

**Chapter 70.128 RCW
ADULT FAMILY HOMES**

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RCW 70.128.005 Findings—Intent. (1) The legislature finds that:

(a) Adult family homes are an important part of the state's long-term care system. Adult family homes provide an alternative to institutional care and promote a high degree of independent living for residents.

(b) Persons with functional limitations have broadly varying service needs. Adult family homes that can meet those needs are an essential component of a long-term system. Different populations living in adult family homes, such as persons with developmental disabilities and elderly persons, often have significantly different needs and capacities from one another.

(c) There is a need to update certain restrictive covenants to take into consideration the legislative findings cited in (a) and (b) of this subsection; the need to prevent or reduce institutionalization; and the legislative and judicial mandates to provide care and services in the least restrictive setting appropriate to the needs of the individual. Restrictive covenants which directly or indirectly restrict or prohibit the use of property for adult family homes (i) are contrary to the public interest served by establishing adult family homes and (ii) discriminate against individuals with disabilities in violation of RCW 49.60.224.

(2) It is the legislature's intent that department rules and policies relating to the licensing and operation of adult family homes

recognize and accommodate the different needs and capacities of the various populations served by the homes. Furthermore, the development and operation of adult family homes that promote the health, welfare, and safety of residents, and provide quality personal care and special care services should be encouraged.

(3) The legislature finds that many residents of community-based long-term care facilities are vulnerable and their health and well-being are dependent on their caregivers. The quality, skills, and knowledge of their caregivers are the key to good care. The legislature finds that the need for well-trained caregivers is growing as the state's population ages and residents' needs increase. The legislature intends that current training standards be enhanced.

(4) The legislature finds that the state of Washington has a compelling interest in developing and enforcing standards that promote the health, welfare, and safety of vulnerable adults residing in adult family homes. The health, safety, and well-being of vulnerable adults must be the paramount concern in determining whether to issue a license to an applicant, whether to suspend or revoke a license, or whether to take other licensing actions. [2011 1st sp.s. c 3 s 201; 2009 c 530 s 2; 2001 c 319 s 1; 2000 c 121 s 4; 1995 c 260 s 1; 1989 c 427 s 14.]

Finding—Intent—2011 1st sp.s. c 3: "The legislature finds that Washington's long-term care system should more aggressively promote protections for the vulnerable populations it serves. The legislature intends to address current statutes and funding levels that limit the department of social and health services' ability to promote vulnerable adult protections. The legislature further intends that the cost of facility oversight should be supported by an appropriate license fee paid by the regulated businesses, rather than by the general taxpayers." [2011 1st sp.s. c 3 s 101.]

RCW 70.128.007 Purpose. The purposes of this chapter are to:

(1) Encourage the establishment and maintenance of adult family homes that provide a humane, safe, and residential home environment for persons with functional limitations who need personal and special care;

(2) Establish standards for regulating adult family homes that adequately protect residents;

(3) Encourage consumers, families, providers, and the public to become active in assuring their full participation in development of adult family homes that provide high quality and cost-effective care;

(4) Provide for appropriate care of residents in adult family homes by requiring that each resident have a care plan that promotes the most appropriate level of physical, mental, and psychosocial well-being consistent with client choice; and

(5) Accord each resident the right to participate in the development of the care plan and in other major decisions involving the resident and their care. [2001 c 319 s 5; 1995 1st sp.s. c 18 s 19; 1989 c 427 s 15.]

Conflict with federal requirements—Severability—Effective date—1995 1st sp.s. c 18: See notes following RCW 74.39A.030.

RCW 70.128.010 Definitions. Unless the context clearly requires otherwise, the definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter.

(1) "Adult family home" means a residential home in which a person or persons provide personal care, special care, room, and board to more than one but not more than six adults who are not related by blood or marriage to the person or persons providing the services. An adult family home may provide services to up to eight adults upon approval from the department under RCW 70.128.066.

(2) "Adult family home licensee" means a provider as defined in this section who does not receive payments from the medicaid and state-funded long-term care programs.

(3) "Adult family home training network" means a nonprofit organization established by the exclusive bargaining representative of adult family homes designated under RCW 41.56.029 with the capacity to provide training, workforce development, and other services to adult family homes.

(4) "Adults" means persons who have attained the age of eighteen years.

(5) "Capacity" means the maximum number of persons in need of personal or special care permitted in an adult family home at a given time. This number shall include related children or adults in the home and who received special care.

(6) "Department" means the department of social and health services.

(7) "Home" means an adult family home.

(8) "Imminent danger" means serious physical harm to or death of a resident has occurred, or there is a serious threat to resident life, health, or safety.

(9) "Provider" means any person who is licensed under this chapter to operate an adult family home. For the purposes of this section, "person" means any individual, partnership, corporation, association, or limited liability company.

(10) "Resident" means an adult in need of personal or special care in an adult family home who is not related to the provider.

(11) "Resident manager" means a person employed or designated by the provider to manage the adult family home.

(12) "Special care" means care beyond personal care as defined by the department, in rule. [2020 c 220 s 1. Prior: 2019 c 466 s 2; 2007 c 184 s 7; prior: 2001 c 319 s 6; 2001 c 319 s 2; 1995 c 260 s 2; 1989 c 427 s 16.]

Part headings not law—Severability—Conflict with federal requirements—2007 c 184: See notes following RCW 41.56.029.

RCW 70.128.030 Exemptions. The following residential facilities shall be exempt from the operation of this chapter:

- (1) Nursing homes licensed under chapter 18.51 RCW;
- (2) Assisted living facilities licensed under chapter 18.20 RCW;
- (3) Facilities approved and certified under chapter 71A.22 RCW;
- (4) Residential treatment centers for individuals with mental illness licensed under chapter 71.24 RCW;
- (5) Hospitals licensed under chapter 70.41 RCW;
- (6) Homes for individuals with developmental disabilities licensed under chapter 74.15 RCW. [2012 c 10 s 55; 1989 c 427 s 17.]

Application—2012 c 10: See note following RCW 18.20.010.

RCW 70.128.040 Adoption of rules and standards—Negotiated rule making—Specialty license. (1) The department shall adopt rules and standards with respect to adult family homes and the operators thereof to be licensed under this chapter to carry out the purposes and requirements of this chapter. The rules and standards relating to applicants and operators shall address the differences between individual providers and providers that are partnerships, corporations, associations, or companies. The rules and standards shall also recognize and be appropriate to the different needs and capacities of the various populations served by adult family homes such as but not limited to persons who are developmentally disabled or elderly. In developing rules and standards the department shall recognize the residential family-like nature of adult family homes and not develop rules and standards which by their complexity serve as an overly restrictive barrier to the development of the adult family homes in the state. Procedures and forms established by the department shall be developed so they are easy to understand and comply with. Paper work requirements shall be minimal. Easy to understand materials shall be developed for applicants and providers explaining licensure requirements and procedures.

(2) (a) In developing the rules and standards, the department shall consult with all divisions and administrations within the department serving the various populations living in adult family homes, including the division of developmental disabilities and the aging and adult services administration. Involvement by the divisions and administration shall be for the purposes of assisting the department to develop rules and standards appropriate to the different needs and capacities of the various populations served by adult family homes. During the initial stages of development of proposed rules, the department shall provide notice of development of the rules to organizations representing adult family homes and their residents, and other groups that the department finds appropriate. The notice shall state the subject of the rules under consideration and solicit written recommendations regarding their form and content.

(b) In addition, the department shall engage in negotiated rule making pursuant to RCW 34.05.310(2)(a) with the exclusive representative of the adult family home licensees selected in accordance with RCW 70.128.043 and with other affected interests before adopting requirements that affect adult family home licensees.

(3) Except where provided otherwise, chapter 34.05 RCW shall govern all department rule-making and adjudicative activities under this chapter.

(4) The department shall establish a specialty license to include geriatric specialty certification for providers who have successfully completed the University of Washington school of nursing certified geriatric certification program and testing. [2009 c 530 s 1; 2007 c 184 s 8; 1995 c 260 s 3; 1989 c 427 s 18.]

Part headings not law—Severability—Conflict with federal requirements—2007 c 184: See notes following RCW 41.56.029.

RCW 70.128.043 Negotiated rule making—Statewide unit of licensees—Intent. (1) Solely for the purposes of negotiated rule making pursuant to RCW 34.05.310(2)(a) and 70.128.040, a statewide unit of all adult family home licensees is appropriate. As of July 22, 2007, the exclusive representative of adult family home licensees in the statewide unit shall be the organization certified by the American arbitration association as the sole representative after the association conducts a cross-check comparing authorization cards against the department of social and health services' records and finds that majority support for the organization exists. If adult family home licensees seek to select a different representative thereafter, the adult family home licensees may request that the American arbitration association conduct an election and certify the results of the election.

(2) In enacting this section, the legislature intends to provide state action immunity under federal and state antitrust laws for the joint activities of licensees and their exclusive representative to the extent such activities are authorized by this chapter. [2007 c 184 s 6.]

Part headings not law—Severability—Conflict with federal requirements—2007 c 184: See notes following RCW 41.56.029.

RCW 70.128.050 License—Required as of July 1, 1990—Limitations.

(1) After July 1, 1990, no person shall operate or maintain an adult family home in this state without a license under this chapter.

(2) Couples legally married or state registered domestic partners:

(a) May not apply for separate licenses; and

(b) May apply jointly to be coproviders if they are both qualified. One person may apply to be a provider without requiring the other person to apply. [2011 1st sp.s. c 3 s 202; 1989 c 427 s 19.]

