



High School Home Care Aide Training Course

RESOURCE GUIDE



Washington State Department of Social and Health Services
Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

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Introduction

This guide is intended to provide information about the High School (HS) Home Care Aide (HCA) training course, including the program components, resources, and answer frequently asked questions.

The HS HCA training course was developed in partnership between the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to prepare students for certification and employment as an HCA in Washington State.

The program aligns with State Superintendent Chris Reykdal's vision to provide options for the diverse students of Washington State and encourages them to follow their own path. The strength of our communities depends on a strong workforce with wide-ranging opportunities for every type of career seeker. As high school juniors and seniors explore career pathways outside of the traditional higher education track, many find the long-term care profession a good fit. Graduates will be trained to provide quality care to older adults and adults with disabilities in need of qualified caregivers. There are many employment opportunities for certified HCAs due to the growing number of people needing assistance.

This is an excellent entry point into the health care field for students. The past few years have highlighted the importance and contribution of long-term care workers more than ever. HCAs provide essential and meaningful care that makes a positive difference in the lives of people who need their skill, compassion, and courage!

By offering the HS HCA course at your school, you will make a difference to students, their families, and those who need care throughout our communities.

Course Objectives

The course objectives are to prepare students to:

- Earn high school credit while completing HCA training.
- Apply for HCA certification through the Department of Health (DOH).
- Pass the HCA certification knowledge and skills examinations.¹
- Work as an HCA².

¹ See [WAC 246-980-100](#). Exams are administered/proctored by Prometric.

² Must pass a background check. See [RCW 74.39A.056](#). Some providers and settings have age requirements. To work as a caregiver in an Adult Family Home or as an Individual Provider (IP), individuals must be 18 or older. See [WAC 388-115-0510](#) and [WAC 388-76-10135](#).

Course Description

The course content is derived from the DSHS-approved HCA curriculum and OSPI Career and Technical Education (CTE) [program standards](#). Using the academic foundation of medical terminology, knowledge of the life sciences, and the DSHS curriculum, students will demonstrate technical skill competency in caregiving situations.

The National Health Science Standards are integrated into the 90-hour framework, including academic foundations, communications, systems, safety, and employability skills. The foundation standards for Health Science are critical competencies that students pursuing any health care career pathway should exhibit to be successful.

For a secondary high school program, the recommended sequence of courses may include Introduction to Health Science, Medical Terminology, and Human Body Systems (Anatomy & Physiology). While these courses are recommended to help students build a foundation for a career in the health care industry, they are not a requirement of participation in the program.

Once students display evidence of competency in a classroom laboratory setting, they will participate in an extended learning experience.

We recommend students enter the course as juniors or seniors. While there is no minimum age to take the training or certification exams, some work settings have age requirements.

Structure

The CTE framework model³ is for a 90-hour CTE course. However, your school can be flexible in how and when the course is offered. For example, the 90-hour framework could be completed in one or two terms, offered as an after- or summer-school course, or a senior capstone project. Your school might also find that a 90-hour framework is not the best fit and consider other ideas.

Your program must be approved by both DSHS and OSPI. In addition to the approved CTE framework, the instructor and training program must be approved by and contracted with DSHS. DSHS and OSPI are eager to work with schools and support creativity in course models while maintaining state training requirements.

CTE Framework

Create your own CTE learning plans and schedule using the framework model and the [Fundamentals of Caregiving, 3rd Edition \(FOC\)](#) curriculum. The FOC is a DSHS-approved curriculum for HCA training, which meets the Washington Administrative Code (WAC) for HCA basic training core competencies⁴.

Before submitting your framework for OSPI approval, complete the Leadership Alignment, Performance Assessment, and Academic Standards sections. Content and time may be added but not removed. In the list of modules below, units marked with an asterisk (*) must meet the hours listed. These hours reflect department requirements. The hours for the remaining units are suggestions in alignment with the FOC Facilitator's Guide. Flexibility is provided within the framework for Tribes to include Traditional practices and values.

³ Available by contacting carly.seagren@dshs.wa.gov or cte@k12.wa.us and on OSPI's website. Confirm you are using the most current version.

⁴ See [WAC 388-112A-0310](#).

Modules

Students must complete the 75-hour DSHS HCA training to be eligible for the exams and certification.⁵ This includes all topics of the 90-hour high school course **except**:

- Introduction to Health Careers
- CPR (required by OSPI for high school graduation) and First Aid⁶
- Food Worker card⁷
- Extended Learning

Modules	Hours
*These units must meet the hours listed.	
Welcome and Introductions	1
Introduction to Health Careers	2
Caring for Others: A Person-Centered Model	4
Communication	3
Orientation (Certificate)*	2
Safety (Certificate)*	7 (Safety Certificate: 3*)
Clients and Their Rights	4
The Caregiver Role – Basic Job Responsibilities	4
Infection Control and Prevention	4
Mobility	3
Skin and Body Care	4
Nutrition and Food Handling	4
Toileting	3
Nurse Delegations and Medications	4
Self-Care for Caregivers	2
Dementia (Specialty Certificate)*	8
Mental Health (Specialty Certificate)*	8
Extended Learning	7
Skills Practice*	16

⁵ See [RCW 18.88B.031](#).

⁶ Included in the Safety module. Must be taught by a qualified CPR/First Aid instructor.

⁷ Included in the Nutrition and Meal Preparation module.

Extended Learning

Once students display evidence of competency in a classroom laboratory setting, they will participate in an extended learning experience in a facility environment⁸ appropriate to the HCA role. It is the school's responsibility to create partnerships, set up extended learning opportunities for students, and obtain any necessary agreements/acknowledgements between the school, students/parents, and facilities/sites.

There are many options to fulfill this 7-hour extended learning requirement, including the following.

Instructional facility learning in one or more facilities:

- Adult Family Home (AFH)
- Assisted Living Facility (ALF)
- Other supported residential setting

Shadow an HCA in routine real work setting.

Participate in events that take place in the work setting:

- Visit an AFH and/or ALF to compare and contrast physical setting, number of residents and caregivers, the level of care required by residents, departments within the setting, the feel/culture, etc.
- Observe a planned resident activity (art class, bingo, pet therapy visit, karaoke, etc.).
- Interview a panel of residents.
- Interview a panel of caregivers. Find out why they like their jobs, what challenges they face, etc.
- Practice job interviews with facility hiring managers.
- Join marketing events hosted by the facility.
- Attend job/recruiting events hosted by WorkSource, health care providers, health care associations, or by individual AFHs or ALFs.

Additional practice to increase confidence and competency in skills and knowledge in preparation for the HCA exam.

Practice and demonstrate skills on the [Skills Procedure Checklist](#), as observed and verified by the facility designee.⁹

⁸ Depending on the setting and activity, students may be required to complete a TB test and/or background check. Additionally, proof of Covid-19 vaccination may be required. Please check with the facility.

⁹ Students require supervision by a certified Home Care Aide, Nursing Assistant Certified (NAC), or nurse when practicing and performing a specific skill with a client.

This is a preview. Please contact DSHS Workforce Development High School Liaison at highschoolhca@dshs.wa.gov for the complete Resource Guide.



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