



Washington State Office of Administrative Hearings

To hear and independently resolve disputes between the public and state agencies with an impartial, quick, and easy to access process.

What Happens When You Request a Hearing in a DCYF case?

- A party may request a hearing to contest a Department of Children Youth and Family (DCYF) action if a DCYF rule or law gives a right to a hearing. You have a limited time to request a hearing. The DCYF notice has instructions on how to request a hearing. It is your responsibility to make sure you request the hearing correctly.
- The hearing is held by an independent and impartial judge at the Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH).
- OAH will mail you a Notice of Hearing with the date, time, and location of your hearing. On average, hearings last about 60 minutes. (Plan for up to 90 minutes.)

Tell OAH immediately if your address or phone number changes.

How to Prepare for Your Hearing

- You may represent yourself at the hearing or choose an attorney or any other person to represent you. (You may not choose a DCYF employee.) You are responsible for any fees charged by your attorney.
- DCYF will be represented by an attorney or administrative hearings coordinator. The DCYF representative will mail you a hearing packet which includes documents provided you and DCYF. Carefully read the hearing packet and have it with you at the time of the hearing.
- If you have documents you want the judge to see, please send them immediately to OAH and DCYF.
- Examples of documents you may want the judge to see:
 - The notice that DCYF sent you that caused you to request the hearing.
 - Documents that show your claims are correct.
 - Proof of any special or financial circumstances that you want considered.
 - Documents that DCYF has told you that you need to show the judge.
- If you need an interpreter, OAH will provide one for you at no cost. You may request an interpreter by calling the OAH office on your Notice of Hearing.
- If you have a disability, you may request an accommodation to help you participate in the hearing. You may request an accommodation by calling the OAH office on your Notice of Hearing.
- If you need to request a change to the time or the date of your hearing, contact the DCYF representative and OAH as soon as possible. Only the judge can grant a change to your scheduled hearing time. Before a decision is made, the judge will want to know if the other parties agree or disagree with your request.

Your hearing may be:

- **Over the phone or**
- **In-person**

The Notice of hearing explains how to participate.



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- The judge may deny your request if you do not have a good reason for the change.
- If the judge changes the hearing time, keep the hearing packet to use during the rescheduled hearing.
- If you are interested in doing legal research, links are available at www.oah.wa.gov and www.washingtonlawhelp.org.
- Here are options for reduced cost legal assistance:

Resource Name	Phone Number	Website
CLEAR: In King County	Call 211	www.resourcehouse.com/win211
CLEAR: Outside King County	888-201-1014	
Veteran’s Project	855-657-8387	http://nwjustice.org/veterans
WA State Bar Association		http://www.wsba.org/Resources-and-Services/Find-Legal-Help
Moderate Means Program	855-741-6930	http://www.wsba.org/Legal-Community/Volunteer-Opportunities/Public-Service-Opportunities/Moderate-Means-Program

How to Participate in Your Hearing

- Follow the instructions in the Notice of Hearing. If you do not appear and participate, you may lose your right to a hearing. The hearing may go on without you.
 - The Notice may instruct you to provide the telephone number where you can be reached.
 - You must have good phone reception.
 - Please note that you must be able to receive calls from a blocked caller ID.
- If you plan to use a witness, they will testify during your scheduled hearing time. Have the number where your witness can be reached. Tell your witness the time and date of the hearing and how to participate. Tell your witness their phone must have good reception and their phone must be able to receive calls from a blocked caller ID.
- The judge will record the hearing. The judge will begin by identifying the issues with the parties and describing what will happen during the hearing. The judge will review the hearing packet (and other documents received) and decide what to admit into evidence.
- DCYF usually presents its case first. Each party may call their own witnesses and question the witnesses called by the other parties. Witnesses testify under oath or affirmation. The judge may also ask questions.
- After the hearing, the judge will send out a written decision that will be mailed to the parties. Deadlines vary based on the type of case you have. At the end of the hearing, the judge will let you know how long they have to issue their decision.
- If you disagree with the decision, instructions to appeal the decision will be at the end of the judge’s order.