Finding—Intent—2011 1st sp.s. c 3: See note following RCW 70.128.005.

RCW 70.128.055 Operating without a license—Misdemeanor. A person operating or maintaining an adult family home without a license under this chapter is guilty of a misdemeanor. Each day of a continuing violation after conviction is considered a separate offense. [1991 c 40 s 1.]

RCW 70.128.057 Operating without a license—Injunction or civil penalty. Notwithstanding the existence or use of any other remedy, the department may, in the manner provided by law, upon the advice of the attorney general who shall represent the department in the proceedings, maintain an action in the name of the state for an injunction, civil penalty, or other process against a person to restrain or prevent the operation or maintenance of an adult family home without a license under this chapter. [1995 1st sp.s. c 18 s 20; 1991 c 40 s 2.]

~~Conflict with federal requirements—Severability—Effective date—~~
1995 1st sp.s. c 18: See notes following RCW 74.39A.030.

RCW 70.128.058 Operating without a license—Application of consumer protection act. The legislature finds that the operation of an adult family home without a license in violation of this chapter is a matter vitally affecting the public interest for the purpose of applying the consumer protection act, chapter 19.86 RCW. Operation of an adult family home without a license in violation of this chapter is not reasonable in relation to the development and preservation of business. Such a violation is an unfair or deceptive act in trade or commerce and an unfair method of competition for the purpose of applying the consumer protection act, chapter 19.86 RCW. [1995 1st sp.s. c 18 s 21.]

~~Conflict with federal requirements—Severability—Effective date—~~
1995 1st sp.s. c 18: See notes following RCW 74.39A.030.

RCW 70.128.060 License—Generally—Fees. (1) An application for license shall be made to the department upon forms provided by it and shall contain such information as the department reasonably requires.

(2) Subject to the provisions of this section, the department shall issue a license to an adult family home if the department finds that the applicant and the home are in compliance with this chapter and the rules adopted under this chapter. The department may not issue a license if (a) the applicant or a person affiliated with the applicant has prior violations of this chapter relating to the adult family home subject to the application or any other adult family home, or of any other law regulating residential care facilities within the past ten years that resulted in revocation, suspension, or nonrenewal of a license or contract with the department; or (b) the applicant or a person affiliated with the applicant has a history of significant noncompliance with federal, state, or local laws, rules, or regulations relating to the provision of care or services to vulnerable adults or to children. A person is considered affiliated with an applicant if the person is listed on the license application as a partner, officer, director, resident manager, or majority owner of the applying entity, or is the spouse of the applicant.

(3) The license fee shall be submitted with the application.

(4) Proof of financial solvency must be submitted when requested by the department.

(5) The department shall serve upon the applicant a copy of the decision granting or denying an application for a license. An applicant shall have the right to contest denial of his or her application for a license as provided in chapter 34.05 RCW by requesting a hearing in writing within twenty-eight days after receipt of the notice of denial.

(6) The department shall not issue a license to a provider if the department finds that the provider or spouse of the provider or any partner, officer, director, managerial employee, or majority owner has a history of significant noncompliance with federal or state regulations, rules, or laws in providing care or services to vulnerable adults or to children.

(7) The department shall license an adult family home for the maximum level of care that the adult family home may provide. The department shall define, in rule, license levels based upon the education, training, and caregiving experience of the licensed provider or staff.

(8) For adult family homes that serve residents with special needs such as dementia, developmental disabilities, or mental illness, specialty training is required of providers and resident managers consistent with RCW 70.128.230, and also is required for caregivers, with standardized competency testing for caregivers hired after July 28, 2013, as set forth by the department in rule. The department shall examine, with input from experts, providers, consumers, and advocates, whether the existing specialty training courses are adequate for providers, resident managers, and caregivers to meet these residents' special needs, are sufficiently standardized in curricula and instructional techniques, and are accompanied by effective tools to fairly evaluate successful student completion. The department may enhance the existing specialty training requirements by rule, and may update curricula, instructional techniques, and competency testing based upon its review and stakeholder input. In addition, the department shall examine, with input from experts, providers, consumers, and advocates, whether additional specialty training categories should be created for adult family homes serving residents with other special needs, such as traumatic brain injury, skilled nursing, or bariatric care. The department may establish, by rule, additional specialty training categories and requirements for providers, resident managers, and caregivers, if needed to better serve residents with such special needs.

(9) The department shall establish, by rule, standards used to license nonresident providers and multiple facility operators.

(10) The department shall establish, by rule, for multiple facility operators educational standards substantially equivalent to recognized national certification standards for residential care administrators.

(11) (a) (i) At the time of an application for an adult family home license and upon the annual fee renewal date set by the department, the licensee shall pay a license fee. Beginning July 1, 2011, the per bed license fee and any processing fees, including the initial license fee, must be established in the omnibus appropriations act and any amendment or additions made to that act. The license fees established in the omnibus appropriations act and any amendment or additions made to that act may not exceed the department's annual licensing and oversight activity costs and must include the department's cost of paying providers for the amount of the license fee attributed to medicaid clients.

(ii) In addition to the fees established in (a) (i) of this subsection, the department shall charge the licensee a nonrefundable fee to increase bed capacity at the adult family home to seven or eight beds or in the event of a change in ownership of the adult family home. The fee must be established in the omnibus appropriations act and any amendment or additions made to that act.

(b) The department may authorize a one-time waiver of all or any portion of the licensing, processing, or change of ownership fees required under this subsection (11) in any case in which the department determines that an adult family home is being relicensed because of exceptional circumstances, such as death or incapacity of a provider, and that to require the full payment of the licensing,

processing, or change of ownership fees would present a hardship to the applicant.

(12) A provider who receives notification of the department's initiation of a denial, suspension, nonrenewal, or revocation of an adult family home license may, in lieu of appealing the department's action, surrender or relinquish the license. The department shall not issue a new license to or contract with the provider, for the purposes of providing care to vulnerable adults or children, for a period of twenty years following the surrendering or relinquishment of the former license. The licensing record shall indicate that the provider relinquished or surrendered the license, without admitting the violations, after receiving notice of the department's initiation of a denial, suspension, nonrenewal, or revocation of a license.

(13) The department shall establish, by rule, the circumstances requiring a change in the licensed provider, which include, but are not limited to, a change in ownership or control of the adult family home or provider, a change in the provider's form of legal organization, such as from sole proprietorship to partnership or corporation, and a dissolution or merger of the licensed entity with another legal organization. The new provider is subject to the provisions of this chapter, the rules adopted under this chapter, and other applicable law. In order to ensure that the safety of residents is not compromised by a change in provider, the new provider is responsible for correction of all violations that may exist at the time of the new license. [2020 c 220 s 3; 2015 c 66 s 1; 2013 c 300 s 2; 2011 1st sp.s. c 3 s 403; 2009 c 530 s 5; 2004 c 140 s 3; 2001 c 193 s 9; 1995 c 260 s 4; 1989 c 427 s 20.]

Effective date—2011 1st sp.s. c 3 ss 401-403: See note following RCW 18.51.050.

Finding—Intent—2011 1st sp.s. c 3: See note following RCW 70.128.005.

RCW 70.128.064 Priority processing for license applications—Provisional license. (1) A provisional license permits the operation of an adult family home for a period of time to be determined by the department, not to exceed twelve months, and is not subject to renewal. A provisional license may be issued:

(a) When a currently licensed adult family home provider has applied to be licensed as the new provider for a currently licensed adult family home, the application has been initially processed, and all that remains to complete the application process is an on-site inspection; or

(b) Under exceptional circumstances, such as the sudden and unexpected death of the sole provider of an adult family home.

(2) In order to prevent disruption to current residents, the department shall give priority processing to an application for a change of ownership:

(a) At the request of the currently licensed provider; or

(b) When the department has issued a provisional license. [2018 c 160 s 1; 2001 c 319 s 10.]

RCW 70.128.065 Multiple facility operators—Requirements—

Licensure of additional homes. (1) A multiple facility operator must successfully demonstrate to the department financial solvency and management experience for the homes under its ownership and the ability to meet other relevant safety, health, and operating standards pertaining to the operation of multiple homes, including ways to mitigate the potential impact of vehicular traffic related to the operation of the homes.

(2) The department shall only accept and process an application for licensure of an additional home when:

(a) A period of no less than twenty-four months has passed since the issuance of the initial adult family home license; and

(b) The department has taken no enforcement actions against the applicant's currently licensed adult family homes during the twenty-four months prior to application.

(3) (a) Except as provided in (b) of this subsection, the department shall only accept and process an additional application for licensure of other adult family homes when twelve months has passed since the previous adult family home license, and the department has taken no enforcement actions against the applicant's currently licensed adult family homes during the twelve months prior to application.

(b) The department shall accept and process applications for licensure of additional adult family homes when less than twelve months have passed since the previous adult family home license, if the applications are due to the change in ownership of existing adult family homes that are currently licensed and the department has taken no enforcement actions against the applicant's currently licensed adult family homes during the twelve months prior to application.

(4) In the event of serious noncompliance leading to the imposition of one or more actions listed in RCW 70.128.160(2) for violation of federal, state, or local laws, or regulations relating to provision of care or services to vulnerable adults or children, the department is authorized to take one or more actions listed in RCW 70.128.160(2) against any home or homes operated by the provider if there is a violation in the home or homes.

(5) In the event of serious noncompliance in a home operated by a provider with multiple adult family homes, leading to the imposition of one or more actions listed in RCW 70.128.160(2), the department shall inspect the other homes operated by the provider to determine whether the same or related deficiencies are present in those homes. The cost of these additional inspections may be imposed on the provider as a civil penalty up to a maximum of three hundred dollars per additional inspection.

