

BEFORE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF COWLITZ COUNTY, WA

In the Matter of Establishing an Artificial Intelligence Policy for Cowlitz County)
Intelligence Policy for Cowlitz County) Resolution No. 26-021
)

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners finds it necessary to establish a formal policy governing the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) within County operations to ensure ethical, transparent, accountable, and responsible implementation of such technologies; and;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED by the Board of County Commissioners that the Information Technology IT Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy is hereby established and adopted, to be effective immediately upon adoption as set forth below:

EFFECTIVE this 28th day of April, 2026.

Attest:

Signed by:

Kelly Grayson

AG359B2400C0492...

Clerk of the Board

Signed by:


BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF COWLITZ COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Signed by:

Richard Dahl

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Richard R. Dahl, Chair

Signed by:

Steve Rader

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Steve Rader, Commissioner

Signed by:

Steven L Ferrell

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Steve Ferrell, Commissioners

COWLITZ COUNTY POLICY

Policy – IT Use of Artificial Intelligence in Cowlitz County

1. Purpose

Recognizing the use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) has the potential to transform government business, changing how county employees perform their work, with both positive and negative impacts, the County adopts specific guidelines for its use to ensure ethical, transparent, accountable and responsible implementation of this technology. These guidelines outline best practices for all Cowlitz County employees' use of AI, or any subsets of AI, to maximize the benefits while addressing ethical, privacy, and security concerns. Because AI technology is continually changing and advancing, these guidelines will be reviewed and updated to address any emerging technologies, challenges, and use concerns.

2. Scope

These guidelines are applicable to all departments, offices, employees, volunteers, and contractors of Cowlitz County who use AI technologies.

3. Approval Process

All AI systems other than those approved by the IT Department shall be submitted for review by the IT Department for approval. Once a specific system is approved, it will be added to the IT approved applications list for use County wide. All guidelines for use will continue to apply to approved AI systems.

4. Authorized Use

County personnel may only use AI for approved business-related purposes, from County approved devices, using IT approved AI software.

Usage of any technology, including generative AI systems, to perform malicious or inappropriate actions, or to generate malicious, inappropriate, or illegal material is strictly prohibited. Any attempt to circumvent blocks placed to dissuade illegal and or inappropriate activity will be assumed to be an attempt to generate inappropriate and or illegal content. Intentional misuse may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Intentional misuse may also result in civil and/or criminal penalties.

5. Privacy

AI systems should use only public data. Utilizing sensitive data, personally identifiable information (PII), criminal justice information (CJI), or protected health information (PHI) is prohibited. The County official implementing AI technology is responsible for verifying the AI system only has access to approved data and only data necessary to fulfil the desired objectives for use.

6. Transparency

Employees will disclose the use of AI in business processes to all involved parties. If the AI system is to be used in a customer facing feature, a notice will be displayed. For documents, AI-generated content will be labeled with a statement or watermark to distinguish it from human-created material. All AI-generated content shall be reviewed by a human for accuracy and to ensure data requirements are not violated.

7. Security

The Cowlitz County IT team will conduct a risk assessment in accordance with County Policy. At a minimum, risk assessments will ensure AI systems are limited to handling public data, and employ multi-factor authentication (MFA) if available to enhance account security when using third-party systems. The IT team will periodically conduct checks of all AI systems authorized on the County's IT network to ensure all standards are maintained.

8. Oversight

Humans must maintain control in critical decision-making processes. Because AI-generated content is produced through complex algorithms, the risk of incomplete or inaccurate information is real. No decision-making process will be fully automated and based solely on AI outputs.

All AI users have the responsibility to verify the accuracy of information acquired or produced through the use of generative AI before using that information in any final or published document. All AI-generated content shall be reviewed for relevance to the identified business purpose and as otherwise outlined in this guideline. Users shall proofread and edit all generative-AI outputs and fact-check citations to ensure accuracy. Users must independently verify any AI generated quotes or references. Do not assume that a quote or reference is accurate, or real.

9. Discrimination Protection

Acknowledge that biases and errors can occur in non-human created content just like human-created content. Without proper configurations, inputs or training, AI systems might use language that is discriminatory according to Cowlitz County policies. AI systems will be designed and used with the intention of preventing all forms of discrimination. To ensure discriminating language is not generated, AI generated outputs will be reviewed and approved by a human prior to release.

10. Compliance

Content produced by Generative AI systems may implicate intellectual property rights and may include copyrighted material. AI systems may be "trained" using Data (text, images, etc.) that has been sourced from the internet without regard for copyright or licensing terms. It is extremely difficult to determine what content was used to train an AI system, and difficult to verify whether AI-generated content is wholly original or only a slight stylization of existing copyrighted material. Nevertheless, County employees are required to perform due diligence to ensure that no copyrighted material is published by the County without proper attribution or without obtaining proper rights. County employees who choose to utilize AI shall ensure AI-generated content complies with all legal requirements and does not infringe upon copyrights or intellectual property rights. County employees will stay updated on potential legislation or regulatory

oversight that may impact the use of AI systems and their business processes. When in doubt of AI generated outputs, departments and offices will seek legal review.

11. Public Records

Using a generative AI system may result in creating a public record under Washington state's Public Records Act, Chapter 42.56 RCW. All County employees using generative AI systems must do so consistent with the Cowlitz County Public Records Policy and the Cowlitz County Records Management Policy. County employees who use generative AI systems are required to be able to retrieve upon request, records of inputs, prompts, and outputs in a manner consistent with the aforementioned county policies. Generative AI systems or platforms shall not be used as recordkeeping repositories. Generative AI systems or platforms are not designed for efficient and effective record keeping. Therefore, users shall not rely on generative AI to fulfill Cowlitz County's records retention requirements.