure for

- collaboration between work groups.
- 5B. Departments are encouraged to purchase applications that meet County standards and IT principles; exceptions must be documented in the Department's IT plan and approved by ITAC if the Department is to receive IT support. Any disputes that cannot be resolved will be forwarded to the Board.
 - 5C. The direction for the use of technology will be consistent with the direction of the industry.
 - 5D. The evaluation and selection methodology for client/server technologies and standards include:
 - 1. Environmental scan of the IT industry.
 - 2. Consultation with expert firms regarding Industry direction and available products (i.e., Gartner Group).
 - 3. Strategic positioning of companies (i.e., completeness of vision, ability to perform, market presence, computability with existing software, etc.).
 - 4. Develop a draft of programming, user interface, and design standards.
 - 5. Feasibility and assessment through a pilot project.
 - 6. Refine programming and user interface design standards
 - 5E. Information technology is a vital part of the County service delivery infrastructure. In order to realize full value from major capital investments in IT those investments must result in significant, measurable improvements in the services provided by the County. IT projects are to be evaluated and priorities established taking into account the following criteria:
 - 1. Project focus:
 - a. What strategies, goals and business needs of the Department and the County does the project support?
 - b. What function(s) does the project support (i.e., justice, health and social service programs, finance and human resources, etc.)?
 - c. What opportunities have been identified for sharing of hardware and software resources?
 - 2. Cost-benefit analysis:
 - a. What are the measurable improvements in effectiveness and productivity (i.e., service level increase, service outcome and cost reduction) that will result from the technology?
 - b. What is the measurable reduction in organizational overhead that can be achieved or the amount of overhead resources that can be transferred to direct customer service?
 - c. How will current equipment and technology investments be maximized?
 - e. What is the detailed project costs, including integration and annual support?
 - f. What re-engineered work processes have been considered?

3. Project Management:
 - a. Identify the system development, maintenance, operation and project management practices that will be used to successfully support the investment over the life of the application?
 - b. Who has been given the responsibility and authority to manage the project and what are the project outcome measurements?
4. Data Management:
 - a. Does the project focus on providing front-line, service delivery staff with the tools to access all needed information?
 - b. Will information captured or generated by the application, regardless of its location within the County, be universally available (subject to the need and right to know)?
 - c. Will information be delivered for direct client services, for management analysis and for business decisions?
 - d. What opportunities have been identified for information to be shared by other Departments to minimize the cost of collection and maintenance and to maximize accuracy?
5. Project Technology:
 - a. How does the technology support the integration of different products acquired at different times for different purposes?
 - b. Will the project employ technology that includes proven off-the-shelf systems, or does the project include production pilots and other small-scale trials in order to reduce project risks or to evaluate the creative use of technology?
 - c. Are the communication systems compatible with the County's communication infrastructure?
 - d. In what ways will the technology improve public access to County government by citizens?

*Changes in County
Information
Technology*

- 6A. Efforts will be made to maintain mission critical applications no more than one release behind the manufacturer's current version.
- 6B. The County's strategic direction for the use of technology is consistent with the direction of the industry to be established using the processes described in sections 5A through 5E.
- 6C. Implementation of current IT across the County can be phased Department by Department based upon Departmental IT plans and funding availability.
- 6D. The County's business practice is that Departments will implement IT that has been proven to improve service to the public and/or reduce the cost of providing service.
- 6E. IT and ITSC will review new information technology and provide recommendations to ITAC in order to increase the County's understanding of opportunities and innovations.

- Make or Acquire Decisions*
- 7A. Preference will be given to vendor provided products versus custom developed applications.
 - 7B. Preference will be given to products that can demonstrate an appropriate level of stability in a production environment.
 - 7C. Preference will be given to vendor-provided products that meet at least 80% of the functional requirements.
 - 7D. All proposed applications costing \$25,000 or more will be incorporated into the Department's IT plan and have received approval by the BCC.
 - 7E. Product selection will be based upon quantitative criteria.

- Purchase of Information Technology*
- 8A. Departments must purchase the basic set of general-purpose workstation, work group and application tools through the Purchasing Department in order to receive County support (see the Washoe County Information Technology Architecture, Acquisition and Security Standards Manual).
 - 8B. Departments must develop a project acquisition proposal, which addresses the evaluation criteria listed in section 5E.

- System Development and Maintenance*
- 9A. Departments must complete a system development proposal, which addresses the evaluation criteria listed in section 5E.
 - 9B. The County's system development management guidelines, includes:
 - 1. Accountability for completion within outcome measurements.
 - 2. Senior Department management sponsorship and continuing, fully involved, project commitment in partnership with the project managers.
 - 3. Fully staffed systems project management with appropriate responsibility and authority.
 - 4. Quarterly summary reports of progress, plans, costs and issues.
 - 9C. System development and maintenance standards used by IT are in the Methodology for Application System Development, which includes the following phases:
 - 1. Project initialization and feasibility study, including project plan and budget (which identifies all costs, including integration and annual support).
 - 2. Detailed project analysis, design and construction.
 - 3. Implementation, including plans for operation, maintenance, security and disaster recovery.
 - 4. Post-implementation review, including quality assurance reviews, planned versus actual functional capabilities, measurable benefits and documented innovations and lessons learned.
 - 9D. When an application is being built by a contractor an equivalent system development and maintenance methodology will be used.

- 9E. IT will establish the standard system development tool kit for application development in conjunction with ITSC (see the Washoe County Standards and Procedures for Information Technology Manual for the tool kit list).

