



Administrative Policy No. 18.34

Subject: Employee Learning and Development

Information Contact: Human Resources Division

Authorizing Sources: [Chapter 41.06 RCW](#) State Civil Service Law
[Chapter 357-01 WAC](#) Civil Service Rules Definitions
[Chapter 357-34 WAC](#) Employee Training and Development

Effective Date: July 1, 2005

Revised: January 16, 2025 i Housekeeping 6/16/2025 ii Housekeeping 9/5/2025

Approved By: Original approved by Wendy Long
Senior Director, Human Resources Division

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to outline the responsibilities of the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) employees, supervisors, managers, and appointing authorities, as it relates to required trainings and additional activities or developmental opportunities. It is the intent of DSHS to support a culture of learning and professional development.

Scope:

This policy applies to all DSHS employees except where provisions of an applicable collective bargaining agreement ([CBA](#)) may apply differently.

Additional guidance

[DSHS administrative policies](#)

- DSHS administrative policy 5.04 records retention
- DSHS administrative policy 18.13 classification
- DSHS administrative policy 18.37 performance management
- DSHS administrative policy 18.58 Washington management service
- DSHS administrative policy 18.66 harassment, discrimination, and other inappropriate behaviors
- DSHS administrative policy 18.91 use of resources
- [DSHS required training web page](#) (details mandatory training for employees and supervisors)
- [Collective bargaining agreements](#)

[WaTech Accessibility Policy](#)

Definitions:

Access: The ability, freedom, or permission to locate, get, or use information, resources, physical and virtual places, and people.

Accessibility: Being able to interact with products, devices, services, information, or environments in meaningful ways, with equal effectiveness and ease of use, regardless of ability.

Appointing authority: An individual lawfully authorized to appoint, transfer, layoff, reduce, dismiss, suspend, or demote employees. [WAC 357-01-025](#).

Learning and development: The training, resources, activities, and other functions provided by or through DSHS that empower employees in their growth and development of knowledge, skills, and capabilities focused on enhancing competencies and job performance, and developmental opportunities.

Learning and development council (council): A DSHS-wide representative body convened by the Human Resources Division (HRD) consisting of learning and development professionals from all administrations within DSHS that coordinates the development, communication, and delivery of trainings.

Leaders Empowered to Elevate Program (LEEP): A program that creates equitable access to competency-based learning and development opportunities holistically through phases of a leadership career pathway. Completing the required training modules within the emerging and supervisor phases meet the training requirements of both [WAC 357-34-055](#) and [065](#).

Mandatory training: Training that is required because of an agency or state policy; state rule or law; federal policy, rule, or law; or other requirement, such as a legal settlement or licensing requirement.

Washington State learning center ([the learning center](#)): The platform used for creating and distributing online learning experiences, and learning and development at DSHS. In addition to its role as a learning platform, the learning center serves as Washington state and DSHS' official system of record and reporting for employee training management, including active and completed training. The learning center includes access to online training content, registration management for instructor led training activities, and learner training transcripts for DSHS employees, as well as other learners.

Policy:

A. Responsibilities

1. Human resources division (HRD) is responsible for:
 - a. Creating the agency wide learning and development council which coordinates the development, communication, and delivery of DSHS trainings.
 - b. Ensuring all employees have access to DSHS-wide mandatory trainings.
 - c. Ensuring all DSHS-wide mandatory trainings are accessible, such as by leveraging technology, or by providing training in a classroom setting.
 - d. Evaluating DSHS-wide mandatory trainings and activities against the requirements for those mandatory trainings.
 - e. Developing and delivering a DSHS wide [new employee orientation](#).
 - f. Ensuring agency-wide mandatory trainings have been assigned to employees.
2. Appointing authorities or designees must:
 - a. Develop and deliver a new employee orientation relevant to the administration, program, or facility.
 - b. Establish any required program specific trainings to include mandatory and annual trainings.
 - i. Program specific trainings may be substituted for agency-wide trainings if the learning and development council together with subject matter experts complete a review and find the learning outcomes meet the curriculum requirements.
 - c. Provide on-the-job training for employees' success in their career path.
 - d. Monitor each of their employees successful and timely completion of all mandatory learning and development activities in DSHS-wide and program specific trainings.
 - e. Ensure trainings meet the accessibility standards as required by [WATech Accessibility Policy](#).
 - f. Ensure all participation is documented in the learning center.
3. Supervisors and managers must:
 - a. Be proactive in helping employees identify developmental learning opportunities by:
 - i. Assessing each employee's learning and development needs as part of the employee's annual performance review; and
 - ii. Providing coaching and training for the employee's success in their current position.
 - b. Ensure that their employees have completed all assigned mandatory training. Ensure all mandatory training is documented in the learning center.
 - c. Model behaviors by example through participation in learning and development activities.