(6) A provider is ultimately responsible for the day-to-day operations of each licensed home. [2013 c 185 s 1; 2011 1st sp.s. c 3 s 203; 1996 c 81 s 6.]

Finding—Intent—2011 1st sp.s. c 3: See note following RCW 70.128.005.

Effective date—1996 c 81: See note following RCW 70.128.120.

RCW 70.128.066 Seven or eight bed adult family homes—

Requirements—Licensure. (1) An applicant requesting to increase bed

capacity to seven or eight beds must successfully demonstrate to the department financial solvency and management experience for the home under its ownership and the ability to meet other relevant safety, health, and operating standards pertaining to the operation of an eight bed home, including the ability to meet the needs of all current and prospective residents and ways to mitigate the potential impact of vehicular traffic related to the operation of the home.

(2) The department may only accept and process an application to increase the bed capacity to seven or eight beds when:

(a) A period of no less than twenty-four months has passed since the issuance of the initial adult family home license;

(b) The home has been licensed for six residents for at least twelve months prior to application;

(c) The home has completed two full inspections that have resulted in no enforcement actions. For adult family homes applying to increase bed capacity under this section prior to January 1, 2026, the department may:

(i) Complete the first inspection upon receipt of an application to increase bed capacity if the home has otherwise met the requirements of this section.

(ii) Complete a second inspection upon receipt of an application to increase bed capacity if at least six months have passed since the first inspection;

(d) The home has submitted an attestation that an increase in the number of beds will not adversely affect the health, safety, or quality of life of current residents of the home;

(e) The home has demonstrated to the department the ability to comply with the emergency evacuation standards established by the department in rule;

(f) The home has a residential sprinkler system in place in order to serve residents who require assistance during an evacuation; and

(g) The home has paid any fees associated with licensure or additional inspections.

(3) The department shall accept and process applications under RCW 70.128.060(13) for a seven or eight bed adult family home only if:

(a) The new provider is a provider of a currently licensed adult family home that has been licensed for a period of no less than twenty-four months since the issuance of the initial adult family home license;

(b) The new provider's current adult family home has been licensed for six or more residents for at least twelve months prior to application; and

(c) The adult family home has completed at least two full inspections, and the most recent two full inspections have resulted in no enforcement actions.

(4) Prior to issuing a license to operate a seven or eight bed adult family home, the department shall:

(a) Notify the local jurisdiction in which the home is located, in writing, of the applicant's request to increase bed capacity, and allow the local jurisdiction to provide any recommendations to the department as to whether or not the department should approve the applicant's request to increase its bed capacity to seven or eight beds; and

(b) Conduct an inspection to determine compliance with licensing standards and the ability to meet the needs of eight residents.

(5) In addition to the consideration of other criteria established in this section, the department shall consider comments

received from current residents of the adult family home related to the quality of care and quality of life offered by the home, as well as their views regarding the addition of one or two more residents.

(6) Upon application for an initial seven or eight bed adult family home, a home must provide at least sixty days' notice to all residents and the residents' designated representatives that the home has applied for a license to admit up to seven or eight residents before admitting a seventh resident. The notice must be in writing and written in a manner or language that is understood by the residents and the residents' designated representatives.

(7) In the event of serious noncompliance in a seven or eight bed adult family home, in addition to, or in lieu of, the imposition of one or more actions listed in RCW 70.128.160(2), the department may revoke the adult family home's authority to accept more than six residents. [2024 c 147 s 1; 2020 c 220 s 2.]

RCW 70.128.070 License—Inspections—Correction of violations.

(1) A license shall remain valid unless voluntarily surrendered, suspended, or revoked in accordance with this chapter.

(2)(a) Homes applying for a license shall be inspected at the time of licensure.

(b)(i) Homes licensed by the department shall be inspected at least every eighteen months, with an annual average of fifteen months. However, an adult family home may be allowed to continue without inspection for two years if the adult family home had no inspection citations for the past three consecutive inspections and has received no written notice of violations resulting from complaint investigations during that same time period.

(ii) For adult family homes applying to increase bed capacity under RCW 70.128.066 prior to January 1, 2026, the department may:

(A) Complete the first inspection upon receipt of an application to increase bed capacity if the home has otherwise met the requirements of RCW 70.128.066.

(B) Complete a second inspection upon receipt of an application to increase bed capacity if at least six months have passed since the first inspection.

(c) The department may make an unannounced inspection of a licensed home at any time to assure that the home and provider are in compliance with this chapter and the rules adopted under this chapter.

(d) If a pandemic, natural disaster, or other declared state of emergency prevents the department from completing inspections according to the timeline in this subsection, the department shall adopt rules to reestablish inspection timelines based on the length of time since last inspection, compliance history of each facility, and immediate health or safety concerns.

(i) Rules adopted under this subsection (2)(d) are effective until the termination of the pandemic, natural disaster, or other declared state of emergency or until the department determines that all facility inspections are occurring according to time frames established in (b) of this subsection, whichever is later. Once the department determines a rule adopted under this subsection (2)(d) is no longer necessary, it must repeal the rule under RCW 34.05.353.

(ii) Within 12 months of the termination of the pandemic, natural disaster, or declared state of emergency, the department shall conduct

a review of inspection compliance with (b) of this subsection and provide the legislature with a report.

(3) If the department finds that the home is not in compliance with this chapter, it shall require the home to correct any violations as provided in this chapter. [2024 c 147 s 2; 2021 c 203 s 13; 2011 1st sp.s. c 3 s 204; 2004 c 143 s 1; 1998 c 272 s 4; 1995 1st sp.s. c 18 s 22; 1989 c 427 s 22.]

Effective date—Retroactive application—2021 c 203: See note following RCW 43.43.832.

Finding—Intent—2011 1st sp.s. c 3: See note following RCW 70.128.005.

Findings—Severability—Effective date—1998 c 272: See notes following RCW 18.20.230.

Conflict with federal requirements—Severability—Effective date—1995 1st sp.s. c 18: See notes following RCW 74.39A.030.

RCW 70.128.080 License and inspection report—Availability for review. An adult family home shall have readily available for review by the department, residents, and the public:

(1) Its license to operate; and

(2) A copy of each inspection report received by the home from the department for the past three years. [1995 1st sp.s. c 18 s 23; 1989 c 427 s 21.]

Conflict with federal requirements—Severability—Effective date—1995 1st sp.s. c 18: See notes following RCW 74.39A.030.

RCW 70.128.090 Inspections—Generally. (1) During inspections of an adult family home, the department shall have access and authority to examine areas and articles in the home used to provide care or support to residents, including residents' records, accounts, and the physical premises, including the buildings, grounds, and equipment. The personal records of the provider are not subject to department inspection nor is the separate bedroom of the provider, not used in direct care of a client, subject to review. The department may inspect all rooms during the initial licensing of the home. However, during a complaint investigation, the department shall have access to the entire premises and all pertinent records when necessary to conduct official business. The department also shall have the authority to interview the provider and residents of an adult family home.

(2) Whenever an inspection is conducted, the department shall prepare a written report that summarizes all information obtained during the inspection, and if the home is in violation of this chapter, serve a copy of the inspection report upon the provider at the same time as a notice of violation. This notice shall be mailed to the provider within ten working days of the completion of the inspection process. If the home is not in violation of this chapter, a copy of the inspection report shall be mailed to the provider within ten calendar days of the inspection of the home. All inspection

reports shall be made available to the public at the department during business hours.

(3) The provider shall develop corrective measures for any violations found by the department's inspection. The department shall upon request provide consultation and technical assistance to assist the provider in developing effective corrective measures. The department shall include a statement of the provider's corrective measures in the department's inspection report. [2001 c 319 s 7; 1995 1st sp.s. c 18 s 24; 1989 c 427 s 30.]

~~Conflict with federal requirements—Severability—Effective date—~~
1995 1st sp.s. c 18: See notes following RCW 74.39A.030.

RCW 70.128.100 Immediate suspension of license when conditions warrant. The department has the authority to immediately suspend a license if it finds that conditions there constitute an imminent danger to residents. [1989 c 427 s 32.]

RCW 70.128.105 Injunction if conditions warrant. The department may commence an action in superior court to enjoin the operation of an adult family home if it finds that conditions there constitute an imminent danger to residents. [1991 c 40 s 3.]

RCW 70.128.110 Prohibition against recommending unlicensed home—Report and investigation of unlicensed home. (1) No public agency contractor or employee shall place, refer, or recommend placement of a person into an adult family home that is operating without a license. (2) Any public agency contractor or employee who knows that an adult family home is operating without a license shall report the name and address of the home to the department. The department shall investigate any report filed under this section. [1989 c 427 s 23.]

