

Policy

Policy: The formal guidance needed to coordinate and execute activity throughout the organization. When effectively deployed, policy statements help focus attention and resources on high priority issues - aligning and merging efforts to achieve the organizational vision. Policy provides the operational framework within which the organization functions.

A policy is a guiding principle used to set direction in an organization. It can be a course of action to guide and influence decisions. It should be used as a guide to decision making under a given set of circumstances within the framework of objectives, goals and management philosophies as determined by senior management.

Procedure

Procedures: The operational processes required to implement organizational policy. Operating practices can be formal or informal, specific to a department or applicable across the entire organization. If policy is "what" the organization does operationally, then its procedures are "how" it intends to carry out those operating policy expressions.

A procedure is a **particular way of accomplishing something**. It should be designed as a series of steps to be followed as a consistent and repetitive approach or cycle to accomplish an end result. Once complete, you will have a set of established methods for conducting the business of your organization.

Distinguishing Characteristics

The distinctions commonly drawn between policy and procedures can be subtle, depending upon the nature of the organization and the level of operations being described in the statements. Nevertheless, there are common characteristics that can help discern policy from procedures (or the practices used to implement policy). Here they are:

Policy

- Widespread application
- Changes less frequently
- Usually expressed in broad terms
- Statements of "what" and/or "why"
- Answers major operational issue(s)

Procedures

- Narrow application
- Prone to change
- Often stated in detail
- Statements of "how," "when" and/or and sometimes "who" sometimes "who"
- Describes process

Application to Councils

The DD Act indicates Council's should abide by State and Federal laws. In the case of human resource matters, the DD Act references application of State laws and personnel policies.

The DD Act provides clear language on matters of the **budget** and indicates allowable expenditures for a number of items "as determined in Council policy" (Section 125(c)(8)(ii)(I-IV)

The reference to Council policy is specific to the following items:

- "Reimbursing members of the Council for reasonable and necessary expenses..."
- "Paying a stipend to a Council member if they are not employed or must forfeit wages..."
- "Supporting Council member and staff travel to authorized training and technical assistance activities including in-service training and leadership development activities"
- "Carrying out appropriate subcontracting activities"

Typically, Council staff is in a position to ensure procedures are in concert with all applicable State laws, policies and procedures specific to the Council's Designated State Agency. As a reminder, the procedures should detail the process of policy implementation.

Note: Policies and procedures should be written in easy to understand language so that all Council members can access the information.