

# WASHINGTON COUNTIES RISK POOL

2558 R.W. Johnson Road SW, Suite 106  
Olympia, WA 98512-6103

Created by Counties for Counties



## WCRP PoolCast

TOPIC: Member Spotlight: Public Records Consolidation & Training

DISCUSSION DATE: December 10, 2020

*Special guest, Kelly Gonzalez, Public Records Officer for Clallam County, answered questions about the streamlined public records and training process she presented. [Click here to check out the presentation.](#)*

### 1. How much time is set aside for training/questions?

- a. The Clallam County Public Records Office provides four types of public records trainings:
  - i. PRS refresher trainings (two 60-minute trainings per year)
    - Due to COVID-19 Pandemic we offered PRSs 10 virtual PRA refresher classes throughout 2020
    - Mandatory for all PRSs to attend at least one refresher
  - ii. Department All Staff meetings (offer 20-minute introductions to department directors monthly/bimonthly)
  - iii. New Hire Orientations (15-20 minutes per week)
  - iv. HR's Annual Online Required Trainings also include a Public Records Act training and a Records Management training

### 2. Do you do a full group orientation or just individual trainings as people are hired?

- a. HR schedules new hire orientations weekly – normally on the employee's first day – two to five people is the norm.

### 3. How many lawsuits have you had over PR since implementing this?

- a. No lawsuits – yet. However, should a lawsuit be filed, we are prepared to defend our process. However, we never stop looking for ways to improve our processes.

### 4. How do you follow up with employees who “mess up” or go about the process incorrectly? Is there follow up training?

- a. One-on-one reminders
- b. Annual PRA training of PRSs
- c. Ask to attend department All Staff meetings to go over our public records process

# WASHINGTON COUNTIES RISK POOL

2558 R.W. Johnson Road SW, Suite 106  
Olympia, WA 98512-6103

*Created by Counties for Counties*



- 5. Do you get legal advice from in-house council or do you have an attorney on call? If on call, what is the cost?**
  - a. Clallam County Deputy Prosecuting Attorney, Elizabeth Stanley, acts as legal counsel for the Public Records Office (PRO) as part of her assigned duties.
  
- 6. How long does it take to submit JLARC since you are the only record keepers?**
  - a. Clallam County uses GovQA software to process all public records requests. GovQA has been a great partner and has provided updated tools for tracking most of the necessary metrics needed for the annual JLARC report.
  - b. A quick audit/review of the request log report takes place before end of year to edit/correct data: approximately 4-10 hours
  - c. GovQA Report provides data for most of the metrics. I perform spot checks and double check data that looks irregular: approximately 8-16 hours
  
- 7. How did you set up Adobe Redaction? Do you have information you could share on this?**
  - a. Our office uses Adobe Overlay Text for redacting, marking each redaction with a code. We then provide the requester with a master exemption key, along with the responsive records at the time they are released. The requester then can match the key code shown on the record(s) to the master exemption key that is provided to them at the time the records are released. The master exemption key summarizes the exemptions – it is then provided to the requester with the responsive records. This system shows the redactions and explains how the exemption(s) applies to the redacted text in a clear manner.
  - b. Legal Counsel compiled the master exemption key and made a template to explain the process.
  - c. In my experience, this was the best way to track and communicate with requesters. This system clearly communicates what was redacted and the reason(s) for redaction.
  - d. During my employment at the City of Seattle, many Public Records Officers used Adobe Overlay Text for redacting, along with a master exemption key.
  
- 8. How do you follow up with individuals regarding retention? Don't employees just keep or delete everything?**
  - a. Each Clallam County Department has one or two Public Records Specialists (PRSs). The PRSs act as the go-to person for their department's records. They are

# WASHINGTON COUNTIES RISK POOL

2558 R.W. Johnson Road SW, Suite 106  
Olympia, WA 98512-6103

*Created by Counties for Counties*



our department “records experts” and provide direction to department employees.

- b. During new hire orientation, I provide them with the name of the department PRS and direct them to reach out to them first for specific records retention questions. I also let them know they can contact our office with questions as well.

**9. What would you say is the benefit to in house training versus the free online training from the Attorney General’s website?**

- a. In-house (Zoom and in-person) classes provide
  - i. Personalized/team building instruction (name to face)
  - ii. Covers not only information on the PRA and what is legally required in Washington State, but also includes Clallam County’s administrative policies, PRS responsibilities, our internal records request process, and records retention guidance for specific county records
  - iii. Able to have your question answered during or directly after the presentation – and learn from other staff questions