RCW 70.128.120 Adult family home provider, applicant, resident manager—Minimum qualifications. Each adult family home provider, applicant, and each resident manager shall have the following minimum qualifications, except that only applicants are required to meet the provisions of subsections (10) and (11) of this section:

- (1) Twenty-one years of age or older;
- (2) For those applying after September 1, 2001, to be licensed as providers, and for resident managers whose employment begins after September 1, 2001, a United States high school diploma or high school equivalency certificate as provided in RCW 28B.50.536 or any English or translated government documentation of the following:
 - (a) Successful completion of government-approved public or private school education in a foreign country that includes an annual average of one thousand hours of instruction over twelve years or no less than twelve thousand hours of instruction;
 - (b) A foreign college, foreign university, or United States community college two-year diploma;
 - (c) Admission to, or completion of coursework at, a foreign university or college for which credit was granted;

(d) Admission to, or completion of coursework at, a United States college or university for which credits were awarded;

(e) Admission to, or completion of postgraduate coursework at, a United States college or university for which credits were awarded; or

(f) Successful passage of the United States board examination for registered nursing, or any professional medical occupation for which college or university education preparation was required;

(3) Good moral and responsible character and reputation;

(4) Literacy and the ability to communicate in the English language;

(5) Management and administrative ability to carry out the requirements of this chapter;

(6) Satisfactory completion of department-approved basic training and continuing education training as required by RCW 74.39A.074, and in rules adopted by the department;

(7) Satisfactory completion of department-approved, or equivalent, special care training before a provider may provide special care services to a resident;

(8) Not be disqualified by a department background check;

(9) For those applying to be licensed as providers, and for resident managers whose employment begins after August 24, 2011, at least one thousand hours in the previous sixty months of successful, direct caregiving experience obtained after age eighteen to vulnerable adults in a licensed or contracted setting prior to operating or managing an adult family home. The applicant or resident manager must have credible evidence of the successful, direct caregiving experience or, currently hold one of the following professional licenses: Physician licensed under chapter 18.71 RCW; osteopathic physician licensed under chapter 18.57 RCW; physician assistant licensed under chapter 18.71A RCW; registered nurse, *advanced registered nurse practitioner, or licensed practical nurse licensed under chapter 18.79 RCW;

(10) For applicants, proof of financial solvency, as defined in rule; and

(11) Applicants must successfully complete an adult family home administration and business planning class, prior to being granted a license. The class must be a minimum of forty-eight hours of classroom time and approved by the department. The department shall promote and prioritize bilingual capabilities within available resources and when materials are available for this purpose. Under exceptional circumstances, such as the sudden and unexpected death of a provider, the department may consider granting a license to an applicant who has not completed the class but who meets all other requirements. If the department decides to grant the license due to exceptional circumstances, the applicant must have enrolled in or completed the class within four months of licensure. [2021 c 219 s 6; (2021 c 219 s 5 expired July 1, 2022); 2020 c 80 s 47; 2015 c 66 s 2; 2013 c 39 s 21; 2012 c 164 s 703; 2011 1st sp.s. c 3 s 205; 2006 c 249 s 1; 2002 c 223 s 1; 2001 c 319 s 8; 2000 c 121 s 5; 1996 c 81 s 1; 1995 1st sp.s. c 18 s 117; 1995 c 260 s 5; 1989 c 427 s 24.]

***Reviser's note:** The term "advanced registered nurse practitioner" was changed to "advanced practice registered nurse" by 2024 c 239 s 1, effective June 30, 2027.

Effective date—2021 c 219 s 6: "Section 6 of this act takes effect July 1, 2022." [2021 c 219 s 11.]

Expiration date—2021 c 219 s 5: "Section 5 of this act expires July 1, 2022." [2021 c 219 s 10.]

Rules—Conflict with federal requirements—2021 c 219: See notes following RCW 43.20A.715.

Effective date—2020 c 80 ss 12-59: See note following RCW 7.68.030.

Intent—2020 c 80: See note following RCW 18.71A.010.

Finding—Intent—Rules—Effective date—2012 c 164: See notes following RCW 18.88B.010.

Finding—Intent—2011 1st sp.s. c 3: See note following RCW 70.128.005.

Effective date—2002 c 223 s 1: "Section 1 of this act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect immediately [March 28, 2002]." [2002 c 223 s 7.]

Effective date—1996 c 81: "This act shall take effect July 1, 1996." [1996 c 81 s 7.]

Conflict with federal requirements—Severability—Effective date—1995 1st sp.s. c 18: See notes following RCW 74.39A.030.

RCW 70.128.122 Adult family homes licensed by Indian tribes. The legislature recognizes that adult family homes located within the boundaries of a federally recognized Indian reservation may be licensed by the Indian tribe. The department may pay for care for persons residing in such homes, if there has been a tribal or state criminal background check of the provider and any staff, and the client is otherwise eligible for services administered by the department. [1995 1st sp.s. c 18 s 25.]

Conflict with federal requirements—Severability—Effective date—1995 1st sp.s. c 18: See notes following RCW 74.39A.030.

RCW 70.128.125 Resident rights. RCW 70.129.005 through 70.129.030, 70.129.040, and 70.129.050 through 70.129.170 apply to this chapter and persons regulated under this chapter. [2011 1st sp.s. c 3 s 302; 1994 c 214 s 24.]

Finding—Intent—2011 1st sp.s. c 3: See note following RCW 70.128.005.

Conflict with federal requirements—1994 c 214: See RCW 70.129.901.

RCW 70.128.130 Adult family homes—Requirements. (1) The provider is ultimately responsible for the day-to-day operations of each licensed adult family home.

(2) The provider shall promote the health, safety, and well-being of each resident residing in each licensed adult family home.

(3) Adult family homes shall be maintained internally and externally in good repair and condition. Such homes shall have safe and functioning systems for heating, cooling, hot and cold water, electricity, plumbing, garbage disposal, sewage, cooking, laundry, artificial and natural light, ventilation, and any other feature of the home.

(4) In order to preserve and promote the residential home-like nature of adult family homes, adult family homes licensed after August 24, 2011, shall:

(a) Have sufficient space to accommodate all residents at one time in the dining and living room areas;

(b) Have hallways and doorways wide enough to accommodate residents who use mobility aids such as wheelchairs and walkers; and

(c) Have outdoor areas that are safe and accessible for residents to use.

(5) The adult family home must provide all residents access to resident common areas throughout the adult family home including, but not limited to, kitchens, dining and living areas, and bathrooms, to the extent that they are safe under the resident's care plan.

(6) Adult family homes shall be maintained in a clean and sanitary manner, including proper sewage disposal, food handling, and hygiene practices.

(7) Adult family homes shall develop a fire drill plan for emergency evacuation of residents, shall have working smoke detectors in each bedroom where a resident is located, shall have working fire extinguishers on each floor of the home, and shall house nonambulatory residents on a level with safe egress to a public right-of-way. Nonambulatory residents must have a bedroom on the floor of the home from which the resident can be evacuated to a designated safe location outside the home without the use of stairs, elevators, chair lifts, platform lifts, or other devices as determined by the department in rule.

(8) The adult family home shall ensure that all residents can be safely evacuated from the home in an emergency as established by the department in rule. The rules established by the department must be developed in consultation with the largest organization representing fire chiefs in the state of Washington.

(9) Adult family homes shall have clean, functioning, and safe household items and furnishings.

(10) Adult family homes shall provide a nutritious and balanced diet and shall recognize residents' needs for special diets.

(11) Adult family homes shall establish health care procedures for the care of residents including medication administration and emergency medical care.

(a) Adult family home residents shall be permitted to self-administer medications.

(b) Adult family home providers may administer medications and deliver special care only to the extent authorized by law.

(12) Adult family home providers shall either: (a) Reside at the adult family home; or (b) employ or otherwise contract with a qualified resident manager to reside at the adult family home. The

department may exempt, for good cause, a provider from the requirements of this subsection by rule.

(13) A provider will ensure that any volunteer, student, employee, or person residing within the adult family home who will have unsupervised access to any resident shall not be disqualified by a department background check. A provider may conditionally employ a person pending the completion of a criminal conviction background inquiry, but may not allow the person to have unsupervised access to any resident.

(14) A provider shall offer activities to residents under care as defined by the department in rule.

(15) An adult family home must be financially solvent, and upon request for good cause, shall provide the department with detailed information about the home's finances. Financial records of the adult family home may be examined when the department has good cause to believe that a financial obligation related to resident care or services will not be met.

(16) An adult family home provider must ensure that staff are competent and receive necessary training to perform assigned tasks. Staff must satisfactorily complete department-approved staff orientation, basic training, and continuing education as specified by the department by rule. The provider shall ensure that a qualified caregiver is on-site whenever a resident is at the adult family home; any exceptions will be specified by the department in rule. Notwithstanding RCW 70.128.230, until orientation and basic training are successfully completed, a caregiver may not provide hands-on personal care to a resident without on-site supervision by a person who has successfully completed basic training or been exempted from the training pursuant to statute.

(17) The provider and resident manager must assure that there is:

(a) A mechanism to communicate with the resident in his or her primary language either through a qualified person on-site or readily available at all times, or other reasonable accommodations, such as language lines; and

(b) Staff on-site at all times capable of understanding and speaking English well enough to be able to respond appropriately to emergency situations and be able to read and understand resident care plans. [2021 c 219 s 7; 2019 c 80 s 1; 2012 c 164 s 704; 2011 1st sp.s. c 3 s 206; 2000 c 121 s 6; 1995 c 260 s 6; 1989 c 427 s 26.]

Rules—Conflict with federal requirements—2021 c 219: See notes following RCW 43.20A.715.

Finding—Intent—Rules—Effective date—2012 c 164: See notes following RCW 18.88B.010.

Finding—Intent—2011 1st sp.s. c 3: See note following RCW 70.128.005.

RCW 70.128.135 Compliance with chapter 70.24 RCW. Adult family homes shall comply with the provisions of chapter 70.24 RCW. [2001 c 319 s 9.]

RCW 70.128.140 Compliance with local codes and state and local fire safety regulations. (1) Each adult family home shall meet applicable local licensing, zoning, building, and housing codes, and state and local fire safety regulations as they pertain to a single-family residence. It is the responsibility of the home to check with local authorities to ensure all local codes are met.

