

Administrative Policy No 15.18.03

Subject: External Linking Policy for
Internet Websites & Web Applications

Information Contact: Office of Communications and Government Affairs
Web Services Unit
Mailstop 45100
360-902-7829

Authorizing Source: Office of the Secretary

Effective Date: September 3, 2013

Revised: July 5, 2024

Approved By: Original signed by Pearlette J. Ramos
Senior Director, Office of Justice and Civil Rights

Purpose

This policy governs links to external websites from Department of Social and Health Services websites and social media accounts.

Scope

This policy applies to all websites and social media accounts maintained by DSHS and accessible by the general public.

Additional Guidance

[DSHS Administrative Policy 18.64 Standards of Ethical Conduct](#)

[DSHS Administrative Policy 18.68 Employee Participation in Political Activities](#)

[DSHS Administrative Policy 18.91 Use of Resources](#)

[DSHS Administrative Policy 15.24 Social Media](#)

[DSHS Administrative Policy 18.66 Discrimination, Harassment, and other Inappropriate Behaviors](#)

Definitions

External content: Electronic information not maintained by DSHS.

Policy

The state Executive Ethics Board has issued [Advisory Opinion 04-01](#) regarding state agency links to external websites. Unless needed to conduct DSHS business, staff will not place links to sites that:

- Are profane in nature or contain reference to illegal conduct.
- Endorse or oppose political candidates. See also DSHS administrative policy 18.68.
- Take a position on bills under consideration by the legislature that are not officially endorsed by DSHS. See also DSHS administrative policy 1.01.
- Promote discrimination that is prohibited by federal and state laws or departmental policy. See also DSHS administrative policy 18.66
- Endorse businesses or products.

Each DSHS website must contain a disclaimer that tells the user that DSHS will not be held responsible for external content.

Responsibility

- A. The office of communications must maintain a public version of this policy on [the DSHS website](#).
- B. Program staff are responsible for monitoring external links and ensuring compliance with this policy.