



Bridges PCS SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAM CIVIL RIGHT COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

Any person alleging discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability has a right to file a complaint within 180 days of the alleged discriminatory action. The purpose of this procedure is to describe civil right complaint processing requirements at both the subgrantee and District of Columbia level.

I. Complaint Processing at Subrecipient

A. Acceptance of Complaint

The Operation Specialist must accept all written and verbal civil rights complaints and instruct complainants on how to file a complaint. The entity must make public the contact information for the individual to whom civil rights complaints will be directed. The Operation Specialist must obtain, either verbally or in writing the following information:

- Name, address, and telephone number or other means of contacting the complainant;
- The specific location and name of the subrecipient delivering the service or benefit;
- The nature of the incident or action that led the complainant to feel discrimination was a factor;
- The basis on which the complainant believes discrimination exists, such as race, color, national origin, age, sex or disability;
- The names, telephone numbers, titles, and business or personal addresses of individuals with knowledge of the alleged discriminatory action; and
- The date(s) during which the alleged discriminatory action occurred or, if continuing, the duration of such actions.

B. Forwarding to State Agency

A copy of the civil rights complaint must be forwarded to the Office of the State Superintendent of Education Civil Rights Complaint Coordinator within 3 calendar days of initial report. Complaint must be forwarded to Elizabeth Leach at Elizabeth.Leach@dc.gov.

¹Under special circumstances this 180-day time limit may be extended by the United States, Department of Agriculture Office of Adjudication and Compliance.

C. Tracking of Complaints

The Operation Specialist must maintain a log of each civil rights complaint received. In addition to the information contained above, the log must track the date of the complaint, the subrecipient staff which received the complaint, and the date the complaint was forwarded to the Office of the State Superintendent of Education. This log must be kept separate from any log which record other complaints.

D. Complaint Filing

Complainants or their authorized representative should be directed to complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form. The form is attached as Appendix A to this policy, found online at https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Complain_combined_6_8_12_508.pdf or at any USDA office, or can be requested by calling (866) 632-9992. A complainant is not required to use the complaint form, and may write a letter instead. If the complainant writes a letter it must contain all of the information requested in the form and be signed by the complainant or the complainant's authorized representative. Failure to include all of the required information may result in a delay in complaint processing. While use of the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint form is optional, it is important to provide the complainant the form as it advises the complainant of information related to confidentiality and the Privacy Act. The subrecipient may also develop its own complaint forms, but the use of such forms must not be a prerequisite for acceptance of a complaint. It is encouraged that complaint form format be collaboratively developed and coordinated among FNS, State agency, local agency, and/or other subrecipients. The completed, signed complaint form or letter may be mailed, faxed, or emailed to USDA at the addresses below:

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250-9410
Fax: (202) 690-7442
E-mail: program.intake@usda.gov

For help filling out the form, instruct the complainant to call any of these telephone numbers:

(202) 260-1026 Local area
(866) 632-9992 Toll-free Customer Service
(800) 877-8339 Local or Federal relay

(800) 845-6136 Spanish relay
(866) 377-8642 Relay voice users

II. State Agency Receipt

A. Tracking of Complaints

OSSE's Civil Rights Coordinator will confirm with the Operation Specialist that the subrecipient (1) collected the required information; and (2) provided the complainant with the information necessary to file the complaint with USDA. The coordinator will also log all received civil rights complaints. In addition to the information required in Sections I.A. and I.C above, the coordinator must also record the date the complaint was forwarded to USDA. This log must be kept separate from any log which record other complaints.

B. Forwarding to USDA

Within two days of receipt from the subrecipient and no later than five calendar days after the initial complaint is filed, OSSE will forward the complaint to USDA FNS Civil Rights Division.