

# GENERAL GOVERNMENT

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The General Government section includes the budgets for the County Executive, who has county-wide responsibility for day-to-day operations; the County Council, which is the County’s policy making body; and the departments of the Assessor/Treasurer, and Auditor, who are elected officials under the Executive. It also includes several other departmental budgets whose activities are of a general government nature.

## MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2011

The **Assessor-Treasurer Office** has embraced a number of new technologies and processes designed to increase the efficiency and productivity from field and office staff. We continually seek new ways to streamline processes, maximize productivity, make the best use of technology, and improve customer service.

In 2011 over 30 new tablet PCs were configured and deployed to the field appraisal staff. These new tablets perform significantly faster than the models they replaced. An application was created for use by all the commercial appraisers to reduce the time it takes to create their response to commercial appeals. The Department’s electronic file storage was successfully migrated from Novell to Windows File System. This provides a more cost effective storage solution that is easier to maintain.

We conducted 63,356 residential and commercial physical inspections in 2011, and at the end of the 2011 revaluation cycle, approximately 63% of Pierce County had been lawfully inspected. Also, as of December 1, 2011, 25,678 residential physical inspections were conducted and 71% of Pierce County has been lawfully inspected for the 2012 revaluation cycle.

The Office holds training workshops and post educational material on our website to help improve our customers’ understanding of mandated processes.

We continue to provide outstanding levels of customer service in person or via telephone, or via electronic media. In the first nine months of 2011, our administrative section provided direct assistance to more than 71,000 customers.

The **Auditor’s Office** saw significant achievements in 2011 across all four divisions. In Elections, 100% of candidate filings and Voters’ Pamphlet statements were submitted online. We have increased accuracy and reduced staff labor.

For the second year in a row, we not only met but exceeded the federal MOVE Act standards for military voters.

We designed, manufactured, and installed 26 ballot drop boxes. The sites, which are extremely popular, were used by nearly 39% of our voters in the Primary Election and 48% of our voters in the General Election. We expect this trend to continue.

Despite a budget reduction we smoothly transitioned 17% of Pierce County voters from poll voting to Vote-By-Mail (HB 2154). We saw voter turnout increase during our first two Vote-By-Mail elections, turnout was up 8% in the Primary and 6% in the General Election, when compared to the 2009 Primary and General Elections. Other initiatives to increase voter accessibility include the implementation of Voting Centers strategically located

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homes for these large animals. Taking the animals to a livestock auction is counterproductive. We have learned that hoarders “shop” at the sale yard and this creates a vicious cycle.

Animal Control moved to a new CALi Web application for calls in 2011. CALi Web greatly improved and streamlined data entry and access for field staff. Enhancements were also made in call management and statistics.

We continue to do more with less. Over the past two budget cycles, the Auditor’s Office has reduced its management staff, reallocating resources to preserve customer service and front line staff.

We continue to optimize processes. In 2011 we focused on systems documentation through Policies, Procedures, and Tasks. We participated in the Executive’s 2011 Initiative to develop a Balance Scorecard Performance Management process and we concurrently wrote the Auditor’s Office Strategic Plan.

The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) awarded Pierce County the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for 2010 Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports. The **Budget and Finance Accounting Division** has achieved this distinction for Pierce County’s annual financial report for 28 consecutive years. The GFOA also awarded the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award to the **Budget Division** for the 24th consecutive year.

The DOLFIN (Distributed On Line Financial System) application was enhanced to accept interface files with Accounts Receivable invoices from other systems. The application was also enhanced to automate interest charges on selected invoices. The custom built DOLFIN application is a joint effort of the Budget and Finance and Information Technology Departments.

A new application called PC Records was deployed to assist Pierce County departments with preparation of records retention schedules. PC Records is a single repository with each record series published by the State of Washington in the Local Government Records Retention Schedules. The data is also augmented with details specific to the County. The Pierce County Records Committee, Budget and Finance, and Information Technology staff collaborated on the design and development of the custom application.

