



Employee News

www.islandcountywa.gov

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A Big Chill

Road crews clear hundreds of miles to keep motorists safe

Island County Public Works crews hit the roads during January's winter blast to keep the community – and their coworkers – safe.

The cold weather event was an especially challenging example of their good skills put to important use, according to Esco Bell, the director for Public Works.

There was a major change in the weather pattern during the middle of January from the pattern that dominated most of December, according to the National Weather Service. The month began with above-normal temperatures over most areas. Then there was an arctic intrusion that began the 11th and persisted about a week.

"Temperatures hovered at or a



bit below freezing for several days and conditions were slippery and variable, freezing rain, ice, heavy snow and rain on snow," Bell said.

From Jan. 17 through 19, crews worked long hours operating the county's 23 snowplows and sanders to clear hundreds of miles of roads on Whidbey and Camano islands, according to Bell.

"When the snow was falling and ice began forming, crews focused on the most essential routes first until they made good headway," Bell said. "Then secondary routes and local access roads were included in the full-out effort."

Great job, Island County road crews. Your hard work is important and greatly appreciated.

Tell us how this newsletter can be improved

Please send your comments, suggestions and ideas for future news items to Keven Graves at k.graves@islandcountywa.gov

HIRES, RETIRES & MILESTONES

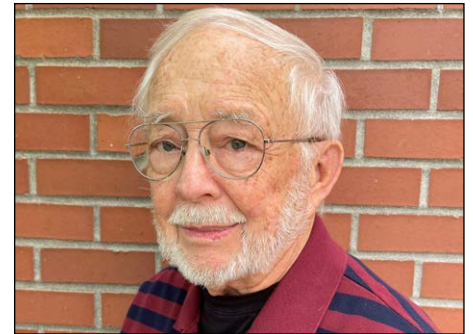
New Employees

The following were hired by Island County between December 2023 and February 2024:

Department	Name	Position
Budget & Risk:	Cody Bakken	ARPA Broadband Coordinator
Budget & Risk:	Monika Paquette	Budget Analyst
District Court:	Peggy Schneider	Court Clerk
Facilities:	Magen Gregory	Office Manager II
Human Services:	Timarah Bass	Case Manager
Human Services:	Yvonne De La Rosa	Housing Navigator
Human Services:	Laurel Johnson	Opioid Outreach
Human Services:	Amber Nichols	Outreach Behavioral Counselor
Human Services:	Crystal Tovar	Outreach Parent Support
Human Services:	Jana Warner	Accounting Coordinator
Information Tech.:	Megan Broadie	GIS Manager
Planning/Comm Dev:	Yumi Shridhar	Current Use Planner
Planning/Comm Dev:	Maria Strohschien	Planning Coordinator
Public Health:	Sarah Lisenko	Office Manager II
Public Health:	Brook Peplinski	Accounting Coordinator
Public Works:	Chloe Ammons	Parks Technician
Public Works:	Melissa Clark	Solid Waste Attendant
Public Works:	Zachary Dirig	Laborer I
Public Works:	Christopher Goodnight	Parks Technician
Public Works:	Thomas Taylor	Laborer I
Sheriff's Office:	Sage Sharp	Control Room Operator
Sheriff's Office:	James (Dylan) Shipley	Animal Control Officer
Superior Court Clerk:	Bethany Bertram	Deputy Clerk
Superior Court Clerk:	Susan Wilmoth	Deputy Clerk
Superior Court:	Cheryl Duncan	VGAL Program Coordinator
Superior Court:	Paul Johnson	Juvenile Detention Officer
Superior Court:	Madison Latimer	Juvenile Detention Officer
Superior Court:	Melissa Lievanos	Juvenile Probation Officer
Superior Court:	Raven Webster	Juvenile Detention Officer
Treasurer's Office:	Yaylen Steinhauer	Treasury Accountant

Retirements

The following employees have announced their plans to retire:



John Kent Director of IT

John Kent is retiring after 10 years with Island County. His last day is scheduled for April 1.

