

Procedure for receiving and processing complaints alleging discrimination within FNS School Meal Programs

Civil rights complaints are written or verbal allegations of discrimination based on race, color, national origin, age, sex, or disability. Any person claiming discrimination has a right to file a complaint within 180 days of the alleged discrimination. Complaints filed after the 180 day deadline must include a “good cause” explanation for the delay.

Any civil rights complaint received at the individual school level by a school employee should be forwarded through the SAU 48 office to the USDA for investigation and disposition, recognizing that the complaint could enter the School District at several different levels. The complaint will be reviewed by the Building Administrator, who researches and reviews for validity and then forwards to the Business Administrator, who is the hearing Official, and if necessary the Superintendent, and finally the School Board. The Fair Hearing Rights and Procedures must be given to the complainant at the beginning of the process, as decisions can be appealed at all levels, eventually ending with USDA.

USDA Program Discrimination Complaint forms are available at the SAU office, on the SAU website, or at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html

If the complainant makes the allegations verbally or in a telephone conversation and is reluctant or refuses to put them in writing, the person who handles the complainant must write up the description. There must be enough information to identify the agency or individual toward which the complaint is directed and indicate the possibility of a violation. Every effort should be made to obtain at least the following information: name, address and telephone number or other means of contacting the complainant, the specific location and name of the organization delivering the program service or benefit, the nature of the incident(s) or action(s) that led the complainant to feel there was discrimination, the basis on which the complainant feels discrimination occurred (race, color, national origin, age, sex or disability), the names, titles, and addresses of people who may have knowledge of the discriminatory action(s), the date(s) when the alleged discriminatory action(s) occurred, or, if continuing, the duration of such action(s).

USDA Nondiscrimination Statement

For all other FNS nutrition assistance programs, State or local agencies, and their subrecipients, must post the following Nondiscrimination 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 any 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.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.