



## Administrative Policy No. 18.84

- Title:** Employment References
- Authorizing Sources:** [RCW 4.24.730](#) - Liability immunity  
[RCW 9A.60-070](#) - False academic credentials  
[RCW 41.06.204](#) - Use of false academic credentials – Penalties  
[RCW 42.56.250](#) - Employment and licensing  
[WAC 357-01-025](#) – Appointing Authority  
[WAC 357-19 – 015](#) – Basis for Appointments  
[DSHS Reference Checking Guidelines](#)
- Information Contact:** DSHS Human Resources
- Effective Date:** October 1, 2011
- Revised Date:** August 1, 2012
- Approved By:** original signed by Glen G. Christopherson  
Senior Director, DSHS Human Resources
- Purpose:**
- The purpose of this policy is to ensure Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) hiring authorities or designees conduct reference checks consistent with the DSHS Reference Checking Guidelines.
- Checking references is one of the most important procedures in the hiring process. It is necessary to conduct reference checks to avoid hiring applicants who misrepresent their backgrounds and credentials or exclude necessary information.
- Scope:**
- This policy applies to all DSHS hiring authorities or designees.
- Policy:**
- A. Reference checks must be completed prior to an employment offer, except for non-competitive appointments such as Layoff, Reasonable Accommodation, Article 3 Bids, Article 4.3 Transfers, Reversions, Reassignments, Involuntary Demotions and Elevations.
- B. Reference Check Activities**

1. Notify applicants that employment references are required as part of the application process.
  2. Obtain a completed Reference Check Release Form from all candidates interviewed.
  3. The hiring authority or designee must contact employment references of the final candidate(s), including the current supervisor. (See Employment References Guidelines)
  4. The hiring authority or designee must review the personnel file of a current or former state employee.
  5. If the current or former employer is reluctant to provide reference information, document attempts to obtain reference information from the current or former employer and retain this documentation with the candidate's recruitment file.
  6. Verify educational qualifications, licenses, certifications, and other credentials as authentic and current.
  7. If misleading or inaccurate information is found the hiring authority or designee must eliminate the candidate from being considered.
  8. Records created in conducting reference checks will be considered confidential and will be retained for three (3) years plus sixty (60) days in a secure location.
- C. The appropriate Executive Leadership Team member will hold hiring authorities or designees accountable, up to and including termination, when they fail to conduct reference checks before an employment offer is made.