Eric Mendenhall Plans Examiner/Building Inspector

Eric Mendenhall is retiring after 1 year and two months with Island County. His last day is scheduled for April.

- We thank both John and Eric for their years of service.

Service Awards

30 Years

Sheriff's Office: Shawn Warwick
Sheriff's Office: Robert Davison

25 years

Superior Court: Chris Cram

20 years

Superior Court: Christine Holbrook

10 years

Assessor: Matthew Chidsey
Facilities: Howard Reed Jr.
HR/GSA: Catherine Reid
Sheriff's Office: Bo Miller

5 years

District Court: Norma Allain
Public Health: Clea Barenburg
Public Health: Christina Pilgeram
Public Works: Michael Ledgerwood
Sheriff's Office: Tanner Copeland
Sheriff's Office: Julia Rosenberg
Sheriff's Office: Evan Tingstad



Employee Spotlight

Diane Haddon
Engineering Tech

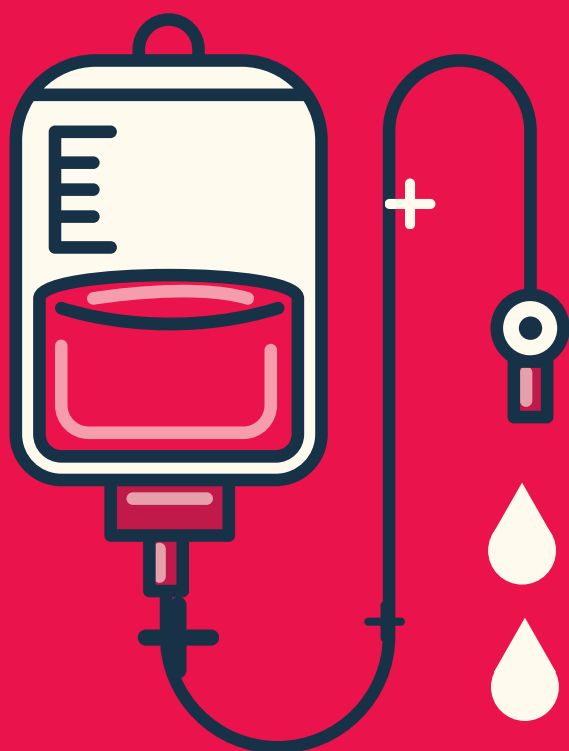
Diane is highly valued by her coworkers at Island County Public Works for lifting office morale with her interactive trivia questions and riddles. Her positive attitude and positive nature are appreciated by both her supervisor and peers.



+DONATE+ +BLOOD+



Sign Up to Support Our Local Blood Supply, **SAVE LIVES**



Show How Much Island County Cares!

Bloodworks Northwest
needs a minimum of 25 people
to commit **NOW** to schedule a
blood drive at the Island County
Campus in May.



Scan QR Code for information
to determine your eligibility
and for guidelines on how to
prepare to give blood.



→ Email Lynette Goodell l.goodell@islandcountywa.gov
now to register, or call her at 360-679-7373.

+ Each Donation Can Save TWO Lives.
Let's Save 50 or more! +



In addition to coming across some spectacular views, Island County employees who take part in the Amazing Race each year stand to gain some significant health benefits.

Win health benefits by taking part in the Amazing Race

The Amazing Race is a summer-long activity that Island County Employee Wellness has organized for years. It usually starts off on the summer solstice with the kickoff event being the Solstice Walk.

The event enables employees to form teams to participate in the hiking “race.”

In 2023, the Amazing Race kickoff was held in downtown Coupeville. Participants walked in a loop that started at the historic Coupeville Wharf, continued through Town Park and then onto Coveland Street.

Three options for hikes were offered every 10 to 14 days and points are awarded according to how many hikes each employee participates in before summer’s end.