- d. Mitigate barriers to accessing and completing learning and development opportunities.
 - e. Complete the appropriate LEEP modules.
4. Employees must:
- a. Attend and timely and successfully complete all mandatory trainings; and
 - b. Participate in other learning and development opportunities assigned to them; and
 - c. Participate in the development of the training plan established in the annual performance evaluation through the flexible agency resource management (FARM) system by:
 - i. Informing their supervisor of training or coaching needed for success.
 - ii. Exploring career goals with their supervisor for assistance in creating a development plan that may allow future professional opportunities. (See DSHS administrative policy [18.37](#) performance management, DSHS administrative policy [18.58](#) Washington management service.)
- Note: Employees who notice any errors or discrepancies in their learning center records may contact their local [learning center support team](#) member.

B. Mandatory Training

All DSHS employees are required to attend and successfully complete mandatory training activities. Mandatory training includes, but is not limited to:

- a. Agency-wide mandatory training activities identified on the DSHS human resources website, in the DSHS human resource development plan or in [WAC 357-34-055](#) and [100](#);
- b. Program based training activities; and
- c. Training activities tied to a specific job class or job duties.

C. General training information

The following types of training are considered time worked and compensated as such:

- a. [DSHS-wide mandatory training](#) activities.
- b. Program based mandatory training activities.
- c. Training activities tied to a specific job class or job duties; and
- d. Non-mandatory training activities from which the supervisor or manager believes the employee's performance in current or future positions will benefit.

D. DSHS enterprise related training waver requests

1. Training waiver or exemption requests must be made by an appointing authority or their designee.
2. If granted, the waiver request is only for the specific training requested.
3. For supervisor related training, the waiver or exemption request must meet the waiver requirements for training set forth under [WAC 357-34-075](#), and also include the following:
 - a. Evidence that the individual has taken DSHS specific leadership training within the past five years.
 - b. An assurance that the individual has no pending investigations related to supervisory responsibilities in conflict with DSHS expectations.
 - c. An assurance that the individual has no pending performance issues related to either supervisory responsibilities or DSHS leadership culture.
4. Sexual harassment awareness and prevention training may be waived when a new employee provides proof of attending similar training given by another state agency within five years from their start date with DSHS for employees and three years for supervisors.
 - a. If the sexual harassment awareness and prevention training is waived, the new employee must review DSHS administrative policy [18.66](#) harassment, discrimination, and other inappropriate behaviors; and
 - b. If the sexual harassment awareness and prevention training is waived, the new employee must take the next training, in accordance with [WAC 357-34-110](#).
5. To submit a training waiver or exemption request, the appointing authority or their designee may send the [training waiver request form](#). Please be sure to include:
 - a. The name and employee id of the learner that the request pertains to.
 - b. The names of the training requested to be waived.
 - c. The justification for the waiver.
 - d. The authority that potentially permits the waiver (RCW, WAC, Policy, etc.).

E. Education and training requests and educational leaves of absence

1. The supervisor or manager with designated approval authority must issue a decision whether to approve a request for education or training within 30 calendar days of receiving the request.
2. If a training request is denied, the employee must be provided a written explanation at the same time as the denial notice.