The **Revenue Division** implemented the investment management portion of the debt/investment management system.

The **Purchasing Division** co-hosted the Third Annual Greater Pierce County Purchasing Forum. Nearly 200 Pierce County businesses came to learn how to do business with local governments.

**Fleet Rental** continued to progress toward the goal of having 50% of general purpose vehicles be hybrid, electric, and/or alternative fuel vehicles by 2015. At the end of 2011, 21% met that criteria including three all electric, zero emissions cars. The Fleet Rental Fund also installed three charging stations to support the new electric vehicles.

**General Services** processed over 4,000 records request; managed a records inventory exceeding 45,000 boxes; processed 1,300 print orders resulting in nearly 4,500,000 print pieces; and processed over 1,800,000 pieces of mail.

The **Communications Department** assisted in public outreach for a number of projects, issues, and events involving public safety, customer service, and recreation.

Communications staff developed a presentation that was delivered to more than 50 community groups about the goals of South Sound 911. The public learned about the state of the current patchwork system of frequencies and dispatch centers used by first responders.

The Communications Department assists County agencies in a variety of ways. In 2011, that included assisting Parks and Recreation with announcements about the temporary closure of Sprinker Recreation Center's ice rink for a renovation, the Office of Sustainability's successes in reducing the county's energy consumption, and



roof, but Executive McCarthy's team came up with an affordable solution that will keep the popular ice rink open for decades.

The Executive also pressed for a solution to the conflict over the proposed Orton Junction development near Sumner. When it appeared that the developer, farmland preservationists, and the City of Sumner were at a stalemate, Executive McCarthy asked the Cascade Land Conservancy to intervene. The resulting agreement will provide for services and jobs while permanently protecting hundreds of acres of farmland and creating a "green wall" to curb further growth in the valley.

Other highlights from the Executive's Office include joining with regional partners to address traffic congestion and other growth issues around Joint Base Lewis-McChord, working with the United States Golf association on preparations for the 2015 US Open at Chambers Bay, reducing energy consumption in County buildings, and negotiating the sale of a vacant County building in Lakewood to a church that will convert the property into a community center.

The **Human Resources Department** continues to streamline and consolidate the Salary Classification Plan as a part of the scheduled compensation maintenance review. HR has increased its sustainability efforts through enhancements to the online application and screening process which realized an increase from 85% to 92%.

Labor Relations assisted departments with eighty disciplinary actions, handled sixteen grievances, conducted twenty workplace investigations, and negotiated the resolution of two Unfair Labor Practice charges. Labor Relations negotiated no COLA and the rollover of 15 collective bargaining units for 2012 and handled 48 ADA reasonable accommodations and 14 EEO complaints.

Civil Service conducted 12 recruitments and 17 examinations for open competitive positions, and five promotional recruitments with four promotional examinations. The staff worked with Sheriff's Department, Auditor's Office, and Community Connections to transfer four classifications and 11 positions into the Civil Service system as a result of transferring the positions to the Sheriff's Department.

ODT trained 2,765 County employees and conducted 146 classes for a total of 6,497 participant training hours. 26 training sessions were conducted for external agencies, producing approximately \$5,200 in revenue for the County. There were four new agencies added to the TRAIN Consortium in 2011 ODT co-sponsored the annual TRAIN Support Staff Conference, with over 400 attendees.

The **Risk Management Department** worked with the Budget and Finance Department to create consistent tracking of monies owed to Pierce County through the Self Insurance and Workers' Compensation funds. Risk Management also participated in a project with our Excess Workers' Compensation insurance carrier to ensure Pierce County is following recommended best practices. Through negotiations and stable loss experience, we were able to renew a majority of our insurance policies within the amounts forecasted and budgeted. As of November 16, 2011, our Department has collected over \$250,000 in subrogation and recovery payments for damages to County property.