To earn points, team captains email a photo of the team taken during the hike to the Wellness Committee coordinator.

Among the trails hiked by employees last summer were ones at Ebey’s Landing National Historical Reserve, Camano Island State Park, Double Bluff Beach in Freeland, Joseph Whidbey State Park on North Whidbey,

and Meerkerk Gardens in Greenbank.

Many of the hikes were inspired by the book “Hiking Close to Home,” written by Whidbey Island’s Maribeth Crandell with Jack Hartt, a former manager for Deception Pass State Park.

At the end of each summer, a drawing is for prizes for Amazing Race participants. Prizes in the past have included hiking poles, an insulated tumbler, and Blue Fox tickets.

In addition to the physical health benefits for the participants, the Amazing Race encourages healthy social interaction and friendship by encouraging employees to hike with a team. There is a slight point incentive for larger teams, especially if that team includes other coworkers.

“I encourage all employees to go explore the hiking trails in Island County and the surrounding region any time of year,” said Public Health Coordinator Liz Dickman.

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You don't have to leave Whidbey or Camano islands in order to find some great places to walk, as Jenna Miller, a civil paralegal in the Prosecuting Attorney's Office, has learned.

AMAZING RACE: Get out, get walking, get healthier

Continued from page 4

"Walking and trail running, like other forms of exercise have many health benefits like reducing your risk of dying of coronary heart disease or developing colon cancer, diabetes and high blood pressure."

"Walking regularly helps relieve pain from arthritis, maintains healthy bones, muscles and joints and helps control weight, it also reduces symptoms of anxiety and depression," she said.

"Walking can diminish the need for insulin or help reverse type II diabetes along with a healthy diet and weight loss," she added."

The rate of diabetes has increased dramatically for

Americans over the past 40 years, caused in part by more people who are obese and a lack of physical activity, she noted.

Hiking is a weight-bearing exercise – meaning your own body is the weight. For people with osteoporosis, walking regularly has been shown to strengthen bone density and slow the loss of calcium in bones, thus decreasing how susceptible bones are to breaking.

- To sign up for this year's Amazing Race or participate on the Wellness Committee, contact Lindsey Hilton in HR at lc.hylton@islandcountywa.gov or call 360-678-7991. Learn more about the health benefits and reduced risk of certain diseases at [Health Benefits of Hiking - American Hiking Society](#).



The Amazing Race encourages healthy social interaction and friendship by encouraging employees to hike with a team

During March, focus on ladder safety, tsunami awareness, patient safety

During the month of March, the Island County Employee Safety Committee will be focusing on the following:

- **National Ladder Safety Month;**
- **National Tsunami Awareness Week** (March 24-30), and;
- **Patient Safety Awareness Week** (March 10-16)

Island County Safety Coordinator Lynette Goodell typically obtains or creates posters that are provided to committee members to install on the safety bulletin boards. Keep an eye out for these important safety messages.

The Safety Committee's employee web page on the intranet will be updated and revamped for launch this year.

Did you know ...

As part of Island County's Safety Orientation Training, it is mandatory that each new employee complete the FEMA Active Shooter training within the first 30 days of employment.

The training is a required prerequisite to additional training provided by a partnership between the Island County Department of Emergency Management and the Island County Sheriff's office.

You can download or print out the [Immediate Threat](#)



[Checklist](#) and post in your office for quick reference.

• For more information about employee safety or the Employee Safety Committee, contact Lynette at 360-679-7373 or email her at L.Goodell@islandcountywa.gov

IC Coroner's Office putting in work toward accreditation

The Island County Coroner's Office has embarked on the process of gaining accreditation, a requirement in Washington under state law.

All coroner and medical examiner offices in Washington state must be accredited by July 1, 2025, according to Island County Coroner Shantel Porter.

"Being accredited simply means that we as a department are meeting or exceeding the required standards set in place by our state and are being held accountable," she said.