3. An educational leave of absence may be granted under [WAC 357-31-330](#) by the appointing authority when an employee wishes to enhance their education in an area that will enhance the employee's performance in the job, provided:
 - a. The requested leave does not exceed 24 months.
 - b. The employee is enrolled in an accredited educational institution; and
 - c. The employee maintains a satisfactory standing meeting the approved education plan.
4. An employee on educational leave must return to state service within 30 days of completing the course(s) for which leave was taken and show proof of satisfactory completion as originally agreed on with the appointing authority.

F. Tuition reimbursement

1. Appointing authorities may approve full or partial [tuition reimbursement](#), based on available resources within their organization.
2. An employee who wants to receive reimbursement must receive written approval for reimbursement **before** enrolling in the course(s).
3. The appointing authority must inform the employee of the following when initially approving the request for tuition reimbursement:
 - a. The appointing authority's definition of "satisfactory completion". This may include, but is not limited to, a grade or grade point, a completed project, or product that is brought back to the organization.
 - b. Whether the original approving program will still pay the reimbursement if the employee moves to another program or state agency before completing the approved course of study.
4. DSHS employees requesting tuition reimbursement must use the [tuition reimbursement request form](#). Any agreements between the employee and appointing authority must be attached to this form.
5. The employee must provide proof of satisfactory completion of the course(s), based on **F.3.a** above.

G. Developmental opportunities

1. [Developmental job assignments \(DJA\)](#):
 - a. An appointing authority, in consultation with their HRD business partner, approves developmental job assignments using form [03-428 developmental job assignment confirmation](#) for an employee's career development:

- i. The assignment must be in writing, signed by the employee and appointing authority, and placed in the employee's personnel file.
 - ii. The participating employee remains in their permanent position and retains the permanent salary.
 - b. The developmental job assignment (DJA) should last no more than 12 months and must have at least a six-month break before an employee engages in another DJA.
 - c. DJAs may be extended with a written justification.
 - d. DJAs may be full-time or part-time.
 - e. Funding for the DJA is absorbed by the loaning program unless there is a prior agreement.
 - f. A DJA may be terminated by any of the parties with seven days' notice unless a shorter period is agreed upon.
 - g. A DJA may not be used to fill a vacant position.
- 2. In-training plans:
 - a. In-training plans must be submitted to the HRD for approval. An Appointing Authority may request progression or advancement of an existing in-training plan. The appointing authority must submit a request to the HRD classification and compensation unit (CCU), submitted with a FARM action requesting the in-training position, and include the following documents with each request:
 - i. A memo signed by the appointing authority, addressed to the CCU stating the specific requested step. The memo must include the following information:
 - 1. Additional details explaining the rationale for progression.
 - 2. A statement from the appointing authority regarding the employee's satisfactory performance.
 - 3. A copy of the in-training plan showing successful completion of the outlined requirements.
 - iii. Each element of the in-training plan at that level must be met for advancement.
 - iv. The approved memo from CCU must be attached to the FARM action before an HR staff may process the action.

Note: See also DSHS administrative policy 18.13 classification

- 3. An appointing authority or designee may approve other learning and development activities to include but not limited to:
 - a. Mentoring.

- b. Leadership programs.
 - i. In-state attendance at conferences or summits (Note – for out of state conference attendance see DSHS administrative policy [19.10.12](#) general travel provisions;
 - ii. Office of Equity, Diversity, Access, and Inclusion approved trainings or certifications (certified diversity professional or certified diversity executive); or
 - iii. DSHS led trainings and certifications (lean or change management).
- 4. An employee's work status when attending non-mandatory training activity solely at the employee's request is at the discretion of the appointing authority, subject to the appointing authority's budget, and ensuring a fair and unbiased decision-making process is used.

ⁱ Update policy point A.4 adding a note after ii to clarify how employees may request correct of errors in their learning center record.

ⁱⁱ Removed an obsolete link in D.5. to send an email.