



Administrative Policy No. 18.25

Title: Affirmative Action and Religious Discrimination

Applies To: All Department of Social and Health Services Employees

Authorizing Sources: Presidential Executive Orders [11246 \(as amended\) and 11375](#);
Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) [Title 41, Part 60-2](#);
[Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964](#), as amended;
Equal Employment Opportunity governing guidelines, CFR
Titles [28](#), [29](#), and [43](#);
[Vietnam-Era Veterans Readjustment Act of 1974](#);
RCW [41.06](#) and [49.60](#)
WAC [357-25](#)

Information Contact: Human Resources Division

Effective Date: July 1, 2005

Revised: June 1, 2010

Sunset Review Date: June 1, 2014

Approved By: 
Senior Director, DSHS Human Resources

Purpose:

Equal employment opportunity is the goal, and the affirmative action plan is the vehicle by which the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) fulfills this goal. In an effort to eliminate barriers and improve employment opportunities available to under-represented groups, this policy will be applied to all activities concerning recruitment, hiring, career development, training, promotion, transfer, retention, reclassification, disciplinary actions, termination, reversion and non-permanent appointments.

This policy provides guidance on affirmative action, affirmative action goals, and religious non-discrimination.

Scope:

This policy applies to all employees of the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS).

Policy:

A. Equal Opportunity

1. DSHS is committed to equal employment opportunities for employees without regard to race, color, sex, age, religion, national origin, creed, disability, use of a trained guide dog or service animal by a person with a disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or status as a disabled veteran, Vietnam Era veteran, recently separated veteran, or other protected veteran status.
2. DSHS will provide an environment free from all forms of discrimination in accordance with Chapter 49.60 RCW. Employees shall not engage in any form of racial, religious, or sexual harassment related behavior including jokes, slurs, and innuendoes. This behavior is inappropriate in the work environment and may be grounds for disciplinary action in accordance with any applicable collective bargaining agreement or federal or state law.
3. An employee or job seeker that believes he or she has been discriminated against, within the meaning of this policy, has the right to file an internal complaint with the Investigations Unit of the Human Resources Division. He or she also has the right to file a complaint with the Washington State Human Rights Commission or the Federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

B. Affirmative Action Plan

1. The Diversity Affairs Office creates the Affirmative Action Plan and is responsible for the plan's implementation and enforcement.
2. The Affirmative Action Plan will comply with the requirements set out in chapter 357-25 WAC as well as other applicable state and federal law.
3. The [Affirmative Action Plan](#) may be viewed on the DSHS internet site, on the Diversity Affairs web page. Copies of the plan may be requested by contacting a Diversity Consultant at:

Telephone: (360) 725-5829 or (360) 725-5831

Mail: Department of Social and Health Services
Diversity Affairs Office
Post Office Box 45104
Olympia, WA 98504-5014

4. The Department of Personnel approves and monitors the DSHS Affirmative Action Plan.

C. Responsibilities

Equal employment opportunities and affirmative action are responsibilities that are equally important within all functions of DSHS.

- a. It is the responsibility of each employee to comply with and promote affirmative action and equal opportunity.
- b. Affirmative action and equal opportunity also apply to any contractual agreements entered into by DSHS.

D. Religious Discrimination

1. DSHS will not discriminate against an employee or job seeker because of his or her religion.
2. Religion includes all aspects of religious observances and practices as well as belief. Religious beliefs include moral or ethical beliefs as to what is right and wrong which are sincerely held with the strength of traditional religious views. Social, political, or economic philosophies, as well as mere personal preferences, are not “religious” beliefs.
3. Employees may request an accommodation for their religious beliefs and observances.
 - a. An employee seeking accommodation shall inform his or her appointing authority or designee of the request for an accommodation.
 - b. The appointing authority or designee will consider requests case-by-case, based on the employee’s conflict between his or her religion and work, and the program’s business needs.
 - c. The employee will provide documentation to support their request, if requested by the appointing authority or designee.
 - d. If the appointing authority believes accommodation causes undue hardship on business operations, the request will be reviewed by the Secretary or designee for final determination. The immediate supervisor and requesting employee will receive written notification of the decision.
4. Candidates may request an accommodation of religious beliefs, observances, and/or practices during the examination, interview, or selection processes. Information about the job seeker’s religion gained through this process cannot be used to determine whether to hire the candidate.