



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

APPLICABILITY  
**PRISON**  
FACILITY/SPANISH MANUAL

REVISION DATE  
1/3/22

PAGE NUMBER  
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**DOC 310.300**

# POLICY

TITLE

**SKILL BUILDING UNIT**

## REVIEW/REVISION HISTORY:

Effective: 1/30/17

Revised: 1/3/22

## SUMMARY OF REVISION/REVIEW:

Major changes to include terminology updated throughout. Read carefully!

## APPROVED:

Signature on file

\_\_\_\_\_  
**CHERYL STRANGE**, Secretary  
Department of Corrections

12/7/21  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Signed

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**REFERENCES:**

DOC 100.100 is hereby incorporated into this policy; DOC 300.380 Classification and Custody Facility Plan Review; DOC 490.820 Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) Risk Assessments and Assignments; DOC 540.150 Nature Imagery Program

**POLICY:**

- I. The Department has established procedures for identifying incarcerated individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities or traumatic brain injury to house in a Skill Building Unit (SBU) that provides a safe environment for building skills to improve independence in the correctional setting and support successful transition back into the community.
- II. Facilities may establish an SBU, in consultation with the Mission Housing Administrator (MHA).

**DIRECTIVE:**

- I. Responsibilities
  - A. Each facility with an SBU will designate:
    1. The Health Services Manager 1 or higher rank as the SBU Point of Contact (POC), who will facilitate bimonthly SBU unit and program employee/contract staff meetings to discuss:
      - a. Clinical issues
      - b. Unit operations
      - c. Staffing
      - d. Specific needs of incarcerated individuals
      - e. Programming
      - f. Reentry
      - g. Unit activities
    2. An Associate Superintendent/designee to coordinate with:
      - a. A local college(s) to provide educational programming, and
      - b. Evergreen State College for Sustainability in Prisons Project (SPP) programs.
  - B. The MHA, Chief of Classification/designee, and/or the Mental Health Director/designee will co-chair a multidisciplinary Headquarters SBU Committee that will meet weekly and include, at a minimum:

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1. SBU Correctional Unit Supervisor (CUS)
2. Facility SBU POC
3. Americans with Disabilities Act Compliance Manager
4. Headquarters Classification Manager

C. The facility SBU POC will develop, publish, and maintain a schedule of unit programs/activities to include:

1. Life skills lab
2. Specialized educational classes
3. Nature imagery per DOC 540.150 Nature Imagery Program
4. Adaptive skills groups

## II. Eligibility

- A. Individuals will be screened for intellectual deficits and traumatic brain injury using DOC 13-349 Intersystem/Restrictive Housing Mental Health Screening at the Reception Diagnostics Centers.
  1. Based on results, a standardized intellectual assessment to screen for intellectual and/or developmental disabilities may be completed by mental health employees/contract staff on a case-by-case basis.
  2. If screening is not able to occur at reception, then any subsequent facility where the individual is transferred will complete the screening.
- B. For individuals that score in the low average range or less on the assessment, mental health employees/contract staff will notify the case manager to complete DOC 13-457 Intellectual Disability Review and forward the form to the facility SBU POC.
- C. Individuals will be considered for housing placement in the SBU based upon the following criteria:
  1. Indicator of intellectual disability or observation of poor adaptive functioning or traumatic brain injury as documented on DOC 13-457 Intellectual Disability Review.
  2. Documented intellectual disability (e.g., previous enrollment in Division of Developmental Disabilities services).
  3. Exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis by the Headquarters SBU Committee.

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- D. In consultation with the Headquarters Maximum (MAX) Custody Committee, developmentally disabled/intellectually delayed individuals assigned to MAX custody housed in an Intensive Management Unit may be provided specific programming by SBU employees/contract staff.
- E. The facility POC will consult with the SBU CUS to review individuals for other eligibility criteria and determine if placement in the SBU would be beneficial.

### III. Referral process

- A. Employees will email referrals for the SBU to [docsbureferrals@doc1.wa.gov](mailto:docsbureferrals@doc1.wa.gov).
- B. The facility SBU POC will:
  - 1. Collaborate with appropriate employees to create informative and effective meetings and develop an agenda,
  - 2. Review and forward referrals with a recommendation regarding admission and the agenda to the Headquarters SBU Committee prior to the meeting, and
  - 3. Notify all SBU employees of meeting decisions.
- C. The Headquarters SBU Committee co-chairs will:
  - 1. Identify committee members, determine when a quorum has been established, and meet to review the SBU referrals, plan(s), and placement options.
  - 2. Consider the SBU Committee's input and make the final decision.
    - a. If SBU placement is approved, the facility SBU POC will:
      - 1) Email the referring and receiving facility to provide notification of the decision, and
      - 2) Document the decision as a Chronological Event (chrono) in the individual's electronic file and ensure it is included in the Custody Facility Plan.
    - b. If SBU placement is denied, the Headquarters SBU POC will:
      - 1) Provide the receiving facility with direction regarding the individual's housing assignment, and

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2) Document the decision as a chrono in the electronic file.

c. If the co-chairs cannot agree, the final decision will be made by the Comprehensive Case Management Senior Director.

#### IV. Unit Operations

- A. The SBU CUS is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the SBU and will ensure employees, contract staff, and volunteers adhere to the processes and procedures of the unit.
- B. DOC 13-069 Individual Behavior Management Plan will be developed and implemented as needed for individuals in the SBU.
- C. The Correctional Mental Health Counselor (CMHC) 3 will:
  - 1. Meet with each SBU participant every 6 months to complete DOC 13-576 Skill Building Unit Individualized Plan.
  - 2. Offer an informal monthly meeting with the participant to monitor the progress of the plan and document the meeting on DOC 13-538 Mental Health Encounter Report.
- D. Formal reviews will be conducted every 6 months per DOC 300.380 Classification and Custody Facility Plan Review.

#### V. Transfer or Release

- A. If an individual is believed to no longer need SBU services, requests a transfer, or is found unsuitable for the SBU environment, a recommendation will be made to the Headquarters SBU Committee, who will make the final decision for discharge from the program and placement in another unit/facility.
  - 1. Individuals requesting transfer will be considered during the next formal review.
  - 2. The Headquarters Classification Manager will notify the facility SBU POC and SBU CUS of the committee chair's decision regarding the individual's housing assignment.
- B. One year before an individual's Earned Release Date, the case manager, CMHC 3, and a continuity of care nurse will collaborate with a Psychiatric Social Worker to complete documentation necessary to continue/initiate disability benefits, health insurance, and any other applicable benefits to contribute to successful reentry.

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1. Documentation will include the completion of DOC 13-084 Mission Housing/Skill Building Unit Transition Plan.

C. Individuals releasing from the SBU will be assessed for transportation needs that may include transporting the individual to a destination in the community.

VI. Training

A. Specialized training for SBU employees/contract staff will be provided to include information on people with intellectual/developmental disabilities and disability etiquette.

**DEFINITIONS:**

Words/terms appearing in this policy may be defined in the glossary section of the Policy Manual.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

None

**DOC FORMS:**

- DOC 13-069 Individual Behavior Management Plan
- DOC 13-084 Mission Housing/Skill Building Unit Transition Plan
- DOC 13-349 Intersystem/Restrictive Housing Mental Health Screening
- DOC 13-457 Intellectual Disability Review
- DOC 13-538 Mental Health Encounter Report
- DOC 13-576 Skill Building Unit Individualized Plan