(2) An adult family home must be considered a residential use of property for zoning and public and private utility rate purposes. Adult family homes are a permitted use in all areas zoned for residential or commercial purposes, including areas zoned for single-family dwellings. [2011 1st sp.s. c 3 s 207; 1995 1st sp.s. c 18 s 26; 1989 c 427 s 27.]

Finding—Intent—2011 1st sp.s. c 3: See note following RCW 70.128.005.

Conflict with federal requirements—Severability—Effective date—1995 1st sp.s. c 18: See notes following RCW 74.39A.030.

RCW 70.128.150 Adult family homes to work with local quality assurance projects—Interference with representative of ombuds program—Penalty. Whenever possible, adult family homes are encouraged to contact and work with local quality assurance projects such as the volunteer ombuds with the goal of assuring high quality care is provided in the home.

An adult family home may not willfully interfere with a representative of the long-term care ombuds program in the performance of official duties. The department shall impose a penalty of not more than one thousand dollars for any such willful interference. [2013 c 23 s 181; 1995 1st sp.s. c 18 s 27; 1989 c 427 s 28.]

Conflict with federal requirements—Severability—Effective date—1995 1st sp.s. c 18: See notes following RCW 74.39A.030.

RCW 70.128.155 Resident contact information—Department requirements and duties. (1) The department shall require each adult family home to:

(a) Create and regularly maintain a current resident roster containing the name and room number of each resident and provide a written copy immediately upon an in-person request from any long-term care ombuds;

(b) Create and regularly maintain current, accurate, and aggregated contact information for all residents, including contact information for the resident representative, if any, of each resident. The contact information for each resident must include the resident's name, room number, and, if available, telephone number and email address. The contact information for each resident representative must include the resident representative's name, relationship to the resident, phone number, and, if available, email and mailing address;

(c) Record and update the aggregated contact information required by this section, upon receipt of new or updated contact information from the resident or resident representative; and

(d) Upon the written request of any long-term care ombuds that includes reference to this section and the relevant legal functions

and duties of long-term care ombuds, provide a copy of the aggregated contact information required by this section within 48 hours, or within a reasonable time if agreed to by the requesting long-term care ombuds, by electronic copy to the secure email address or facsimile number provided in the written request.

(2) In accordance with the federal older Americans act, federal regulations, and state laws that govern the state long-term care ombuds program, the department shall inform adult family homes that:

(a) Any long-term care ombuds is authorized to request and obtain from adult family homes the information required by this section in order to perform the functions and duties of long-term care ombuds as set forth in federal and state laws;

(b) The state long-term care ombuds program and all long-term care ombuds are considered a "health oversight agency," so that the federal health insurance portability and accountability act and chapter 70.02 RCW do not preclude adult family homes from providing the information required by this section when requested by any long-term care ombuds, and pursuant to these laws, the federal older Americans act, federal regulations, and state laws that govern the state long-term care ombuds program, adult family homes are not required to seek or obtain consent from residents or resident representatives prior to providing the information required by this section in accordance with the requirements of this section;

(c) The information required by this section, when provided by an adult family home to a requesting long-term care ombuds, becomes property of the state long-term care ombuds program and is subject to all state and federal laws governing the confidentiality and disclosure of the files, records, and information maintained by the state long-term care ombuds program or any local long-term care ombuds entity; and

(d) The adult family home may not refuse to provide or unreasonably delay providing the resident roster, the contact information for a resident or resident representative, or the aggregated contact information required by this section, on any basis, including on the basis that the adult family home must first seek or obtain consent from one or more of the residents or resident representatives.

(3) Nothing in this section shall interfere with or diminish the authority of any long-term care ombuds to access facilities, residents, and resident records as otherwise authorized by law.

(4) For the purposes of this section, "resident representative" has the same meaning as in RCW 70.129.010. [2021 c 159 s 17.]

Findings—2021 c 159: See note following RCW 18.20.520.

RCW 70.128.160 Department authority to take actions in response to noncompliance or violations—Civil penalties—Adult family home account. (1) The department is authorized to take one or more of the actions listed in subsection (2) of this section in any case in which the department finds that an adult family home provider has:

(a) Failed or refused to comply with the requirements of this chapter or the rules adopted under this chapter;

(b) Operated an adult family home without a license or under a revoked license;

(c) Knowingly or with reason to know made a false statement of material fact on his or her application for license or any data attached thereto, or in any matter under investigation by the department; or

(d) Willfully prevented or interfered with any inspection or investigation by the department.

(2) When authorized by subsection (1) of this section, the department may take one or more of the following actions:

(a) Refuse to issue a license;

(b) Impose reasonable conditions on a license, such as correction within a specified time, training, and limits on the type of clients the provider may admit or serve;

(c) Impose civil penalties of at least one hundred dollars per day per violation;

(d) Impose civil penalties of up to three thousand dollars for each incident that violates adult family home licensing laws and rules, including, but not limited to, chapters 70.128, 70.129, 74.34, and 74.39A RCW and related rules. Each day upon which the same or substantially similar action occurs is a separate violation subject to the assessment of a separate penalty;

(e) Impose civil penalties of up to ten thousand dollars for a current or former licensed provider who is operating an unlicensed home;

(f) Suspend, revoke, or refuse to renew a license; or

(g) Suspend admissions to the adult family home by imposing stop placement.

(3) When the department orders stop placement, the facility shall not admit any person until the stop placement order is terminated. The department may approve readmission of a resident to the facility from a hospital or nursing home during the stop placement. The department shall terminate the stop placement only after: (a) The violations necessitating the stop placement have been corrected; and (b) the provider exhibits the capacity to maintain correction of the violations previously found deficient. However, if upon the revisit the department finds new violations that the department reasonably believes will result in a new stop placement, the previous stop placement shall remain in effect until the new stop placement is imposed. In order to protect the home's existing residents from potential ongoing neglect, when the provider has been cited for a violation that is repeated, uncorrected, pervasive, or presents a threat to the health, safety, or welfare of one or more residents, and the department has imposed a stop placement, the department shall also impose a condition on license or other remedy to facilitate or spur prompter compliance if the violation has not been corrected, and the provider has not exhibited the capacity to maintain correction, within sixty days of the stop placement.

(4) Nothing in subsection (3) of this section is intended to apply to stop placement imposed in conjunction with a license revocation or summary suspension or to prevent the department from imposing a condition on license or other remedy prior to sixty days after a stop placement, if the department considers it necessary to protect one or more residents' well-being. After a department finding of a violation for which a stop placement has been imposed, the department shall make an on-site revisit of the provider within fifteen working days from the request for revisit, to ensure correction of the violation. For violations that are serious or recurring or uncorrected following a previous citation, and create

actual or threatened harm to one or more residents' well-being, including violations of residents' rights, the department shall make an on-site revisit as soon as appropriate to ensure correction of the violation. Verification of correction of all other violations may be made by either a department on-site revisit or by written or photographic documentation found by the department to be credible. This subsection does not prevent the department from enforcing license suspensions or revocations. Nothing in this subsection shall interfere with or diminish the department's authority and duty to ensure that the provider adequately cares for residents, including to make departmental on-site revisits as needed to ensure that the provider protects residents, and to enforce compliance with this chapter.

(5) Chapter 34.05 RCW applies to department actions under this section, except that orders of the department imposing license suspension, stop placement, or conditions for continuation of a license are effective immediately upon notice and shall continue in effect pending a hearing, which must commence no later than sixty days after receipt of a request for a hearing. The time for commencement of a hearing may be extended by agreement of the parties or by the presiding officer for good cause shown by either party, but must commence no later than one hundred twenty days after receipt of a request for a hearing.

(6) A separate adult family home account is created in the custody of the state treasurer. All receipts from civil penalties imposed under this chapter must be deposited into the account. Only the director or the director's designee may authorize expenditures from the account. The account is subject to allotment procedures under chapter 43.88 RCW, but an appropriation is not required for expenditures. The department shall use the special account only for promoting the quality of life and care of residents living in adult family homes. During the 2015-2017 fiscal biennium, the account may be expended for funding costs associated with the adult family home program.

(7) The department shall by rule specify criteria as to when and how the sanctions specified in this section must be applied. The criteria must provide for the imposition of incrementally more severe penalties for deficiencies that are repeated, uncorrected, pervasive, or present a threat to the health, safety, or welfare of one or more residents. The criteria shall be tiered such that those homes consistently found to have deficiencies will be subjected to increasingly severe penalties. The department shall implement prompt and specific enforcement remedies without delay for providers found to have delivered care or failed to deliver care resulting in problems that are repeated, uncorrected, pervasive, or present a threat to the health, safety, or welfare of one or more residents. In the selection of remedies, the health, safety, and well-being of residents must be of paramount importance. [2016 sp.s. c 36 s 944; 2015 c 266 s 1; 2013 c 300 s 4; 2011 1st sp.s. c 3 s 208; 2001 c 193 s 5; 1995 1st sp.s. c 18 s 28; 1989 c 427 s 31.]

Effective date—2016 sp.s. c 36: See note following RCW 18.20.430.

Finding—Intent—2011 1st sp.s. c 3: See note following RCW 70.128.005.

~~Conflict with federal requirements—Severability—Effective date—~~
1995 1st sp.s. c 18: See notes following RCW 74.39A.030.

RCW 70.128.163 Temporary management program—Purposes—Voluntary participation—Temporary management duties, duration—Rules. (1) When the department has summarily suspended a license, the licensee may, subject to the department's approval, elect to participate in a temporary management program. All provisions of this section shall apply.

