

Administrative Policy No. 18.81

Subject: Nondiscrimination in Direct Client Services

Information Contact: Human Resources Division

Authorizing Source: [Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964](#), as amended
[Civil Rights Act of 1991](#)
[Executive Order 89.01](#), Sexual Harassment
[Executive Order 93.07](#), Affirming Commitment to Diversity and Equity in Service Delivery
[Age Discrimination Act of 1975](#), as amended
[President's Executive Order 12250](#)
[Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990](#), as amended
[504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#), as amended
[Food and Nutrition Act of 2008](#)
[Chapter 49.60 RCW](#)

Effective Date: June 16, 2006

Revised: January 27, 2025 ¹ Housekeeping 5/1/2025

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

Purpose

This policy establishes the Department of Social and Health Services' (DSHS) commitment to providing direct services to customers and clients without discrimination.

Scope

This policy applies to all DSHS employees, contractors, volunteers, work study students and interns. This policy also applies to every aspect of the DSHS programs, practices, policies, and activities related to direct service delivery to DSHS customers and clients.

Additional Guidance

Administrative policies:

- 7.02 Equal access to services for individuals with disabilities
- 8.11 Complaint resolution and response standards
- 18.25 Religious accommodation
- 18.64 Standards of ethical conduct
- 18.66 Discrimination, harassment, and other inappropriate behaviors
- 18.67 Workplace and domestic violence/reasonable safety accommodation

18.89 Investigations

18.93 Respectful work environment in the DSHS

20.01 Internal employee work-related civil rights investigations

Definitions

Nondiscrimination: The right to receive services from DSHS in an equitable manner and regardless of whether the person belongs to a protected group as described below.

Policy Requirements

- A. DSHS will provide services regardless of a person's protected group status. Protected group status includes, but is not limited to, age, race, color, creed, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, religion, national origin, honorably discharged veteran or military status, marital status, disability, sex, or any other characteristic that is protected by law.
- B. In addition to the protected group statuses listed above, the Basic Food Program prohibits DSHS and its agents from discriminating against any person because of political beliefs.
- C. Violations of this policy may be reported by anyone in the Human Resources Division (HRD), including using the iraucomplaints@dshs.wa.gov email address or by using any of the following approaches:

DSHS Human Resources Division (HRD) Employee Relations Unit (ERU)

PO Box 45131

Olympia, WA 98504-5105

Fax: (360) 902-7540

800-737-0617 Option 5 ((360) 902-7998) TTY / TDD users dial 711 or 1-800-833-6384 for Washington Relay Service

- D. The HRD employee relations unit (ERU) will assess all complaints received for investigation as outlined in [AP 20.01](#)..
- E. All persons covered by this policy have the right to file discrimination, harassment, and retaliation complaints with outside agencies, including the Washington State Human Rights Commission (WSHRC) and the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). There may also be applicable local laws preventing harassment and county or city agencies that can investigate claims of harassment.

Reports may be made to:

- Washington State Human Rights Commission (WSHRC)
www.hum.wa.gov; 1-800-233-3247
- US Department of Health and Human Services
Department of Health and Human Services | HHS.gov; 1-877-696-6775
- US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)
www.eeoc.gov; 1-800-669-4000, 1-844-234-5122 (ASL Video Phone)

F. All DSHS facilities that provide direct services to clients will post the [nondiscrimination poster](#) (DSHS 24-519) in a location readily available to clients. In addition, the following brochures must be accessible to all DSHS clients:

1. [Nondiscrimination in the Basic Food Program](#) (DSHS 22-552(x))
2. [Nondiscrimination Policy](#) (DSHS 22-171(x))

G. Retaliation is prohibited. Any person who has filed a discrimination complaint or assisted in the investigation of a discrimination complaint, will not be intimidated, threatened, coerced, or discriminated against. Retaliation complaints may be submitted following subsection C of this policy.

¹ Updates reflect changes to laws, DSHS reorganization, and updating links. Ownership changed to HRD effective 5/1/2025.