Pierce County completed its first year of providing a **Self Insured Medical Program** and will be continuing to self insure for 2012.

To improve efficiency, provide better service to the injured employees and assist in controlling costs, through our Third Party Administrator (TPA), we changed **Workers' Compensation** prescription vendors. In working with the Budget and Finance Department and our Workers' Compensation TPA, we streamlined the workers compensation check writing process. The checking account responsibilities have been transferred to our TPA.



# ASSESSOR/TREASURER

## General Fund

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*The mission of the Pierce County Assessor/Treasurer's Office is to administer our duties in a manner that assures public confidence in our accuracy, productivity, and fairness, while ensuring all property subject to taxation is valued in accordance with state law.*

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**DEPARTMENTAL SUMMARY:** We perform the following major functions to fulfill our mission:

Discover, list, and value uniformly all taxable and non-taxable property in Pierce County.

Determine proper legal class for properties based on the current use of the property.

Comply with the legal requirements for processing assessment appeals and comply with physical inspections in a lawful, timely manner.

Determine the eligibility for property tax exemptions, senior freezes, and other taxpayer programs.

Provide current assessment-related information to the community and to government agencies.

Work to improve the Washington State property tax laws to ensure that all property subject to taxation is valued in accordance with fair and just state laws.

Provide taxpayers with assistance and records information in a timely manner.

Maintain accurate and up-to-date mapping of real property parcels.

Complete the levy process as mandated by state statute for all Pierce County taxing districts and calculate and certify rates on time and without error.

Ensure the accurate billing of taxes used to fund essential government services.

Our office staff will treat everyone with respect, compassion, and dignity and will always be guided by the principles of fairness and honesty.

Delivering excellence in public service is our goal. We work for you, the taxpayer.

**BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS:** The 2012 Assessor/Treasurer's proposed budget is 1.1% above 2011, and reflects inflationary increases for staff and operations. The proposed budget also includes \$148,770 in furlough/salary savings for the coming year, as well as a savings of \$3,800 associated with the elimination of elected official COLA's.

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### PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- 1) Guarantee the equitable and uniform treatment of all taxpayers by maintaining strict accordance to all applicable statutes and regulations, and successfully completing all the scheduled annual physical inspections as required by RCW 84.41.030. <sup>(Pierce County Goal D)</sup>
- 2) Continue to seek efficiencies and quality improvement at every stage of our processes; all the while ensuring total operating costs do not exceed 1% of property tax billings. <sup>(Pierce County Goal A)</sup>
- 3) Place all discoverable real property "new construction" value on the rolls by





<b>STAFFING SUMMARY</b>						
	<b>2007 FTE</b>	<b>2008 FTE</b>	<b>2009 FTE</b>	<b>2010 FTE</b>	<b>2011 FTE</b>	<b>2012 FTE</b>
Assessor/Treasurer	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Deputy Assessor/Treasurer	1.00	—	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Comptr Sys Businss Analyst	—	—	—	3.00	3.00	3.00
Dept Comptr Support Spec	—	—	—	2.00	2.00	2.00
Administrative Officer	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Appraiser	36.00	36.00	35.75	33.60	33.60	33.60
GIS Specialist	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Accounting Assistant	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Levy Specialist	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Office Assistant	29.30	29.60	28.60	26.10	26.10	26.10
Segregator Technician	3.00	3.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Asst to Assessor/Treasurer	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
GIS Cartographer	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
Dept Info Tech Spec	7.00	7.00	6.00	—	—	—
Project Analyst	1.00	1.00	1.00	—	—	—
Administrative Assistant	1.00	1.00	—	—	—	—
Appraisal Assistant	1.00	1.00	—	—	—	—
<b>Total</b>	<b>91.30</b>	<b>90.60</b>	<b>86.35</b>	<b>76.70</b>	<b>76.70</b>	<b>76.70</b>

























































































