The purposes of a temporary management program are as follows:

- (a) To mitigate dislocation and transfer trauma of residents while the department and licensee may pursue dispute resolution or appeal of a summary suspension of license;
- (b) To facilitate the continuity of safe and appropriate resident care and services;
- (c) To preserve a residential option that meets a specialized service need and/or is in a geographical area that has a lack of available providers; and
- (d) To provide residents with the opportunity for orderly discharge.

(2) Licensee participation in the temporary management program is voluntary. The department shall have the discretion to approve any temporary manager and the temporary management arrangements. The temporary management shall assume the total responsibility for the daily operations of the home.

(3) The temporary management shall contract with the licensee as an independent contractor and is responsible for ensuring that all minimum licensing requirements are met. The temporary management shall protect the health, safety, and well-being of the residents for the duration of the temporary management and shall perform all acts reasonably necessary to ensure that residents' needs are met. The licensee is responsible for all costs related to administering the temporary management program and contracting with the temporary management. The temporary management agreement shall at a minimum address the following:

- (a) Provision of liability insurance to protect residents and their property;
- (b) Preservation of resident trust funds;
- (c) The timely payment of past due or current accounts, operating expenses, including but not limited to staff compensation, and all debt that comes due during the period of the temporary management;
- (d) The responsibilities for addressing all other financial obligations that would interfere with the ability of the temporary manager to provide adequate care and services to residents; and
- (e) The authority of the temporary manager to manage the home, including the hiring, managing, and firing of employees for good cause, and to provide adequate care and services to residents.

(4) The licensee and department shall provide written notification immediately to all residents, legal representatives, interested family members, and the state long-term care ombuds program, of the temporary management and the reasons for it. This notification shall include notice that residents may move from the home without notifying the licensee in advance, and without incurring any charges, fees, or costs otherwise available for insufficient advance notice, during the temporary management period.

(5) The temporary management period under this section concludes twenty-eight days after issuance of the formal notification of enforcement action or conclusion of administrative proceedings, whichever date is later. Nothing in this section precludes the department from revoking its approval of the temporary management and/or exercising its licensing enforcement authority under this chapter. The department's decision whether to approve or to revoke a temporary management arrangement is not subject to the administrative procedure act, chapter 34.05 RCW.

(6) The department is authorized to adopt rules implementing this section. In implementing this section, the department shall consult with consumers, advocates, and organizations representing adult family homes. The department may recruit and approve qualified, licensed providers interested in serving as temporary managers. [2013 c 23 s 182; 2009 c 560 s 6; 2001 c 193 s 6.]

Intent—Effective date—Disposition of property and funds—Assignment/delegation of contractual rights or duties—2009 c 560: See notes following RCW 18.06.080.

RCW 70.128.167 Disputed violations, enforcement remedies—Informal dispute resolution process. (1) The licensee or its designee has the right to an informal dispute resolution process to dispute any violation found or enforcement remedy imposed by the department during a licensing inspection or complaint investigation. The purpose of the informal dispute resolution process is to provide an opportunity for an exchange of information that may lead to the modification, deletion, or removal of a violation, or parts of a violation, or enforcement remedy imposed by the department.

(2) The informal dispute resolution process provided by the department shall include, but is not necessarily limited to, an opportunity for review by a department employee who did not participate in, or oversee, the determination of the violation or enforcement remedy under dispute. The department shall develop, or further develop, an informal dispute resolution process consistent with this section.

(3) A request for an informal dispute resolution shall be made to the department within ten working days from the receipt of a written finding of a violation or enforcement remedy. The request shall identify the violation or violations and enforcement remedy or remedies being disputed. The department shall convene a meeting, when possible, within ten working days of receipt of the request for informal dispute resolution, unless by mutual agreement a later date is agreed upon.

(4) If the department determines that a violation or enforcement remedy should not be cited or imposed, the department shall delete the violation or immediately rescind or modify the enforcement remedy. Upon request, the department shall issue a clean copy of the revised report, statement of deficiencies, or notice of enforcement action.

(5) The request for informal dispute resolution does not delay the effective date of any enforcement remedy imposed by the department, except that civil monetary fines are not payable until the exhaustion of any formal hearing and appeal rights provided under this chapter. The licensee shall submit to the department, within the time period prescribed by the department, a plan of correction to address

any undisputed violations, and including any violations that still remain following the informal dispute resolution. [2001 c 193 s 8.]

RCW 70.128.170 Homes relying on prayer for healing—Application of chapter. Nothing in this chapter or the rules adopted under it may be construed as authorizing the supervision, regulation, or control of the remedial care or treatment of residents in any adult family home conducted by and for the adherents of a church or religious denomination who rely upon spiritual means alone through prayer for healing in accordance with the tenets and practices of such church or religious denomination and the bona fide religious beliefs genuinely held by such adherents. [1989 c 427 s 33.]

RCW 70.128.200 Toll-free telephone number for complaints—Discrimination or retaliation prohibited. (1) The department shall maintain a toll-free telephone number for receiving complaints regarding adult family homes.

(2) An adult family home shall post in a place and manner clearly visible to residents and visitors the department's toll-free complaint telephone number.

(3) No adult family home shall discriminate or retaliate in any manner against a resident on the basis or for the reason that such resident or any other person made a complaint to the department or the long-term care ombuds or cooperated with the investigation of such a complaint. [2013 c 23 s 183; 1995 1st sp.s. c 18 s 30.]

Conflict with federal requirements—Severability—Effective date—1995 1st sp.s. c 18: See notes following RCW 74.39A.030.

RCW 70.128.210 Training standards review—Delivery system—Issues reviewed—Report to the legislature. (1) The department of social and health services shall review, in coordination with the department of health, the *nursing care quality assurance commission, adult family home providers, assisted living facility providers, in-home personal care providers, and long-term care consumers and advocates, training standards for providers, resident managers, and resident caregiving staff. The departments and the *commission shall submit to the appropriate committees of the house of representatives and the senate by December 1, 1998, specific recommendations on training standards and the delivery system, including necessary statutory changes and funding requirements. Any proposed enhancements shall be consistent with this section, shall take into account and not duplicate other training requirements applicable to adult family homes and staff, and shall be developed with the input of adult family home and resident representatives, health care professionals, and other vested interest groups. Training standards and the delivery system shall be relevant to the needs of residents served by the adult family home and recipients of long-term in-home personal care services and shall be sufficient to ensure that providers, resident managers, and caregiving staff have the skills and knowledge necessary to provide high quality, appropriate care.

(2) The recommendations on training standards and the delivery system developed under subsection (1) of this section shall be based

on a review and consideration of the following: Quality of care; availability of training; affordability, including the training costs incurred by the department of social and health services and private providers; portability of existing training requirements; competency testing; practical and clinical coursework; methods of delivery of training; standards for management; uniform caregiving staff training; necessary enhancements for special needs populations; and resident rights training. Residents with special needs include, but are not limited to, residents with a diagnosis of mental illness, dementia, or developmental disability. Development of training recommendations for developmental disabilities services shall be coordinated with the study requirements in section 6, chapter 272, Laws of 1998.

(3) The department of social and health services shall report to the appropriate committees of the house of representatives and the senate by December 1, 1998, on the cost of implementing the proposed training standards for state-funded residents, and on the extent to which that cost is covered by existing state payment rates. [2012 c 10 s 56; 1998 c 272 s 3.]

***Reviser's note:** The reference to "nursing care quality assurance commission" was changed to "board of nursing" by 2023 c 123.

Application—2012 c 10: See note following RCW 18.20.010.

Findings—Severability—Effective date—1998 c 272: See notes following RCW 18.20.230.

RCW 70.128.220 Elder care—Professionalization of providers.

Adult family homes have developed rapidly in response to the health and social needs of the aging population in community settings, especially as the aging population has increased in proportion to the general population. The growing demand for elder care with a new focus on issues affecting senior citizens, including persons with developmental disabilities, mental illness, or dementia, has prompted a growing professionalization of adult family home providers to address quality care and quality of life issues consistent with standards of accountability and regulatory safeguards for the health and safety of the residents. [2011 1st sp.s. c 3 s 209; 2002 c 223 s 3; 1998 c 272 s 9.]

Finding—Intent—2011 1st sp.s. c 3: See note following RCW 70.128.005.

Findings—Severability—Effective date—1998 c 272: See notes following RCW 18.20.230.

RCW 70.128.230 Long-term caregiver training. (1) The definitions in this subsection apply throughout this section unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(a) "Caregiver" includes all adult family home resident managers and any person who provides residents with hands-on personal care on behalf of an adult family home, except volunteers who are directly supervised.

(b) "Indirect supervision" means oversight by a person who has demonstrated competency in the core areas or has been fully exempted

from the training requirements pursuant to this section and is quickly and easily available to the caregiver, but not necessarily on-site.

(2) Training must have three components: Orientation, basic training, and continuing education. All adult family home providers, resident managers, and employees, or volunteers who routinely interact with residents shall complete orientation. Caregivers shall complete orientation, basic training, and continuing education.

(3) Orientation consists of introductory information on residents' rights, communication skills, fire and life safety, and universal precautions. Orientation must be provided at the facility by appropriate adult family home staff to all adult family home employees before the employees have routine interaction with residents.

