**INFORMATION GOVERNANCE FOR GOVERNMENT**

**Executive Summary**

The state of Washington and its agencies have been serving citizens for over 100 years, fulfilling the role and responsibilities of government in providing services and resources to the public. State agencies are increasingly relying on massive amounts of information and records to fulfill these services, and the volume, velocity, and variety of this information is increasing exponentially.

Similarly, the general public’s interest in government has increased, frequently requiring additional resources to meet agencies responsibilities under Washington’s commitment to transparency and governmental openness. Just like in the corporate world, few are actively managing this information. Information Governance is a strategy agencies can use to actively attack this issue.

***So what is Information Governance (IG)?* Information governance**, or **IG**, is the set of multi-disciplinary structures, policies, procedures, processes and controls implemented to manage information at an enterprise level, supporting an organization's immediate and future regulatory, legal, risk, environmental and operational requirements.

IG encompasses more than traditional records management. It incorporates privacy attributes, electronic discovery requirements, storage optimization, and metadata management.

It is about enabling users to help them do a better job and be more productive. It is about improving business processes and information management strategies.

***IG is also about managing risk.*** Public agencies need to meet the demands for an open and transparent government and the state’s commitment for the public to be informed and allowed access to public records. Agencies also are obligated to protect public records from damage and disorganization, and to manage records and information in a way that supports efficient business processes and legal obligations, often in an uncertain fiscal climate.

IG is a holistic, collaborative approach to managing an agency’s records and information. It involves the following “information” disciplines within an organization that historically have functioned separately:

**Business units/lines of business** *(services, processes, procedures, doing business)*

**Records management** (*organization, retention and disposition of records)*

**IS/IT management** *(hardware, software, devices, integration)*

**Security** *(protection of information and systems)*

**Legal** *(including public disclosure, litigation hold and other legal obligations)*

**Risk management** *(liability, potential loss)*

**Principles of Information Governance**

Information governance is an accountability framework for the management of an agency’s informational assets that includes valuation, creation, storage, use, archiving and deletion of information, as appropriate, and to support compliance and best practices.

IG fosters informed and coordinated decision-making for the greater good of the agency and addresses operational usefulness and business value as well as public records requirements. Other areas of focus for IG decision-making include security and data protection, risk management, solid business practices, efficient processes and obligations to the public such as access, disclosure, transparency and accountability.

All records created, received, maintained or used in the conduct of public business (regardless of format or storage mechanism) should be governed by consistent IG policies, strategies and procedures that support best practices, optimize operational and institutional value, and meet compliance

IG supports the users’ experience by providing effective processes and systems that optimize an employee’s time and effort to improve and enhance business efficiency and customer service.

A successful IG program requires agencies to educate, train and inform all employees regarding their IG roles, duties and responsibilities, as well as enforce agency-wide compliance and performance standards.

**Why IG? Why Now?**

For those agencies seeking to regain control over their electronic records and information, IG offers a roadmap and a framework. For those agencies looking for tools, guidance and resources to get a handle on their information assets, IG and this initiative prepares a path. With this initiative, agencies will have what they need to begin the IG journey within their own organizations, eventually achieving the benefits IG can deliver through much hard work, teamwork, planning and preparation.

