

Administrative Policy No 15.18.03

Subject: External Linking Policy for
Internet Websites & Web Applications

Information Contact: Web Services Unit
Mailstop 45100
360-902-7829

Authorizing Source: Office of the Secretary

Effective Date: September 3, 2013

Revised: March 2, 2020

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

Purpose

This policy governs links to external websites from Department of Social and Health Services websites and social media accounts.

Scope

This policy applies to all websites and social media, accounts maintained by DSHS and accessible by the general public.

Definitions

External content: Electronic information not maintained by DSHS.

Policy

The state Executive Ethics Board has issued [Advisory Opinion 04-01](#) regarding state agency links to external websites. Unless needed to conduct DSHS business, staff will not place links to sites that:

- Are likely to offend a reasonable person or are profane in nature.
- Contain reference to illegal or undesirable practices or conduct.
- Endorse or oppose political candidates.
- Take a position on bills under consideration by the legislature that is not officially

endorsed by DSHS.

- Promote discrimination that is prohibited by federal and state laws or departmental policy.
- Endorse businesses or products.
- Are in conflict with prohibited employee actions contained in DSHS Administrative Policy [18.64](#).

Each DSHS website must contain a disclaimer that tells the user that DSHS will not be held responsible for external content.

Responsibility

- A. The Office of Communications must maintain a public version of this policy on [the DSHS website](#). Program staff are responsible for monitoring external links and ensuring compliance to this policy.