(4) Basic training consists of modules on the core knowledge and skills that caregivers need to learn and understand to effectively and safely provide care to residents. Basic training must be outcome-based, and the effectiveness of the basic training must be measured by demonstrated competency in the core areas through the use of a competency test. Basic training must be completed by caregivers within one hundred twenty days of the date on which they begin to provide hands-on care. Until competency in the core areas has been demonstrated, caregivers shall not provide hands-on personal care to residents without direct supervision.

(5) For adult family homes that serve residents with special needs such as dementia, developmental disabilities, or mental illness, specialty training is required of providers and resident managers.

(a) Specialty training consists of modules on the core knowledge and skills that providers and resident managers need to effectively and safely provide care to residents with special needs. Specialty training should be integrated into basic training wherever appropriate. Specialty training must be outcome-based, and the effectiveness of the specialty training measured by demonstrated competency in the core specialty areas through the use of a competency test.

(b) Specialty training must be completed by providers and resident managers before admitting and serving residents who have been determined to have special needs related to mental illness, dementia, or a developmental disability. Should a resident develop special needs while living in a home without specialty designation, the provider and resident manager have one hundred twenty days to complete specialty training.

(6) Continuing education consists of ongoing delivery of information to caregivers on various topics relevant to the care setting and care needs of residents. Competency testing is not required for continuing education. Continuing education is not required in the same calendar year in which basic or modified basic training is successfully completed. Continuing education is required in each calendar year thereafter. If specialty training is completed, the specialty training applies toward any continuing education requirement for up to two years following the completion of the specialty training.

(7) Persons who successfully complete the competency challenge test for basic training are fully exempt from the basic training requirements of this section. Persons who successfully complete the specialty training competency challenge test are fully exempt from the specialty training requirements of this section.

(8) (a) Registered nurses and licensed practical nurses licensed under chapter 18.79 RCW are exempt from any continuing education requirement established under this section.

(b) The department may adopt rules that would exempt licensed persons from all or part of the training requirements under this chapter, if they are (i) performing the tasks for which they are licensed and (ii) subject to chapter 18.130 RCW.

(9) In an effort to improve access to training and education and reduce costs, especially for rural communities, the adult family home training network must include the use of innovative types of learning strategies such as internet resources, videotapes, and distance learning using satellite technology coordinated through community colleges, private associations, or other entities, as defined by the department.

(10) The adult family home training network shall assist adult family homes that desire to deliver facility-based training with facility designated trainers, or adult family homes that desire to pool their resources to create shared training systems. The department shall develop criteria for reviewing and approving trainers and training materials. The department may approve a curriculum based upon attestation by an adult family home administrator that the adult family home's training curriculum addresses basic and specialty training competencies identified by the department, and shall review a curriculum to verify that it meets these requirements. The department may conduct the review as part of the next regularly scheduled inspection authorized under RCW 70.128.070. The department shall rescind approval of any curriculum if it determines that the curriculum does not meet these requirements.

(11) The department shall adopt rules by September 1, 2002, for the implementation of this section.

(12) (a) Except as provided in (b) of this subsection, the orientation, basic training, specialty training, and continuing education requirements of this section commence September 1, 2002, and shall be applied to (i) employees hired subsequent to September 1, 2002; or (ii) existing employees that on September 1, 2002, have not successfully completed the training requirements under RCW 70.128.120 or 70.128.130 and this section. Existing employees who have not successfully completed the training requirements under RCW 70.128.120 or 70.128.130 shall be subject to all applicable requirements of this section.

(b) Beginning January 7, 2012, long-term care workers, as defined in RCW 74.39A.009, employed by an adult family home are also subject to the training requirements under RCW 74.39A.074.

(13) If a pandemic, natural disaster, or other declared state of emergency makes specialty training unavailable, the department may adopt rules to allow an adult family home where the provider and resident manager have not completed specialty training to admit a resident or residents with special needs related to mental illness, dementia, or a developmental disability, or to care for a resident or residents already living in the home who develop special needs. Such rules must include information about how to complete the specialty training once the training is available.

(a) Rules adopted under this subsection (13) are effective until the termination of the pandemic, natural disaster, or other declared state of emergency or until the department determines that providers and resident managers who were unable to complete the specialty training required in subsection (5) (b) of this section have had

adequate access to complete the required training, whichever is later. Once the department determines a rule adopted under this subsection (13) is no longer necessary, it must repeal the rule under RCW 34.05.353.

(b) Within 12 months of the termination of the pandemic, natural disaster, or other declared state of emergency, the department shall conduct a review of training compliance with subsection (5)(b) of this section and provide the legislature with a report. [2021 c 203 s 11; 2019 c 466 s 5; 2013 c 259 s 5; 2012 c 164 s 705; 2002 c 233 s 3; 2000 c 121 s 3.]

Effective date—Retroactive application—2021 c 203: See notes following RCW 43.43.832.

Finding—Intent—Rules—Effective date—2012 c 164: See notes following RCW 18.88B.010.

Effective date—2002 c 233: See note following RCW 18.20.270.

RCW 70.128.240 Approval system—Department-approved training—Adoption of rules. By March 1, 2002, the department must, by rule, create an approval system for those seeking to conduct department-approved training under RCW 70.128.230, *70.128.120 (5) and (6), and **70.128.130(10). The department shall adopt rules based on recommendations of the community long-term care training and education steering committee established in ***RCW 74.39A.190. [2000 c 121 s 7.]

Reviser's note: *(1) RCW 70.128.120 was amended by 2001 c 319 s 8, changing subsections (5) and (6) to subsections (6) and (7).

** (2) RCW 70.128.130 was amended by 2011 1st sp.s. c 3 s 206, changing subsection (10) to subsection (16).

*** (3) RCW 74.39A.190 was repealed by 2007 c 361 s 10.

RCW 70.128.250 Required training and continuing education—Food safety training and testing. The department shall implement, as part of the required training and continuing education, food safety training and testing integrated into the curriculum that meets the standards established by the state board of health pursuant to chapter 69.06 RCW. Individual food handler permits are not required for persons who begin working in an adult family home after June 30, 2005, and successfully complete the basic and modified-basic caregiver training, provided they receive information or training regarding safe food handling practices from the employer prior to providing food handling or service for the clients. Documentation that the information or training has been provided to the individual must be kept on file by the employer.

Licensed adult family home providers or employees who hold individual food handler permits prior to June 30, 2005, will be required to maintain continuing education of .5 hours per year in order to maintain food handling and safety training. Licensed adult family home providers or employees who hold individual food handler permits prior to June 30, 2005, will not be required to renew the permit provided the continuing education requirement as stated above is met. [2005 c 505 s 6.]

RCW 70.128.260 Limitation on restrictive covenants. (1) To effectuate the public policies of this chapter, restrictive covenants may not limit, directly or indirectly:

(a) Persons with disabilities from living in an adult family home licensed under this chapter; or

(b) Persons and legal entities from operating adult family homes licensed under this chapter, whether for-profit or nonprofit, to provide services covered under this chapter. However, this subsection does not prohibit application of reasonable nondiscriminatory regulation, including but not limited to landscaping standards or regulation of sign location or size, that applies to all residential property subject to the restrictive covenant.

(2) This section applies retroactively to all restrictive covenants in effect on July 26, 2009. Any provision in a restrictive covenant in effect on or after July 26, 2009, that is inconsistent with subsection (1) of this section is unenforceable to the extent of the conflict. [2009 c 530 s 3.]

RCW 70.128.270 Legislative intent—Enacting recommendations included in the adult family home quality assurance panel report. (1)

The protection of vulnerable residents living in adult family homes and other long-term care facilities in the state is a matter of ongoing concern and grave importance. In 2011, the legislature examined problems with the quality of care and oversight of adult family homes in Washington. The 2011 legislature passed Engrossed Substitute House Bill No. 1277 to address some of these issues, and in addition, created an adult family home quality assurance panel, chaired by the state long-term care ombudsman [ombuds], to meet and make recommendations to the governor and legislature by December 1, 2012, for further improvements in adult family home care and the oversight of the homes by the department of social and health services.

(2) The legislature recognizes that significant progress has been made over the years in adult family home care, and that many adult family homes provide high quality care and are the preferred alternative for many residents in contrast to a larger care facility setting. The legislature finds however that the quality of care in some adult family homes would be improved, and abuse and neglect would decline, if these homes' caregivers and providers received better training and mentoring, residents and their families were more informed and able to select an appropriate home, and oversight by the department of social and health services was more vigorous and prompt against poorly performing homes. It is therefore the intent of the legislature to enact the recommendations included in the adult family home quality assurance panel report in order to improve the quality of care of vulnerable residents and the department's oversight of adult family homes. [2013 c 300 s 1.]

RCW 70.128.280 Required disclosure—Forms—Decrease in scope of care, services, activities—Notice—Increased needs of a resident—Denial of admission to a prospective resident—Department website.

(1) In order to enhance the selection of an appropriate adult family home, all adult family homes licensed under this chapter shall disclose the scope of, and charges for, the care, services, and

activities provided by the home or customarily arranged for by the home. The disclosure must be provided to the home's residents and the residents' representatives, if any, prior to admission, and to interested prospective residents and their representatives upon request, using standardized disclosure forms developed by the department with stakeholders' input. The home may also disclose supplemental information to prospective residents and other interested persons.

(2) (a) The disclosure forms that the department develops must be standardized, reasonable in length, and easy to read. The form setting forth the scope of an adult family home's care, services, and activities must be available from the adult family home through a link to the department's website developed pursuant to this section. This form must indicate, among other categories, the scope of personal care and medication service provided, the scope of skilled nursing services or nursing delegation provided or available, any specialty care designations held by the adult family home, the customary number of caregivers present during the day and whether the home has awake staff at night, any particular cultural or language access available, and clearly state whether the home admits medicaid clients or retains residents who later become eligible for medicaid. The adult family home shall provide or arrange for the care, services, and activities disclosed in its form.

