

Administrative Policy No. 18.34

Subject: Employee Learning and Development

Information Contact: Human Resources Division

Authorizing Sources: [Chapter 41.06 RCW](#)
[Chapter 357-34 WAC](#)

Effective Date: July 1, 2005

Revised: November 25, 2020

Approved By: Original signed by Wendy Long
Senior Director, Human Resources Division

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to outline the responsibilities of the Department of Social and Health Services employees, supervisors and managers as it relates to required trainings and additional activities or opportunities. It is the intent of the department to support a culture of learning and professional development.

Scope:

This policy applies to all department employees except where provisions of an applicable collective bargaining agreement may apply differently.

Additional guidance

- [Washington state OCIO accessibility policies](#)
- [The department's agency training web page](#) (details mandatory training for employees and supervisors)

Definitions:

Accessibility – means the design and usability of products, devices, services, or environments for people who experience disabilities. The concept of accessible design and practice of accessible development includes both “direct access” (i.e., unassisted) and “indirect access” (accessible through assistive technology (e.g., screen reader)).

Learning and development council (council) – is a representative body consisting of learning and development professionals from all administrations within DSHS.

Mandatory training – Training that is required because of an agency policy or from Washington Administrative Code (WAC) or Revised Code of Washington (RCW).

Washington State learning center (formally learning management system or LMS) – is the platform used for creating and distributing online learning experiences, and is a core system for learning and development at the department. In addition to its role as a learning platform, the learning center serves as the department's official system of record and reporting for employees training management, including active and completed training.

Policy:

A. Responsibilities

1. Human Resources Division must:
 - a. Maintain an agency wide learning and development council, which will consist of representation from each administration to coordinate the development, communication and delivery of trainings;
 - b. Ensure all agency-wide mandatory trainings are available by leveraging technology or in a classroom setting;
 - c. Evaluate agency-wide mandatory training courses and activities against the legal requirements for that mandatory training; and
 - d. Maintain an agency-wide new employee orientation.
2. Appointing authorities or designees must:
 - a. Provide a new employee orientation relative to the administration, facility, or institution;
 - b. Establish program specific trainings to include mandatory and annual trainings;
 - i. Program specific trainings may be substituted for agency-wide trainings if the learning and development council in conjunction with subject matter experts complete a review and deem the learning outcomes as meeting requirements.
 - c. Provide on-the-job training for employees' success in their career path;
 - d. Monitor the participation in learning and development activities in their program for department wide and program specific trainings; and
 - e. Ensure training courses meet the accessibility standards as required by [OCIO Accessibility Policy No. 188](#).
3. Supervisors and managers must:
 - a. Be proactive in helping employees identify developmental learning opportunities and model behaviors by example through participation in learning and development activities;

- i. Assess each employee's learning and development needs as part of the employee's annual performance review; and
 - ii. Provide coaching and training for the employee's success in their current position.
 - b. Ensure that their employees have completed all mandatory training that has been assigned to the employee through the learning center.
4. Employees must:
 - a. Participate in all mandatory trainings and other learning and development opportunities assigned to them; and
 - b. Participate in the development of the training plan established in the annual [performance evaluation form 03-485](#) by:
 - i. Informing their supervisor of training or coaching needed for success;
 - ii. Explore career goals with their supervisor for assistance in creating a development plan that may allow future professional opportunities.

B. Mandatory training

1. All department employees are required to attend and successfully complete mandatory training activities. Mandatory training includes:
 - a. [Agency-wide mandatory training](#) activities identified on the departments human resources website, in the [DSHS Human Resource Development Plan](#) or in [WAC 357-34-055](#) and [357-34-100](#);
 - b. Program based training activities; and
 - c. Training activities tied to a specific job class.
2. The following types of training are considered time worked and compensated as such:
 - a. Agency-wide mandatory training activities;
 - b. Program based mandatory training activities;
 - c. Training activities tied to a specific job class;
 - d. Non-mandatory training activities from which the supervisor or manager believes the employee's performance in current or future positions will benefit.
3. In accordance with [WAC 357-34](#) appointing authorities may request a waiver for:
 - a. Entry-level supervisor/manager training when:
 - i. The employee has at least one year of experience in a supervisory or management position prior to the present position and has demonstrated experience and competence as a substitute for training; or

- ii. The employee can demonstrate that prior to the present position, the employee completed training that satisfies the requirements of [WAC 357-34-060](#) and [357-34-065](#).
 - b. Sexual harassment awareness and prevention training when a new employee can provide proof of attending training given by another state agency.
 - i. If the sexual harassment training is waived, the department must review the [administrative policy 18.66 discrimination, harassment, and other inappropriate behaviors](#); and
 - ii. If the sexual harassment training is waived the new employee must take the next training in accordance with [WAC 357-34-110](#).
 - c. The waiver request must be submitted using the process developed and maintained by the department's human resources division.
4. An employee who successfully completes a training within the calendar year the training is due, has met the requirement for that training. (e.g. an employee takes the annual required DSHS information security awareness training on January 1, 2020, and again the next year on October 1, 2021. This is acceptable because the employee completed the subsequent training during the 2021 calendar year even though it was completed 22 months after the previous training).

C. Recordkeeping and record retention

1. Proper recordkeeping is the responsibility of the department's human resources division and appointing authorities. Records must be maintained in the official system of record and maintained according to the retention schedule.

D. Education and training requests

1. The supervisor or manager with delegated approval authority must issue a decision on education and training requests within 30 calendar days of receiving the request.
2. If a training request is denied, the employee must be provided a written explanation at the same time as the denial notice.
3. An educational leave of absence may be granted by the appointing authority when an employee wishes to enhance their education in an area that will enhance the employee's performance in the job, provided:
 - a. The requested leave does not exceed 24 months;
 - b. The employee is enrolled in an accredited educational institution; and
 - c. The employee maintains a satisfactory standing meeting the approved education plan.

4. An employee on educational leave must return to state service within 30 days of completing the course(s) for which leave was taken and show proof of satisfactory completion as originally agreed on with the appointing authority.

E. Tuition reimbursement

1. Appointing authorities may approve full or partial tuition reimbursement, based on available resources within their organization.
2. An employee who wants to receive reimbursement must receive written approval for reimbursement before enrolling in the course(s).
3. The appointing authority must inform the employee of the following when initially approving the request for tuition reimbursement:
 - a. The appointing authority's definition of "satisfactory completion". This may include, but is not limited to, a grade or grade point, a completed project, or product that is brought back to the organization.
 - b. Whether the original approving program will still pay the reimbursement if the employee moves to another program or state agency before completing the approved course of study.
4. Department employees may request tuition reimbursement using the [tuition reimbursement request form](#). Any agreements between the employee and appointing authority must be attached to this form.
5. The employee must provide proof of satisfactory completion of the course(s), based on **D.3.a** above.

F. Developmental opportunities

1. An appointing authority, in consultation with the department's human resources division, may approve developmental job assignments on form [03-428 developmental job assignments confirmation](#) for an employee's career development:
 - a. The assignment must be in writing, signed by the employee and appointing authority, and placed in the employee's file.
 - b. The participating employee remains in their permanent position and retains the permanent salary.
2. [In-training plans](#) must be submitted to the department's human resources division for approval.

3. An appointing authority or designee may approve other learning and development activities to include but not limited to:
 - a. Mentoring;
 - b. Leadership programs;
 - c. Conferences or summits; or
 - d. Department led courses and certifications (lean, change management, or certified diversity professional)

4. An employee's work status when attending non-mandatory training activity solely at the employee's request is at the discretion of the appointing authority.

DSHS Official