"Additionally, we are educated and qualified to do our jobs," Porter explained. "By completing the process, the community can rest assured we are following the rules and regulations set in place by our state."

The accreditation process has nearly 300 requirements and consists of such things as medicolegal office practices, space and equipment, policy and procedures, annual reporting, training and safety, investigative practices, mass fatality planning, documentation, forensic autopsy procedures and more.

"A third party evaluates our department ensuring we are practicing within the standards set in place," Porter said.

"The Island County Coroner's Office consists of two individuals, me and my Chief Deputy Coroner Danalee Norris," Porter said. "Together we have been working hard, completing tasks, and checking them off the list."



Porter



Norris



The Camano Island open house on the Island Comprehensive Plan Update, top photo, drew 60 attendees. During February, a total of 200 people attended the four open houses that were held on Camano and Whidbey island. Many from the public shared their comments and ideas during the events.

Comp Plan open houses draw 200

Island County Planning held four open houses on the Comprehensive Plan update during February that drew 200 people and resulted in the gathering of valuable input from the public.

Planners reported that there was great turnout and lots of productive conversations between the staff and public.

The open houses were “interactive sessions” during which the public could chat with staff from different departments at posters that outlined what each element included and mandatory state updates. There were also multiple activities where participants could state their values and what is important to them.

Sixty people attended the Camano Island open house, 115 were at the South Whidbey open house, 50 at the open house on Central Whidbey and 35 at the North Whidbey event.

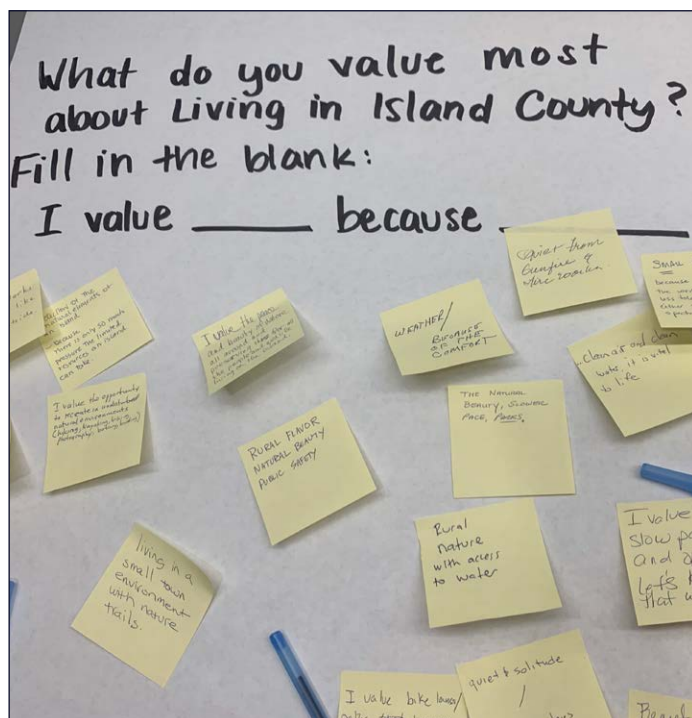
Under state law, Island County’s periodic update to its comprehensive plan must be completed by June 30, 2025.

Complete survey on Comp Plan update

■ Island County employees are encouraged to help Planning staff in gathering feedback for the Comprehensive Plan Update by completing and submitting a brief [Online Survey](#).

Throughout the process of updating the comprehensive plan, the public will be encouraged to participate and help shape growth in the county over the next 20 years.

Additional opportunities for community input will be scheduled.