(b) The department must also develop a second standardized disclosure form with stakeholders' input for use by adult family homes to set forth an adult family home's charges for its care, services, items, and activities, including the charges not covered by the home's daily or monthly rate, or by medicaid, medicare, or other programs. This form must be available from the home and disclosed to residents and their representatives, if any, prior to admission, and to interested prospective residents and their representatives upon request.

(3) (a) If the adult family home decreases the scope of care, services, or activities it provides, due to circumstances beyond the home's control, the home shall provide a minimum of thirty days' written notice to the residents, and the residents' representative if any, before the effective date of the decrease in the scope of care, services, or activities provided.

(b) If the adult family home voluntarily decreases the scope of care, services, or activities it provides, and any such decrease will result in the discharge of one or more residents, then ninety days' written notice must be provided prior to the effective date of the decrease. Notice must be given to the residents and the residents' representative, if any.

(c) If the adult family home increases the scope of care, services, or activities it provides, the home shall promptly provide written notice to the residents, and the residents' representative if any, and shall indicate the date on which the increase is effective.

(4) When the care needs of a resident exceed the disclosed scope of care or services that the adult family home provides, the home may exceed the care or services previously disclosed, provided that the additional care or services are permitted by the adult family home's license, and the home can safely and appropriately serve the resident with available staff or through the provision of reasonable accommodations required by state or federal law. The provision of care or services to a resident that exceed those previously disclosed by the home does not mean that the home is capable of or required to

provide the same care or services to other residents, unless required as a reasonable accommodation under state or federal law.

(5) An adult family home may deny admission to a prospective resident if the home determines that the needs of the prospective resident cannot be met, so long as the adult family home operates in compliance with state and federal law, including RCW 70.129.030(3) and the reasonable accommodation requirements of state and federal antidiscrimination laws.

(6) The department shall work with consumers, advocates, and other stakeholders to combine and improve existing web resources to create a more robust, comprehensive, and user-friendly website for family members, residents, and prospective residents of adult family homes in Washington. The department may contract with outside vendors and experts to assist in the development of the website. The website should be easy to navigate and have links to information important for residents, prospective residents, and their family members or representatives including, but not limited to: (a) Explanations of the types of licensed long-term care facilities, levels of care, and specialty designations; (b) lists of suggested questions when looking for a care facility; (c) warning signs of abuse, neglect, or financial exploitation; and (d) contact information for the department and the long-term care ombuds. In addition, the consumer oriented website should include a searchable list of all adult family homes in Washington, with links to the following documents and information for the previous three years: (i) Deficiency-free inspection letters; (ii) statements of deficiency related to inspection visits; (iii) statements of deficiency related to complaint investigations requiring an attestation of correction; (iv) notices of return to compliance related to [(d)] (ii) and (iii) of this subsection; and (v) enforcement action notices issued by the department. If a violation or enforcement remedy is deleted, rescinded, or modified under RCW 70.128.167 or chapter 34.05 RCW, the department shall make the appropriate changes to the information on the website as soon as reasonably feasible, but no later than thirty days after the violation or enforcement remedy has been deleted, rescinded, or modified. To facilitate the comparison of adult family homes, the website should also include a link to each licensed adult family home's disclosure form required by subsection (2)(a) of this section. The department's website should also include periodically updated information about whether an adult family home has a current vacancy, if the home provides such information to the department, or may include links to other consumer-oriented websites with the vacancy information. [2024 c 235 s 1; 2013 c 300 s 3.]

RCW 70.128.290 Correction of a violation or deficiency—Not included in a home's report—Criteria. (1) If during an inspection, reinspection, or complaint investigation by the department, an adult family home corrects a violation or deficiency that the department discovers, the department shall record and consider such violation or deficiency for purposes of the home's compliance history; however, the licensor or complaint investigator may not include in the home's report the violation or deficiency if the violation or deficiency:

- (a) Is corrected to the satisfaction of the department prior to the exit conference;
- (b) Is not recurring; and

(c) Did not pose a significant risk of harm or actual harm to a resident.

(2) For the purposes of this section, "recurring" means that the violation or deficiency was found under the same regulation or statute in one of the two most recent preceding inspections, reinspections, or complaint investigations. [2013 c 300 s 5.]

RCW 70.128.300 Services for adult family home residents with a primary need of care related to a developmental or intellectual disability—Services for residents of adult family homes dedicated solely to dementia care—Design and implementation—Recommendations.

(1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the developmental disabilities administration within the department shall work with stakeholders to design and implement services for individuals living in adult family homes who have a primary need of care related to a developmental or intellectual disability. These services must be enhancements or in addition to services currently available, and designed to meet the specific provisions related to the assessment, environment, regulations, provision of care, and training requirements. These services must be enhancements or in addition to services currently available, and designed to support an intentional environment to improve resident quality of life, promote resident safety, including protecting safety in relationships between residents, increase resident length of stay, clarify regulations, streamline training requirements, reduce the need for institutional settings, and attract more adult family home providers to develop such highly needed resources. The recommendations for these services must be completed by June 1, 2020, for consideration and implementation in the 2021-2023 biennium.

(2) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the aging and long-term support administration within the department shall work with stakeholders to design and implement proposed services for individuals living in adult family homes that are dedicated solely to the care of individuals with dementia, including Alzheimer's disease. These services must be enhancements or in addition to services currently available, and designed to include specific provisions related to the assessment, environment, regulations, provision of care, and training requirements. These services must be designed to support an intentional environment to improve resident quality of life, promote resident safety, including protecting safety in relationships between residents, increase resident length of stay, clarify regulations, streamline training requirements, reduce the need for institutional settings, and attract more adult family home providers to develop such highly needed resources. The recommendations for these services must be completed by June 1, 2020, for consideration and implementation in the 2021-2023 biennium. [2019 c 466 s 1.]

RCW 70.128.305 Adult family home training network—Requirements.

(1) If the department has any contracts for personal care services with any adult family home represented by an exclusive bargaining representative:

(a) Effective July 1, 2020, training required under this chapter for adult family homes must be available through an adult family home training network.

(b) The exclusive bargaining representative shall designate the adult family home training network.

(c) The parties to the collective bargaining agreement must negotiate a memorandum of understanding to provide for contributions to the adult family home training network. Contributions to the adult family home training network must begin no sooner than January 1, 2020. Contributions to the adult family home training network for fiscal year 2021 must be limited to no more than the amount appropriated for training in the 2019-2021 collective bargaining agreement.

(d) Contributions must be provided to the adult family home training network through a vendor contract executed by the department.

(e) The adult family home training network shall provide reports as required by the department verifying that providers have complied with all training requirements.

(2) Nothing in subsection (1) of this section:

(a) Limits the ability of a department-approved training entity or instructor to provide training to an adult family home provider, resident manager, or caregiver;

(b) Requires that a department-approved training entity or instructor contract with an adult family home training network; or

(c) Prevents an adult family home provider, resident manager, or caregiver from receiving training from a department-approved training entity or instructor. [2019 c 466 s 3.]

RCW 70.128.306 Stop placement orders and limited stop placement orders. The department must require an adult family home that is subject to a stop placement order or limited stop placement order under RCW 70.128.160 to publicly post in a conspicuous place at the adult family home a standardized notice that the department has issued a stop placement order or limited stop placement order for the adult family home. The standardized notice shall be developed by the department to include the date of the stop placement order or limited stop placement order, any conditions placed upon the adult family home's license, contact information for the department, contact information for the administrator or provider of the adult family home, and a statement that anyone may contact the department or the administrator or provider for further information. The notice must remain posted until the department has terminated the stop placement order or limited stop placement order. [2021 c 159 s 18.]

Findings—2021 c 159: See note following RCW 18.20.520.

RCW 70.128.310 Multistate nurse license—Conditions of employment. (1) Beginning September 1, 2023, and annually thereafter, individuals that hold a multistate nurse license issued by a state other than Washington and are employed by adult family homes licensed under this chapter shall complete any demographic data surveys required by the board of nursing in rule as a condition of employment.

(2) Individuals that hold a multistate nurse license issued by a state other than Washington and are employed by adult family homes

licensed under this chapter shall complete the suicide assessment, treatment, and management training required by RCW 43.70.442(5)(a) as a condition of employment.

(3) Adult family homes shall report to the board of nursing, within 30 days of employment, all nurses holding a multistate license issued by a state other than Washington and an attestation that the employees holding a multistate license issued by a state other than Washington have completed the tasks required under this section as a condition of employment.

(4) This section is subject to enforcement by the department.
[2023 c 123 s 30.]

Short title—2023 c 123: See RCW 18.80.900.

RCW 70.128.901 Construction—Chapter applicable to state registered domestic partnerships—2009 c 521. For the purposes of this chapter, the terms spouse, marriage, marital, husband, wife, widow, widower, next of kin, and family shall be interpreted as applying equally to state registered domestic partnerships or individuals in state registered domestic partnerships as well as to marital relationships and married persons, and references to dissolution of marriage shall apply equally to state registered domestic partnerships that have been terminated, dissolved, or invalidated, to the extent that such interpretation does not conflict with federal law. Where necessary to implement chapter 521, Laws of 2009, gender-specific terms such as husband and wife used in any statute, rule, or other law shall be construed to be gender neutral, and applicable to individuals in state registered domestic partnerships. [2009 c 521 s 155.]