STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

POLICY

APPLICABILITY
PRISON

REVISION DATE 8/10/18
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NUMBER DOC 530.155

TITLE FAMILY COUNCILS

REVIEW/REVISION HISTORY:

Effective: 8/1/15
Revised: 8/10/18

SUMMARY OF REVISION/REVIEW:

Major changes. Read carefully!

APPROVED:

Signature on file

STEPHEN SINCLAIR, Secretary
Department of Corrections

7/6/18 Date Signed
REFERENCES:

DOC 100.100 is hereby incorporated into this policy; Records Retention Schedule

POLICY:

I. The Department will maintain family councils to advise, collaborate, problem solve, and partner with the Department and the community to:
   A. Improve communications with the Department,
   B. Create opportunities to strengthen family and community connections,
   C. Improve the quality of life for those incarcerated,
   D. Promote successful reentry,
   E. Provide family input on related policies and operational memorandums, and
   F. Address local and statewide issues/concerns that affect a broad range of incarcerated individuals and their families.

II. Department employees and council members will work together to bring awareness to the family councils and encourage participation.

III. For the purposes of this policy, family is broadly defined to include immediate, extended, and elected family members (e.g., romantic partner, friend, neighbor, clergy).

DIRECTIVE:

I. General Responsibilities
   A. The Department will maintain a Statewide Family Council (SFC).
   B. Each facility will maintain a Local Family Council (LFC) and:
      1. Post this policy in public access areas and in the visit room, and
      2. Maintain a suggestion box in the visit room for submitting agenda items and LFC applications.
   C. Department/facility co-chairs will:
      1. Ensure family council meetings are conducted at least 6 times per year,
         a. When possible, LFC meetings should not conflict with SFC meetings or local special events held at the facility.
b. Meetings will be held on a weekend day to provide maximum opportunities for families to participate, preferably every other month.

1) LFCs may change a meeting to a weekday if the majority of family members will be more available and a vote has passed supporting it.

2) LFC family members will be allowed to visit their loved one on the same day as a meeting, even when it is not a designated visit day/time for the incarcerated individual.

3) If an SFC family member misses a visit with their loved one to attend an SFC meeting, s/he will receive a make-up session during a regular visit session at the facility.

2. Ensure meeting dates and times are scheduled and posted for a year by October 31\(^{st}\) on the Family & Friends page of the Department’s website,

   a. LFC schedules will also be posted on the facility’s website and in public access areas and visit rooms.

   b. Meeting schedules cannot be changed unless there is a facility/statewide emergency.

      1) Family members will be notified as soon as possible.

      2) If an LFC meeting is cancelled, the co-chairs will determine if a make-up meeting will be scheduled.

3. Ensure approved meeting minutes are distributed to council members and posted within 10 days of finalization on the Family & Friends page of the Department’s website, and

   a. LFC minutes will also be posted on the facility’s website and in public access areas and visit rooms.

   b. Approved meeting minutes will be retained per the Records Retention Schedule.

4. Attend all meetings when possible.

   a. The Superintendent will attend LFC meetings at least 3 times a year. If the Superintendent is unable to attend a meeting,
following will be designated to attend, but will not apply to the yearly attendance requirement:

1) An Associate Superintendent for Level 3 or higher facilities.
2) The Correctional Program Manager or Lieutenant at a Level 2 stand-alone facility.

D. Each Superintendent will define and provide facility tours for LFC members 2 times a year. Tours will not substitute for an LFC meeting.

E. Anyone attending a family council meeting will work within Department rules, regulations, and policies.

F. Family council members will demonstrate commitment, integrity, honesty, good judgment, cooperation, professionalism, respect, and courtesy.

II. General Requirements

A. Participation in the family councils is encouraged, though strictly voluntary for all, except designated employees.

B. Each elected family council officer will serve for a term of one year, though officers may be reelected to serve up to 3 consecutive terms on the same council.

1. If a term cannot be completed, an election will be held to fill the position for the unexpired term.

2. Family council members may serve in more than one position.

C. Council members cannot be voted off the council by another council member(s).

D. Attendees may participate and provide input during a family council meeting, but only council members have voting privileges.

1. Department/facility co-chairs will not vote.

E. Council participants will not represent the family council, in writing or verbally, without an approved motion from the majority of the council members.

F. Department/facility co-chairs may request the removal of any member for unprofessional or disruptive behavior which directly interferes with legitimate family council business.
III. Local Family Councils (LFCs)

A. LFCs will consist of:

1. The following 5 council officers, and
   a. The Superintendent as the facility co-chair
   b. A family co-chair elected by majority vote
   c. A facility secretary appointed by the facility co-chair
   d. A family secretary elected by majority vote
   e. An SFC council member elected by majority vote

2. Approved family members with an incarcerated loved one housed at the facility.
   a. Family members who wish to join the LFC as council members will complete DOC 03-512 Local Family Council Application and submit it to an LFC officer or place it in the suggestion box at the facility.

   1) The application will be reviewed by the facility co-chair, who will ensure the family member is an approved visitor in good standing with the facility.

