DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

POLICY DRAFTING CHECKLIST

September 2024

This checklist will help you remember to check all the key features of your policy. Not every item will be relevant to every policy, but all should be considered.

Policy Number: _____

HEADER (NUMBER, TITLE, AND DATES)

- ☐ Does the title reflect the scope of the policy?
- ☐ Is it brief and understandable?
- ☐ Is it in section of the manual where users will look for it?

PURPOSE

- ☐ Does this statement explain why we need the policy?
- ☐ Is it clear and concise?
- ☐ Is it brief?
- ☐ Does it articulate the goal of the policy?
- ☐ Is it consistent with the agency's mission & values?
- ☐ Does it contain procedures? If yes, move to procedures.

APPLICABILITY

- ☐ Does it identify all impacted parties – those who will implement and those who will be affected? (e.g., all facilities; juvenile residents; incarcerated people; all staff, volunteers, and contractors; or health services staff). Note: "Resident" is any juvenile incarcerated/detained at a correctional facility.

DEFINITIONS

- ☐ Does this section include only uncommon terms used repeatedly in the policy?
- ☐ Will users know what the terms mean? If yes, no need to define.
- ☐ Are they listed in alphabetical order?
- ☐ Are terms defined in other policies? If yes, cross-reference or use same definition; don't make up another one.
- ☐ Does it include acronyms? If yes, delete and include acronym after the first use of the full phrase.
- ☐ Have you done a "find/replace" check in policy to ensure defined term is still used?

PROCEDURES

- ☐ Do they include only mandatory steps necessary to implement policy?
- ☐ Are they organized logically - chronologically or categorically?
- ☐ Do they tell the user basic steps to accomplish the purpose but not every detail (e.g. click here, fill in blank)?
- ☐ Do any of them involve steps beyond the scope of the policy?
- ☐ Do procedures offer the greatest amount of autonomy or access to benefits/privileges while taking into consideration reasons for limitations? Restrictions should exist only when there is a mandatory or compelling reason.
- ☐ Are any groups excluded? If yes, review for reducing this negative impact and, if it must stay, be prepared to explain the exclusion with strong justification.
- ☐ Do they create successful experiences for people?

☐ Do they refer to other policies? If yes, include cross references. (e.g., kite or grievance policy)?
☐ Are there any external references that users can refer to? If yes, include links.
☐ Do they include references to who prepares documentation and when?

INTERNAL CONTROLS

☐ Does this section identify any documents created to demonstrate compliance with the policy?
☐ Do they identify who maintains the documents and where/how?

REFERENCES

☐ Are statutes/regulations which guide/govern the policy referenced?
☐ Are relevant policies and other state or federal laws or rules cross-referenced (Minn. Stat., Minn. Rules, OSHA, PREA, ADA, union labor agreements, other MN agency procedures/forms)?
☐ Are relevant Security Audit Standards referenced?
☐ Does reference content align with statements made in policy? If no, revise policy. If conflicts exist between policies, coordinate with other chair.
☐ Are all of the references up-to-date?

REPLACES

☐ Does it identify the version of policy this revision is replacing?

ATTACHMENTS

☐ Are there forms or other documents referred to in the procedures that users need to access?
☐ Can they be accessed through a link to a location in iShare or other electronic location? If no, is the most recent version attached? Is it in MS Word '97-2003 format for inclusion in the manual?
☐ Is it a form available elsewhere in print and only a sample is being attached? If yes, include SAMPLE watermark.

INPUT

Have you sought input from:
☐ Drafting committee?
☐ Impacted facility policy coordinators, business units, and union representatives?
☐ Agency ACA/internal controls coordinator?
☐ Interested/impacted outside parties?
☐ Be sure to provide these individuals at least a two week response time.

APPROVALS

☐ Obtained by policy staff from appropriate assistant and deputy commissioners.

INSTRUCTIONS (Questions to consider in eliminating instructions.) Policy chairs must work with facility policy coordinators to **absorb and delete** instruction content.

☐ Do they repeat procedures? If yes, delete.
☐ Do they contradict policy? If yes, resolve and delete.
☐ Can the information be characterized in a more general way and be included in procedures?
☐ Does the user really need the information?
☐ Can the information be provided in some other place?

CLEAR, CONCISE LANGUAGE/STYLE

☐ Did you use short, easy-to-read sentences that describe what actions are required?
☐ Did you put the key message for each sub-section first and then explain the steps?
☐ Did you group like ideas together and use headings to help a user navigate through procedures?
☐ Did you use plural nouns or repetition of the noun to avoid gender-specific pronouns?
☐ Did you use the same terms used for the same concepts consistently throughout the policy?

☐ Did you avoid using jargon and write out words before using acronyms?
☐ Does it conform to the *Chicago Manual of Style*? See general tips on the Policy Style Guide.
☐ Did you increase Flesch Reading Ease, reduce Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level, and reduce passive sentence use?