STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES
Home and Community Living Administration
Residential Care Services • P.O. Box 45600 • Olympia, Washington 98504

May 19, 2026

HCLA: AFH #2026-019
HCLA: ALF #2026-021
HCLA: CCRSS #2026-009
HCLA: ESF #2026-016

Implementation of the HCBS Access Rule Grievance Process and System Requirements

Dear Provider/Administrator:

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services passed the Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Access Rule in May 2024, establishing a new federal requirement for a standardized grievance process and system across all Home and Community-Based Services. These requirements strengthen participant protections and ensure consistent, timely and transparent handling of concerns.

Definition of Grievance
Under the HCBS Access Rule, a grievance is an expression of a concern or dissatisfaction related to a beneficiary's experience with the person-centered planning process, service plan requirements, or Home and Community Based Services setting requirements regardless of whether a remedial action is requested.

HCLA and DDA Implementation Activities
Home and Community Living Administration (HCLA) and the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) are implementing a new grievance system to meet these federal requirements. The system will support standardized intake, routing, tracking, reporting and oversight for all HCBS grievances.

The new grievance system will go live on **July 1, 2026.**

Next Steps
HCLA and DDA will distribute implementation timelines, contract amendments and provider instructions in the coming months.

Your partnership is essential as we implement these new federal requirements.

If you have any questions, please contact the Grievance Systems Program Manager, at grievances@dshs.wa.gov.

Thank you for your continued commitment to the individuals we serve.

Sincerely,

Amy Abbott, Director
Residential Care Services

DSHS: Partnering with People