GET TO KNOW YOUR BENEFITS

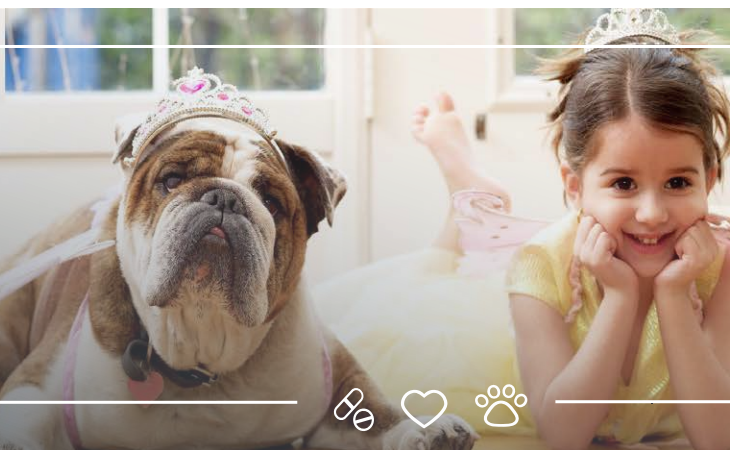


Frequently Asked Questions



If he's always
down to play
dress up,

he deserves to be insured.



Whether playing the role of sidekick, copilot, or closet companion, pets make our family complete. Help protect them when the unexpected occurs with MetLife Pet Insurance.¹

Q. What is Pet Insurance?

A. Similar to health insurance for you and your family, Pet Insurance is coverage for dogs and cats that can help you be prepared for unexpected vet costs.

Q. Why MetLife Pet Insurance?¹

A. With MetLife, pet parents have the power of choice to customize their Pet Insurance to meet their needs. You can take advantage of benefits like:

- flexible coverage with up to 100% reimbursement²
- the freedom to visit any U.S. vet
- optional Preventive Care coverage³
- 24/7 access to Telehealth Concierge Services
- discounts and offers on pet care⁴
- MetLife Pet mobile app makes it easy to submit and track claims and manage your pet's health and wellness.

Q. How does MetLife Pet Insurance¹ work?

A. Our process is simple and straightforward. Take your pet to the vet and pay the bill, then send your claim documents to us. You can file by using our mobile app, online portal, email, fax or mail, and we'll process your claim within 10 days.⁵ Then, you'll receive reimbursement² by check or direct deposit if the claim expense is covered under the policy.

Q. When does coverage start?

A. MetLife Pet Insurance¹ provides among the shortest wait periods for accident and illness coverage.⁶ Accident coverage and optional Preventive Care coverage begin on the effective date of your policy. Illness coverage begins 14 days later.



Pet parents spend nearly \$4,500 a year on annual care.⁷

Get a quote by visiting:
metlifepetinsurance.com/WCIF

Call 1-800-GET-MET8

Island County employees are eligible to receive a MetLife Pet Insurance discount by using the code "WCIF".
Contact [Lindsey Hylton in Human Resources](#) for more information



GET TO KNOW YOUR BENEFITS

Pet Insurance

Pet Insurance can help reimburse you for covered unexpected veterinary expenses for your pet.

Q. What does it cover?

A. Coverage⁸ includes:

- accidental injuries
- illnesses
- exam fees
- surgeries
- medications
- ultrasounds
- hospital stays
- X-rays and diagnostic tests

And our coverage⁸ also includes:

- hip dysplasia
- hereditary conditions
- congenital conditions
- holistic care
- chronic conditions
- alternative therapies
- and much more!

Q. What does it not cover?

A. Pre-existing conditions may not be covered — to learn more about what's not covered, visit metlifepetinsurance.com/coverage-exclusions.

Q. Can I still use my vet?

A. You can visit any U.S. licensed vet, emergency clinic or specialist and you and your veterinarian of choice can determine the best treatment plan and medical course of action for your pet. Once you've received and paid your bill, send it to us and we will process your claim for reimbursement² if the claim expense is covered under the policy.

