King County Law Library Public Records Policy and Procedures

1. Purpose

The following policy and procedures provide staff guidance with respect to requests for public records. The purpose of this policy is to ensure compliance by the King County Law Library with the provisions of state law that deal with public records, RCW 42.56.

Information that employees gather about patrons through their public or personal contact with patrons is personal knowledge not public record and is not covered by this policy. Each employee is personally responsible for the reliability and authenticity of personal knowledge that is provided to federal, state, or local law enforcement relating to civil or criminal discovery procedures or investigations. Law Library records are not to be used by Law Library employees to augment their memory to provide more accurate information to such procedures or investigations. Law Library records that reveal a patron's identity are generally exempt from public inspection or copying, unless otherwise ordered by a court order (RCW 42.56.210(1)).

2. Organizations Affected

King County Law Library

3. References

3.1 King County Law Library Policy on Confidentiality of Patron Records and Files

3.2 Web Site Privacy Disclaimer Notice

4. Definitions

4.1 "Law Library" refers to the King County Law Library
4.2 "RCW" refers to the Revised Code of Washington

5. Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of all Law Library staff to transmit all public disclosure requests received to the Library Director's office.

It is the responsibility of the Library Director or the Director's designee as the Public Records Officer to administer this policy and these procedures regarding release of public records including personnel records, financial records, and information linking the names of library users, their addresses and other personal information with information about specific library books and electronic resources they have used. It is the responsibility of the Library Director or the Director's designee as the Public Records Officer to train the Law Library staff and to

generally ensure compliance by the staff with the public records disclosure requirements of RCW Chapter 42.56.

6. Statements of Policy and Procedure

6.1 Public records available. Law Library public records are to be available for public inspection and duplication, except as otherwise provided by RCW 42.56.210. The following policies and procedures set forth the process for determining the availability of records for public inspection and copying.

6.2 Office hours. Public records are available to the public for inspection and copying at the Seattle location of the Law Library at W621 County Courthouse, 516 3rd Avenue, Seattle, WA 98104 from 9am-Noon and from 1-4pm, Monday through Friday, excluding legal holidays or upon official closure of the facility.

6.3 Requests for public records. Any public record that is subject to disclosure may be obtained by members of the public using the following procedures:

6.3.1 Provide a written request or complete a Request for Public Records form that is available at the Law Library's Seattle King County Courthouse and Kent Maleng Regional Justice Center law library locations. The request should include the following information:

6.3.1.1 The name of the person requesting the record(s);

6.3.1.2 The time of day and calendar date on which the request was made; and

6.3.1.3 An appropriate description of the record(s) requested which may include the name, date, and/or the subject matter of the document(s).

6.4 Copying. No fee will be charged to inspect public records. The Law Library will charge a fee of 20 cents per page for copies of public records and for use of Law Library's copying equipment. The fees for copies of public records on electronic media will be equal to the cost of the media. If the Law Library has to pay an outside source for making duplicates of records, the Law Library will pass such costs on to the requestor.

6.5 Exemption and denials of requested public records.

6.5.1 The Law Library reserves the right to determine that a public record requested in accordance with the procedures outlined in 6.3 above is exempt from public disclosure under the provisions of the law.

6.5.2 The Law Library also reserves the right to redact from records, information that is exempt from disclosure under the provisions of RCW 42.56.210.

6.5.3 The Law Library will fully justify in writing any withholding, in whole or in part, of any requested records.

6.6 Protection of public records. Public records must be maintained in good order and condition. Therefore, the following procedures and practices are followed:

6.6.1 Upon receipt of a Request for a Public Record, the Public Records Officer shall promptly review and respond to the Request for a Public Record and the requested public record and determine whether: (1) the request should be granted; (2) the request should be granted subject to redactions; or (3) the request should be denied. The Public Records Officer shall respond to the requestor in accordance with the Public Records Act.

6.6.2 Only after a determination has been made that all or some portion of a record may be inspected will the public record or portion thereof be made available for inspection.

6.6.3 Only staff members of the Law Library after authorization from the Public Records Officer, may open Law Library files to gain access to Law Library records for either Law Library business or to respond to a request for a public record.

6.6.4 A member of the public may not take any public record of the Law Library from the Law Library's premises.

6.6.5 Public inspection of Law Library records shall be done only at the Seattle Courthouse location or at a location approved by the Public Records Officer.

6.6.6 Public records of the Law Library may be duplicated only through Law Library technology unless the Public Records Officer authorizes other arrangements.

7. Attachments

7.1 Request to Inspect Public Records Form

7.2 Denial of Request to Inspect Public Records Form

7.3 RCW 42.56.210

Adopted 3.19.03,
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LINK TO RECORDS REQUEST FORM