

USDA Foods Civil Rights Training

Civil Rights Training for Volunteers

Discrimination occurs when an individual's civil rights are denied or interfered with because they belong to a particular group or class. CSFP and TEFAP applicants and participants must be advised of their right to file a complaint of discrimination and they must be allowed to do so. If a complaint cannot be resolved or if you are part of or overhear a complaint, please contact your supervisor or a staff member immediately.

Protected Classes for CSFP and TEFAP

- Race
- Color
- National Origin
- Sex
- Age
- Disability

In order to minimize the risk of a civil rights discrimination complaint, ask yourself the following questions each time you visit with a CSFP or TEFAP applicant and/or participant:

- Am I treating this person in the same way that I treat others?
- Have I told this person what information I need to make a determination on the application?
- Have I given this person the chance to explain their side of the situation or to correct inconsistencies?
- Have I provided the person with the information he or she need to make decisions?
- Am I treating others as I wish to be treated?

Types of Discrimination

Disparate Treatment: Direct discrimination of someone that denies or interferes with their rights because they are a member of a protected class. *Example – I don't like women so I will ask them for more proof than I do for men.*

Disparate Impact: This is discrimination that occurs when an organization's rules or practices unintentionally affect a protected class. *Example – We only received three cases of frozen chicken that will be gone by mid-morning. I have to tell this Russian family to return this afternoon because that is when our Russian translator comes in.*

Retaliation: When someone receives negative treatment because they filed a civil rights complaint or cooperated in an investigation of a civil rights complaint. *Example: You are a friend of the family that filed a complaint last month. I am going to only give you dry navy beans.*

Public Notification

The full nondiscrimination statement, including the complaint process, can be found on the applications for CSFP and TEFAP. It is also available on the "And Justice For All" poster. Make sure that you display the "And Justice For All" poster where your clients can see it during every food distribution. Clients should think TEFAP or CSFP every time they see the green poster.



Treat others like you would like to be treated. 😊 Make sure everyone gets the same information and meets the same requirements 😊 Stay calm if a client begins to argue 😊 Ask your supervisor questions if you are unsure 😊 Ask for help if you need it.

Compliance Review

Our agency is regularly monitored for compliance with these and other program regulations. If we are found to be noncompliant, the programs could be taken away.

Equal Access and Language Assistance:

Accommodations must be made for persons with disabilities. Please assist clients with disabilities to make sure that they are able to access food. If your agency does not provide delivery of food boxes, then use a proxy process. The client may complete a proxy form or provide a written note to designate someone (the proxy) to sign required documents and pick-up the food. Make sure to keep the proxy form or note with your records.

USDA Non-Discrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in an program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington D.C. 20250-9410
 - (2) FAX: (202) 690-7442; or
 - (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.
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