Q. How much Pet Insurance do I need?

A. We believe that every individual and their pet have unique needs. Hence, we provide the ability to customize your coverage. Coverage is flexible and customizable so that you can choose the plan that works for you. Options include:

- levels of coverage from **\$500–unlimited**⁹
- **\$0–\$2,500** deductible options¹⁰
- reimbursement percentages from **50%–100%**²

Q. How much will it cost?

A. Each pet's premium will be unique based on the age, breed, location, as well as what coverage amount you select.¹¹ Plus, if you go claim-free in a policy year, we'll automatically decrease your deductible by \$25 or \$50.¹²

Q. Are there any discounts?

A. Yes, a variety of discounts are available, including:

- Employer Benefit Discount¹³
- Internet Purchase Discount¹⁴
- Military, Veteran & First Responder Discount¹⁵
- Healthcare Workers Discount¹⁶
- Animal Care Discount¹⁷

B. How do I pay for my coverage?

A. You can set up an automatic payment via credit card through the online portal or call center. ACH - electronic bank-to-bank payment is available exclusively in our call center.

Q. How does the MetLife Pet mobile app work?

A. When you download our app, you can manage your Pet Insurance account from anywhere.

Plus, we make it easy to:

- Submit and track claims
- Manage your pet's health records
- Talk to an expert with 24/7 Telehealth Concierge Services
- Find nearby pet services

B. Is my coverage portable if I leave my employer?

A. Yes. You can take your policy with you. If your employer was deducting premiums, you will now be responsible for paying them directly to MetLife Pet Insurance.¹ Also, if you receive a group discount due to signing up for Pet Insurance through your employer, that discount will not carry over into your next policy renewal.

1. Pet Insurance offered by MetLife Pet Insurance Solutions LLC is underwritten by Independence American Insurance Company ("IAIC"), a Delaware insurance company, headquartered at 485 Madison Avenue, NY, NY 10022, and Metropolitan General Insurance Company ("MetGen"), a Rhode Island insurance company, headquartered at 700 Quaker Lane, Warwick, RI 02886, in those states where MetGen's policies are available. MetLife Pet Insurance Solutions LLC is the policy administrator authorized by IAIC and MetGen to offer and administer pet insurance policies. MetLife Pet Insurance Solutions LLC was previously known as PetFirst Healthcare, LLC and in some states continues to operate under that name pending approval of its application for a name change. The entity may operate under an alternate, assumed, and/or fictitious name in certain jurisdictions as approved, including MetLife Pet Insurance Services LLC (New York and Minnesota), MetLife Pet Insurance Solutions Agency LLC (Illinois), and such other alternate, assumed, or fictitious names approved by certain jurisdictions.

2. Reimbursement options include: 70%, 80%, 90% and 100%. In addition, there is also a 50% option for MetGen underwritten policies only and a 65% option for IAIC underwritten policies only.

3. Can be purchased at an additional cost. For IAIC underwritten policies, optional Preventive Care coverage is based on a Schedule of Benefits. For MetGen underwritten policies, optional Preventive Care coverage is included in the annual limit.

4. May not be available in all states.

5. Approximately 80% of claims are processed within 10 days or less.

6. Based on a January 2022 review of publicly available summary information about competitors' offerings. Competitors did not furnish copies of their policies for review. If you have questions about a particular competitor's policy or coverage, please contact them or their representative directly.

7. 2021 internal survey conducted by OnePoll in partnership with MetLife Pet Insurance.

8. Provided all terms of the policy are met. Application is subject to underwriting review and approval. Like most insurance policies, insurance policies issued by IAIC and MetGen contain certain deductibles, co-insurance, exclusions, exceptions, reductions, limitations, and terms for keeping them in force. For costs, complete details of coverage and exclusions, and a listing of approved states, please contact MetLife Pet Insurance Solutions LLC.

9. Annual limit options range from \$1,000 to \$25,000 in \$1,000 increments. In addition, there is also a \$500 annual limit option for MetGen underwritten policies. Unlimited benefit option subject to availability.