Section 5 - Budgeting

Policy The County's operating as well as its long-term strategic budget will include and account for hardware and software acquisition, maintenance, upgrades, replacement costs, personnel and training. The annual budget will include and account for the total operating and capital cost of Departmental information technology. Departmental information technology plans will be used to develop Departmental budget proposals, to develop the Department of Information Technology' annual budget and priorities as well as to establish multi-Departmental and Countywide information technology priorities.

Procedures

Base Budgeting

- 10A. The annual budget accounts for the total cost of Departmental IT ownership based on Department IT plans. The budget and the Department's IT plan includes resource estimates on the following costs:
1. New and existing hardware acquisition and maintenance.
 2. New and existing software acquisition and maintenance.
 3. New and existing staff training.
 4. New and existing personnel.
- 10B. Departmental IT service demands on IT, including software and hardware maintenance, are used to develop IT's budget and priorities as included in the service agreement.

Strategic Funding

- 11A. The Finance Division is responsible for developing and recommending a strategic funding plan to the BCC for information technology, (and updating the plan as needed). The strategic funding plan includes:
1. IT projects that cost \$25,000 or more.
 2. Departmental IT plans.
 3. IT annual budget priorities, including support of Departmental IT plans.
 4. An information technology replacement component that is consistent with the standards and policies specified in sections 6A through 6E.
- 11C. Funding for IT will be included in the budgets of:
1. Individual Departments for Departmental specific IT projects.
 2. Information Technology for countywide IT projects.
 3. Designated lead Department for multi-Departmental IT projects.

Section 6 - Data

Policy The County will administer data in accordance with common standards in order to enable access to the data by the public and so that the data can be shared across organizational lines to meet program needs, with the appropriate levels of security and privacy. In doing so, the County will provide and centrally manage a common data access mechanism, ensure that data will be acquired only as necessary for Departmental operations and assign responsibility for data collection, maintenance and accuracy, data definition, accessibility and security consistent with the County's standard data management technology.

Procedures

Administration of Data

- 12A. The County, through IT, provides and centrally manages a common data access mechanism. Access is provided according to the following stages:
1. Inventory all Departmental systems.
 2. Publish a data dictionary with the source and definitions of data elements that are of Countywide value, and each data element classified as open access or restricted.
 3. Document a logical model of Countywide data, which serves a well-defined County business purpose. The model includes common data definitions and relationships.
 4. Establish standard common access tools for workstations to access and analyze data, regardless of its location.
- 12B. Data will be acquired only as necessary for Departmental operations.
- 12C. Departments are responsible for:
1. Data collection, maintenance and accuracy.
 2. Data definition, accessibility and security consistent with the County's standard data management technology. Consideration of Countywide access and governance practices must be included in Department systems.
 3. Opportunities to share information between Departments and to avoid redundant data management shall be considered subject to privacy and confidentiality requirements.
 4. Security and integrity of their data.
- 12D. Data storage and access is consistent with the County's security plan and protocols.
- 12E. Departments are permitted access to other Department's data that is available for general distribution as allowable by law. Access to classified data is to be approved by the Department that is responsible for the data.
- 12F. Data to be shared by Department users or organizations as well as critical user data must be stored on a defined sharable resource, which is backed-up daily.
- 12G. Non-critical user data is stored on the user's local drive to

conserve network storage.

- 12H. Large volumes of static data are stored on high capacity storage medium.
- 12I. Full disk backups to network servers by users must be scheduled with IT.
- 12J. Data to be used by a County department that is shared by or generated by an outside agency, should meet all requirements in this section, including security and integrity. IT should be notified of information shared with outside agencies.

Access by the Public to Electronically Stored Information

- 13A. Public access to the County’s electronically stored information may be by means of web technology.
- 13B. All legally permissible information that is stored electronically may be made available to the public with Department approval.
- 13C. Open access to information must be balanced with the rights to individual privacy and confidentiality.
- 13D. Prior to classifying information under “open access”, a review will be performed by the Department to determine if a single or multiple pieces of data, when combined, would form a whole picture which could result in a violation of privacy and confidentiality requirements. This review should take into consideration data which could jeopardize personal security such as medical records, building plans/burglar alarms, insurance information, juror information, witness protection, personnel records, social security numbers, concealed weapon permits and social services information. It is encouraged that Departments who have questions or need further information consult with ITAC or the District Attorney’s Office as appropriate.
- 13E. Electronic access to public record information shall not compromise the security and integrity of databases, computer systems and networks.

Security

- 14A. ITAC, with the assistance of ITSC, is responsible for developing and maintaining the County’s acceptable use, standard practice and security policies as enumerated by the Washoe County Standards and Procedures for Information Technology manual. These policies and standards include, but are not limited to:
 - 1. County Departments are responsible for the security of their information technology, such as:
 - a. Physical security of their workstations and file servers.
 - b. Ensuring workstations are logged off of the network while unattended.
 - c. Defining security requirements for their data.
 - d. Use of passwords and protection of their passwords.
 - e. Security and backup of data stored on their local drives and file servers.

2. IT is responsible for the security of Countywide information technology, such as:
 - a. Physical security of file servers located in the data center.
 - b. Backup of file server data located in the data center.
 - c. Setting up file and directory access rights base on the Department's security requirements.
- 14B. Departments will adhere to acceptable use, standard practice and security policies, which will be confirmed by a Computer Security Memorandum of Agreement as shown in the Washoe County Standards and Procedures for Information Technology manual.
- 14C. IT will appoint an Information Security Officer who is responsible for Countywide IT security.
- 14D. Departments will provide training to employees on information security and designate at least one Departmental employee to be responsible for IT security.

Appendix A – Roles and Responsibilities Matrix