



Overview

Residential Care Services' (RCS) core mission is to protect the vulnerable in all RCS-regulated settings. The policy unit enables RCS to achieve its mission by providing good stewardship for the regulatory system on which RCS relies. This means the policy unit has the responsibility for careful planning, management, and monitoring of the rules, policies, procedures, and legislation affecting RCS. The policy unit is not the owner of any rule, policy, or procedure, but acts on behalf of RCS leadership, staff, and the public.

The five main functions of the policy unit are:

- Writing rules (WACs) and policies in response to changes in the legal landscape of Washington State, such as new laws, regulations, or RCS business needs and processes.
- Promoting transparency, accountability, and democracy by conducting collaborative stakeholder activities, consensus-building, and other good governance processes.
- Supporting RCS leadership decision making by providing recommendations founded on evidence-based research, consultations, and input from RCS staff and the Assistant Attorney Generals (AAGs), and sound legal and business process analysis.
- Reviewing, analyzing, and drafting legislation that affects RCS regulated settings, including timely responses to the Governor's office, legislators, and public inquiries.
- Providing rule and policy interpretation and advice to RCS leadership, staff, and the public.

The policy unit is comprised of subject matter experts in each of the regulated settings which RCS oversees. However, it is also the responsibility of the policy unit to listen to, understand, and incorporate the advice of the many experts across RCS.

These procedures are in addition to [DSHS Administrative Policies](#), as they are specific to RCS. These procedures will be reviewed for compliance and accuracy at least every five years.

Contacts

- [RCS Policy Unit General Contact](#) (**internal** RCS use)
- RCSPolicy@dshs.wa.gov (**external** RCS use)
- [RCS Quality Improvement Unit General Contact](#)



Table of Contents

Part I: [Rulemaking](#) – Under Construction

A. [General Procedures and Approval to Create](#)

B. [CR-101](#)

C. [Rule Drafting](#)

D. [Analyses](#)

E. [Rule Approval](#)

F. [CR-102](#)

G. [Public Hearing](#)

H. [CR-103P](#)

I. [Implementation](#)

J. [Final Rulemaking File](#)

Part II: [Legislative Session](#) – Under Construction

Part III: [Management Bulletins and Dear Provider Letters](#) – Under Construction

Part IV: [Appendices](#)

A. [Glossary of Terms](#)

B. [Acronym List](#)

C. [Change Log](#)



Part I: Rulemaking – **Under Construction**

- A. General Procedures and Approval to Create
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- F. CR-102
- G. Public Hearing
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Part II: Legislative Session – Under Construction



Part III: Management Bulletins and Dear Provider Letters – Under Construction



Part IV: Appendices

A. Glossary of Terms

Adult Family Home (AFH) – State licensed residential homes to care for two to eight vulnerable adults who may have mental health, dementia, and/or developmental disability/special needs. The homes are private businesses providing each person with a room, meals, laundry, supervision, assistance with activities of daily living, and personal care. Some provide nursing or other special care and services.

Agency – State agency.

Assisted Living Facility (ALF) – State licensed facilities providing basic services assuming general responsibility for the safety and well-being of vulnerable adults. ALFs allow the vulnerable adults to live an independent lifestyle in a community setting while receiving necessary services from a qualified workforce. ALFs can vary in size and ownership from a family-operated 7-bed facility to a corporation-based facility with 150+ beds. ALFs may provide intermittent nursing services or serve vulnerable adults with mental health needs, developmental disabilities, or dementia.

Certified Community Residential Services and Supports (CCRSS) – Includes Supported Living (SL), Group Homes (GH), and Group Training Homes (GTH). These are residential services provided to individuals who are eligible clients of the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA). Supported living clients are vulnerable adults living in their own homes in the community. The client or legal representative owns, rents, or leases the home.

Department – This term refers to the Washington state Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS).

Enhanced Services Facilities (ESF) – means a facility that provides support and services to persons for whom acute inpatient treatment is not medically necessary. [RCW 70.97.010](#).

Intermediate Care Facilities for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities (ICF/IID) – The Social Security Act created this optional Medicaid benefit to fund “institutions” (four or more beds) for individuals with intellectual disabilities. The Secretary defines this as providing “active treatment.”

Long-term care facility – As defined in [RCW 70.129.010\(3\)](#).

Nursing facility (NF) – a nursing home, or any portion of a hospital, veterans' home, or residential habilitation center, that is certified to provide nursing services to Medicaid recipients under [section 1919\(a\) of the federal Social Security Act](#). All beds in a nursing facility are certified to provide Medicaid services, even though one or more of the beds are also certified to provide Medicare skilled nursing facility services.

Nursing home (NH) – A term that can include both 24-hour Skilled Nursing Facilities (SNF) and Nursing Facilities (NF). SNFs are those that participate in both Medicare and Medicaid. NFs are those that participate in Medicaid only.

Revised Code of Washington (RCW) – The compilation of all permanent laws now in force. It is a collection of Session Laws (enacted by the Legislature, and signed by the Governor, or enacted via the initiative process), arranged by topic, with amendments added and repealed laws removed. It does not include temporary laws such as appropriation acts.

CHAPTER 8: Policy



Skilled nursing facility (SNF) – a nursing home, a portion of a nursing home, or a long-term care wing or unit of a hospital that has been certified to provide nursing services to Medicare recipients under [section 1819\(a\) of the federal Social Security Act](#).

State agency (SA) – A permanent or semi-permanent organization in government that is responsible for the oversight and administration of specific functions.

Washington Administrative Code (WAC) – Regulations of executive branch agencies issued by authority of statutes. Similar to legislation and the Constitution, regulations are a source of primary law in Washington State. The WAC codifies the regulations arranging them by subject or agency.

Working days (business days) – defined as Monday through Friday, excluding federal and state holidays.



B. Acronym List

AAG	Assistant Attorney General
AFH	Adult Family Home
ALF	Assisted Living Facility
ALTSA	Aging and Long-Term Support Administration
CCRSS	Certified Community Residential Services and Supports
DSHS	Department of Social and Health Services
ESF	Enhanced Services Facilities
ICF/IID	Intermediate Care Facilities for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities
RCS	Residential Care Services
RCW	Revised Code of Washington
SA	State Agency
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
WAC	Washington Administrative Code
WD	Working Day

CHAPTER 8: Policy

ALTSA Residential Care Services, Standard Operating Procedures Manual



C. Change Log

Eff. Date	Chapter/ Section #	Description of Change	Reason for Change	Communication and Training Plan
01/17/2025	Entire Chapter	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Formatting updates	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Comply with new DSHS branding	N/A
09/08/2023	Full Chapter	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SOP Management moved to Chapter 10 (Quality Management)• Reformat Chapter	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SOP Management responsibility transferred to newly created Quality Improvement Unit• Provide for easier navigation	MB R23-075