10. Deductible options range include: \$0 - \$750 in \$50 increments and \$1,000, \$1,250, \$1,500, \$2,000 and \$2,500.

11. For IAIC underwritten policies only, premium will also be based upon the pet's gender.

12. Your pet's deductible automatically decreases by \$25 (for IAIC underwritten policies) or \$50 (for MetGen underwritten policies) each policy year that you don't receive a claim reimbursement. May not be available in all states.

13. This discount is not available in MN or TN. This discount is only available to individuals who are eligible members or employees of an entity that has arranged for MetLife to offer pet insurance to its population (For IAIC underwritten policies, the discount is 10% for Groups > 1000 lives and 5% for Groups 51-999 lives. For MetGen underwritten policies, this discount is 10% for Employer Groups of all sizes and 5% for Associations of all sizes).

14. When coverage is purchased on-line, a premium discount will apply during the first year of the policy.

15. For MetGen underwritten policies, a discount is available to serving and retired members of the Armed Forces & First Responders. Discount may not be available in all states.

16. For MetGen underwritten policies, a discount is available to active healthcare workers.

17. A discount is applicable to staff/owners of animal care facilities.



Take the Community Health Assessment

Help to inform the next five years of local public health

The Island County Public Health team recognizes the importance of checking in and asking the people who we serve, “How are you doing?” and, “How is your community doing?”

The 2023-24 [Community Health Assessment](#) helps to answer those questions, and much more.

Public Health is asking coworkers across Island County to complete the confidential survey and share what is most important to you and your own health, the health of your family and friends, and the health of the county as a whole.

The survey only takes just 5-10 minutes to complete and will help Island County Public Health better understand how all islanders are doing.

The results of the survey will identify areas needing improvement and set a path towards creating a healthier community for all.

The survey includes questions about quality of life, access to health care, how people get health-related information, and what are some of the barriers to good health in our county.

“The more people we hear from, the more complete our picture will be of how Island County community members are doing,” said Taylor Lawson, assessment supervisor for Public Health.

The results of this survey will go into the Community Health Assessment report, which will be published in July 2024.

The report is distributed widely throughout the county. It is used by

community leaders, agency directors and staff, service providers, and community groups to help make informed decisions about what health needs exist in our community and what work needs to be done, according to Lawson.

Your voice and experience will inform the next five years of local public health services in your community.

The survey is available in English, Spanish, and Tagalog by clicking the “English” drop-down menu on the survey page.

To access the [survey page](#), click on the link, or copy and paste the following into your search bar: <https://www.islandcountywa.gov/792/2023-24-Community-Health-Assessment-CHA>.

ISLAND COUNTY EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

You may apply online by clicking on the job title you are interested in and clicking on the “Apply” link. Instructions on each screen will guide you through the process. For the most current job postings, visit the [Island County website](#).

JOB TITLE	DEPARTMENT	CLOSING DATE
• Chief Civil Deputy Prosecuting Attorney	Prosecuting Attorney	Open until filled
• Code Enforcement Officer	Planning and Community Development	3/1/2024
• Entry Level Corrections Deputy	Sheriff	Open until filled
• Entry Level Patrol Deputy	Sheriff	Open until filled
• Environmental Health Specialist - On-Site Program	Public Health	Open until filled
• Juvenile Detention Officer	Superior Court	2/29/2024
• Lateral Corrections	Deputy Sheriff	Open until filled
• Lateral Entry Patrol Deputy	Sheriff	Open until filled
• Night Custodian	Facilities	3/12/2024
• Payroll Administrator	Auditor	Open until filled

Island County is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate on the basis of political affiliation, age (40 or over), sex, marital status, sexual orientation, race, creed, national origin, honorably discharged veteran or military status, or the presence of any sensory, mental or physical disability or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a disability, unless based upon a bona fide occupational qualification: PROVIDED, that the prohibition against discrimination because of such disability shall not apply if the particular disability prevents the proper performance of the particular worker involved.