   2) Approved applicants will be added to the LFC distribution list and notified of LFC processes and the date, time, and location of the next LFC meeting.

   3) If a family council member’s incarcerated loved one transfers to another facility, s/he may contact an SFC co-chair to request transfer to the receiving facility’s LFC. The co-chair will notify one of the receiving LFC’s co-chairs to add the family member to their council for the remainder of his/her commitment.

      a) The family member is not required to submit a new application.

   4) The Superintendent may remove any family member who is not an approved visitor in good standing.

B. Elections will be conducted each year to elect officers by majority vote of the LFC members present or participating by phone.

1. Members participating by phone will use the conference call number provided by the facility.
C. LFC officers will assist in recruitment efforts to increase participation on the council.

D. The co-chairs will facilitate LFC meetings and should work to maintain a balance of family and Department participants.

1. If the family co-chair is not available, the family secretary will serve as acting family co-chair and will appoint an acting family secretary for the meeting.

2. The facility co-chair will ensure conference call capabilities are set up so long distance LFC members can participate in meetings.

3. The following are encouraged to attend and participate in LFC meetings:
   a. Any approved visitor that visits at the facility.
   b. Department representatives should include:
      1) The Visit Sergeant
      2) The Community Partnership Program Coordinator (CPPC)
      3) The Family Services Specialist assigned to the facility
      4) Other Department employees, contract staff, or volunteers needed to address a specific agenda item(s)
   c. With Superintendent approval, an incarcerated individual may attend and participate as a representative of the population.

4. Each meeting will follow an agenda developed and mutually agreed upon by the co-chairs and published 2 weeks before the meeting.

   a. Suggested agenda topics may be placed in the suggestion box provided in the visit room.

   b. LFC officers will compile and submit agenda items to the co-chairs, who will develop the agenda.

   c. The agenda will be limited to issues/concerns that impact a broad range of incarcerated individuals housed at the facility and their families.

   d. Emergent items may be added to the agenda as needed.

   e. The family secretary will track agenda and action items on DOC 03-514 Family Council Action Items. During the meeting, s/he will
provide a review of the previous meeting’s minutes, and agenda and action items that have not been resolved.

5. The facility and family secretaries will each take minutes during the meeting, then will work together to finalize a single draft on DOC 03-513 Family Council Meeting Minutes.

a. The draft will be submitted to the co-chairs for review and approval within 7 days after the meeting.

IV. Statewide Family Council (SFC)

A. SFCs will consist of:

1. The following 3 council officers, and

   a. A Prisons manager designated by the Assistant Secretary for Prisons as the Department co-chair
   b. A family co-chair elected by majority vote
   c. A council secretary elected by majority vote

2. An elected representative from each LFC.

   a. Elected LFC representatives driving more than 120 miles roundtrip to attend a meeting may request mileage reimbursement on A19-1A State of Washington Invoice Voucher. Requestors must provide supporting documentation and meet requirements to receive reimbursement.

B. Elections will be conducted every September by majority vote of SFC members present at the election. SFC members may vote via email within one day of the election if unable to attend.

   1. Candidates will be given the opportunity to make a statement to the SFC before the election is conducted.

C. The co-chairs will facilitate SFC meetings.

   1. If the Department co-chair is not available, another Prisons Division manager will be designated as co-chair for the meeting.

   2. If the family co-chair is not available, the council secretary will serve as acting family co-chair and will appoint an acting council secretary for the meeting.
3. The following are encouraged to attend and participate in SFC meetings:
   a. Any member of the public.
   b. Department representatives should include, based on the agenda:
      1) A Community Corrections Division representative
      2) A Reentry Division representative
      3) A Family Services Specialist assigned to the facility
      4) Other Department employees, contract staff, or volunteers needed to address a specific agenda item(s)
      5) A Visit Sergeant(s)

      a) Each Superintendent will ensure the Visit Sergeant at his/her facility attends an SFC meeting at least once every 2 years per a schedule provided by the Department co-chair.

4. Each meeting will follow an agenda developed and mutually agreed upon by the co-chairs.
   a. SFC officers will work with SFC members to identify and submit agenda items. The agenda will focus on statewide concerns/issues.

   b. The council secretary will track agenda items and action items on DOC 03-514 Family Council Action Items. During the meeting, s/he will provide a review of previous agenda and action items that have not been resolved.

5. The council secretary will take minutes during the meeting and provide a review of the previous meeting’s approved minutes.
   a. Draft minutes will be submitted to the co-chairs for review and approval on DOC 03-513 Family Council Meeting Minutes within 7 days after the meeting.

D. Focus groups may be created through the SFC to provide in-depth study of a concern or issue.
   1. A focus group will consist of SFC and LFC members to include a Department and a family co-facilitator.

   2. The focus group will provide written recommendations/results to the SFC upon conclusion of the focus group’s work.
DEFINITIONS:

Words/terms appearing in this policy may be defined in the glossary section of the Policy Manual.

ATTACHMENTS:

None

DOC FORMS:

- DOC 03-512 Local Family Council Application
- DOC 03-513 Family Council Meeting Minutes
- DOC 03-514 Family Council Action Items