

**RCW 18.88B.031 Certification examinations.** (1) Except as provided in RCW 18.88B.041 and subject to the other requirements of this chapter, to be certified as a home care aide, a long-term care worker must successfully complete the training required under RCW 74.39A.074(1) and a certification examination. Any long-term care worker failing to make the required grade for the examination may not be certified as a home care aide.

(2) The department, in consultation with consumer and worker representatives, shall develop a home care aide certification examination to evaluate whether an applicant possesses the skills and knowledge necessary to practice competently.

(3) The examination or series of examinations shall include both a skills demonstration and a written or oral knowledge test. The department shall establish rules governing the number of times and under what circumstances individuals who have failed the examination may sit for the examination, including whether any intermediate remedial steps should be required. The skills demonstration, the knowledge test, or both, may be administered throughout training, on the last day of training, or after a student's formal training. An applicant may apply to take the examination during or after training. An applicant may not sit for any part of the examination prior to completing the part of the training associated with that part of the examination. The examination or series of examinations may be conducted at local testing sites around the state. For the purpose of reducing the travel time for applicants, the department shall explore alternative testing options such as remote testing.

(4) (a) All examinations shall be conducted by fair and wholly impartial methods. All examinations shall be available to be administered in the preferred language for the applicant taking the examination. The certification examination shall be administered and evaluated by:

(i) The department;

(ii) A contractor to the department that is not an employer of long-term care workers unless the employer is a department of social and health services approved instructor and has met the department standards for administering the examination; or

(iii) A high school or community college that has met department standards for administering the examination.

(b) The department shall conduct an annual evaluation of the examination results of applicants who complete the examination in a language other than English. If the department finds that applicants taking the examination in a particular language fail at a disproportionately higher rate than other examination takers, the department shall conduct a review of the translation to ensure that it is accurate and understandable.

(5) The department shall adopt rules to implement this section. [2023 c 323 s 2; 2012 c 164 s 304; 2012 c 1 s 104 (Initiative Measure No. 1163, approved November 8, 2011).]

**Finding—2023 c 323:** "(1) Long-term care supports people who need help meeting their health or personal care needs due to age or disabling conditions. Maintaining an adequate workforce of long-term care workers is critical to the system.

(2) Current law requires that home care aides complete required training and pass a test to become certified. A 2022 performance audit found that many home care aide applicants faced barriers in scheduling

the test, challenges getting to the test site, and often delays of months between completing training and taking the test. Barriers and inefficiencies in this process were cited as a primary reason for many applicants dropping out prior to becoming certified.

(3) The legislature finds that improvements in this process and the reduction of barriers are necessary to ensure an adequate home care workforce." [2023 c 323 s 1.]

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

**Intent—Findings—Performance audits—Spending limits—Contingent effective dates—Application—Construction—Effective date—Short title—2012 c 1 (Initiative Measure No. 1163):** See notes following RCW 74.39A.056.