

Administrative Policy No. 14.10

Subject: Accessible Meetings

Information Contact: Office of Diversity and Inclusion
Mail Stop 45014
ODIMailbox@dshs.wa.gov

Authorizing Source: [Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 \(ADA\) Public Law 101-336, subtitle A Title II](#)
[Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#), as amended (29 U.S.C. 794)
[Section 1557 of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act](#)
Washington State Law against Discrimination
[Chapter 49.60 RCW](#)
[Title 162 WAC](#)
[EEOC Guidelines](#)
[Office of Financial Management State Administrative & Accounting Manual Chapter 50.50](#)
[Administrative Policy 7.02](#)
[Administrative Policy 7.20](#)
[Administrative Policy 18.26](#)

Effective Date: June 1, 1992

Revised: April 15, 2021

Approved By: **Original signed by Lori Melchiori**
Senior Director, Office of Policy and Rules

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance for making all Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) meeting sites accessible to persons with disabilities, to include state employees, applicants, clients, and members of the general public.

Scope

This policy applies to meetings held and sponsored in whole or in part by DSHS.

Definitions

Meeting(s) means a gathering of people for a particular purpose, either face-to-face or virtually (over the phone or internet) including, but not limited to, forums, hearings, trainings, conventions, conferences, social events, retirement parties, etc.

Sponsored means activities which, with authorization:

- Are funded in whole or in part by DSHS;
- Use supplies, services, or equipment which are owned or paid for by DSHS; or
- Use event announcements (invitations, posters, or fliers) which display the symbol, acronym, or name of DSHS.

Minimal accessibility means:

- That the meeting site meets the minimum access requirements as outlined in the Office of Financial Management State Administrative and Accounting Manual, Policy [50.50.60](#); and
- The known accessibility needs of individuals who will be in attendance have been accommodated per Administrative Policies [7.02](#) and [7.20](#).

Policy

A. Responsibilities

1. Assistant secretaries or designees are responsible for compliance with this policy.
2. Each administration is responsible for developing appropriate procedures to implement this policy.
3. DSHS staff must assess and determine accessibility prior to using a site or virtual platform.
4. Each administration is responsible for any costs associated with compliance with this policy.

B. Meeting Access

1. DSHS must hold face-to-face or virtual meetings in locations or platforms that are free of barriers that deny a participant an equal opportunity to participate.
2. All open or public meetings must meet minimal accessibility standards.

3. All other meeting sites or virtual platforms must meet minimal accessibility standards when the accessibility needs of all participants are unknown.
4. When requested within the specified time frame, communication access for public meetings must be provided to meet the needs of individuals requesting such accommodations and may include:
 - a. Assisted listening systems compatible with hearing aids and cochlear implants;
 - b. Use of microphones by speakers;
 - c. Real-time captioning;
 - d. Sign language interpreters and other methods of communication that are requested and can reasonably be made available.
5. DSHS must inform clients, employees, and the general public of:
 - a. The right to request auxiliary aids and services for meetings;
 - b. How to initiate such a request; and
 - c. The internal complaint procedures and external mechanisms and remedies when an individual believes DSHS has discriminated on the basis of a disability.
6. When an individual requests accommodations within fourteen calendar days of the event and the accommodations cannot be scheduled or provided, the meeting must be postponed and rescheduled at a date and time when appropriate accommodations can be provided.

C. Technical Resources

1. See DSHS Administrative Policy [7.02](#) Equal Access to Service for Individuals with Disabilities and [7.20](#) Communication Access for Persons Who are Deaf, DeafBlind, Hard of Hearing, Late Deafened, Deaf Plus and/or Speech Disabled.
2. See [Accessible Meeting Facility Checklist](#) developed by the Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment (GCDE) to help evaluate a non-state facility for ADA compliance prior to executing a contract with a facility vendor.

D. Civil Rights

1. Any person with a disability who believes that they have been discriminated against in the application of this policy may file a complaint with any or all of the following:

Human Resources Division

Investigations Unit

1115 S. Washington, OB - 2nd Floor NE Wing
PO Box 45830
Olympia, WA 98504-5830
360-725-5807 or 1-800-521-8060
Toll Free TDD 1-800-521-8061

Washington State Human Rights Commission

Olympia Headquarters Office
711 S. Capitol Way, #402
P.O. Box 42490
Olympia, WA 98504-2490
Fax: 360-586-2282
Toll Free Phone: 1-800-233-3247
Toll Free TTY: 1-800-300-7525
Web site: www.hum.wa.gov

The United States Department of Justice

Civil Rights & Civil Liberties Complaints
Office of the Inspector General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Room 4706
Washington, D.C. 20530
Web site: <http://www.usdoj.gov/oig/FOIA/hotline2.htm>
Email: inspector.general@usdoj.gov
Hotline: 1-800-869-4499, Hotline Fax: 1-202-616-9898

The United States Health and Human Services Office for Civil Rights

Web site: <http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/discrimhowtofile.html>
Office for Civil Rights
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
2201 Sixth Avenue – Mail Stop RX-11
Seattle, WA 98121
(206) 615-2290; (206) 615-2296 (TDD)
(206) 615-2297 FAX

2. Additional information on how to file a complaint is contained in Administrative Policy [18.69](#), Delegation of Authority for Civil Rights Complaint Investigations.
3. DSHS will not retaliate against any person who exercises their rights or assists others in exercising their rights under this policy or under federal or state civil rights law.