

Administrative Policy No. 18.61

Subject: Employee Grievance

Information Contact: DSHS Human Resources Division

Authorizing Source: [Title 357 WAC Civil Service Rules WAC 357-01-317](#) Supervisor

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

Purpose

The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) encourages employees to address issues informally with their supervisor or managers at the earliest opportunity, and lowest level. This policy provides a formal process for dispute resolution.

This policy is intended to provide employees a clear process to address concerns within DSHS and covers only those actions for which DSHS has authority to make decisions, including an alleged violation or misapplication of policy and/or the [Washington state civil service rules](#).

Scope

This policy applies to all DSHS classified employees who are not covered by a [collective bargaining agreement](#) (CBA).

In addition to this internal policy, Washington state civil service employees have a right to appeal certain employer actions to the [personnel resources board](#), under [chapter 357-52 WAC](#). This formal grievance process does not apply to complaints regarding harassment and discrimination. See [DSHS administrative policy 18.66 discrimination, harassment, and other inappropriate behavior](#).

Additional Guidance

[Chapter 357-52 WAC Appeals](#)
[DSHS administrative policy 5.01 privacy policy - safeguarding confidential information](#).

[DSHS administrative policy 18.66 discrimination, harassment, and other inappropriate behaviors](#)

Definitions

Grievance An allegation by an employee or a group of employees that there has been a violation, misapplication, or misinterpretation of DSHS policy or the [Washington state civil service rules](#).

Policy

A. Pre-step

Prior to filing a grievance, employees are strongly encouraged to informally resolve their concerns or disputes. Contact your [human resources division \(HRD\) business partner](#) if you have questions.

B. Step 1

Note: Sensitive/confidential information contained within a grievance will be treated confidentially to the extent possible as allowed by law. See [DSHS administrative policy 5.01 privacy policy - safeguarding confidential information](#).

1. Employees may submit a grievance when they have a concern or dispute that directly impacts them, including but not limited to:
 - a. A misapplication of a DSHS administrative policy, practice, or procedure;
 - b. An oral or written reprimand;
 - c. An alleged violation of the [Washington state civil service rules](#).
2. Employees must initiate a grievance in writing to their supervisor or manager, or to the next higher management level if their supervisor or manager is the subject of the grievance, within 15 calendar days of the occurrence causing the employee to feel aggrieved, or the date the employee knew or could reasonably have known of the occurrence.
3. The written grievance should include the following information:
 - a. The date when the alleged violation occurred.
 - b. The specific DSHS administrative policy, state civil service rule, or both, alleged to have been violated, and a description of the relevant facts upon which the grievance is based.
 - c. The specific remedy requested.
 - d. The steps taken by the employee to informally resolve the grievance.
 - e. The names of the individuals involved in the attempted resolution.
 - f. The results of such discussions.

- g. The name and signature of the aggrieved employee
4. Within 15 calendar days from receipt of the grievance, the supervisor or manager will meet with the employee to discuss the grievance with the employee and attempt to informally resolve the dispute. If the supervisor lacks authority to resolve the issue, the supervisor may involve the appropriate authority.
5. The supervisor or manager will issue a written decision to resolve the grievance within 15 calendar days of meeting with the employee. If the supervisor or manager fails to comply within the timeframe, the employee is entitled to move the grievance to the next step in the process.

C. Step 2

1. If the supervisor or manager cannot resolve the grievance to the employee's satisfaction within the 15-day period, the employee may submit a written grievance to the appointing authority or their designee, with a copy to their [human resource department \(HRD\) business partner](#), within 15 calendar days from the date the employee received the supervisor's or manager's decision. If the appointing authority or designee is the subject of the grievance, the employee may submit the written grievance to the next higher management level.
2. The appointing authority or designee will meet with the employee to discuss the grievance with the employee within 15 calendar days after receipt.
3. Within 15 calendar days of the meeting, the appointing authority or designee will issue a written decision to the employee.

D. Step 3

1. If the appointing authority or designee cannot resolve the grievance to the employee's satisfaction within 15 calendar days, the employee may submit the written grievance to DSHS labor relations within 15 calendar days after receipt of appointing the authority's or designee's decision.
2. The assigned DSHS labor relations specialist will discuss the grievance with the employee within 15 calendar days of receipt of the grievance. The DSHS labor relations specialist will provide the employee with the final written decision within 15 calendar days after the meeting.
3. The decision of the labor relations specialist is final.

⁰¹ Link updates 2024 SharePoint move.