

CIVIL RIGHTS

1. School Food Authorities (SFAs) participating in the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, After School Snack Program or Special Milk Program must include the nondiscrimination statement in their student handbook in the section that addresses access to or information about the school meals program. It must also be included on the school's web site if school meal information is available.

Nondiscrimination Statement

The U.S. Department of Agriculture prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees, and applicants for employment on the bases of race, color, national origin, age disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department. (Not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.)

If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov

Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service (800) 877-8339; or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

PLEASE NOTE: As stated above, all protected bases do not apply to all programs. *The first six protected bases of race, color, national origin, age disability and sex are the six protected bases for all applicants and recipients of the Child Nutrition Programs.*

If the material is too small to permit the full statement to be included, the material will at a minimum include this statement, in print no smaller than the text: USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

2. The USDA "And Justice for All" poster must be displayed at each feeding site in a location that is visible to students during meal service.
3. Train staff on civil rights annually. Document the date of training and who attended. Specific subject areas to include:
 - COLLECTING AND USING DATA: Data is collected on ethnicity and race. Parent self-declares. If they do not report, SFA staff will code based on perception. All program materials must be stored in an area of restricted access and retained for three years.
 - EFFECTIVE PUBLIC NOTIFICATION SYSTEMS: Display the "And Justice for All" poster, include the nondiscrimination statement on program materials, provide information in other languages and alternative formats as needed and convey equal opportunity in all photos and other graphics on websites, publications, etc.
 - COMPLAINT PROCEDURES: Procedures must be established to accept complaints or grievances based on race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. Participants must be advised of their right to file a complaint, how to file a complaint, and the complaint procedures. If there is a complaint, the SFA must contact the Nebraska Department of Education – Nutrition Services.

- COMPLIANCE REVIEW TECHNIQUES: Ensure civil rights requirements are being followed during review process.
 - RESOLUTION OF NON-COMPLIANCE: Inappropriate actions must cease. A corrective action plan is required and appropriate procedures must be implemented.
 - REQUIREMENTS FOR REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: Entrances and exits must exist to accommodate the disabled. Braille signage and alternative arrangements for service must be available, when needed.
 - REQUIREMENTS FOR LANGUAGE ASSISTANT: Bilingual personnel and materials must be provided depending on need, resources available and cost.
 - CONFLICT RESOLUTION: Use alternative dispute resolution techniques when necessary. Treat others with respect.
 - CUSTOMER SERVICE: "Treat others the way they want to be treated (or at least be aware of what that is)."
4. Provide appropriate translations of materials concerning the availability and nutritional benefits of the school meals program, as needed. This requirement can be met through the use of bilingual staff members, volunteers and/or informational materials in appropriate languages.
5. Follow this procedure for Accepting and Filing Complaints of Discrimination in the School Meals Program
- I. Right to File a Complaint
- 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.
- II. Acceptance
- All complaints, written or verbal, shall be accepted by the School Food Authority (SFA) and forwarded to the Administrator of the Nebraska Department of Education - Nutrition Services within five days. It is necessary that the information be sufficient to determine the identity of the agency or individual toward which the complaint is directed, and to indicate the possibility of a violation. Anonymous complaints shall be handled as any other complaint.
- III. Verbal Complaints
- In the event that a complainant makes the allegation verbally or through a telephone conversation and refuses or is not inclined to place such allegations in writing, the person to whom the allegations are made shall write up the elements of the complaint for the complainant. Every effort should be made to have the complainant provide the following information:
- Name, address and telephone number or other means of contacting the complainant.
 - The specific location and name of the entity delivering the program service or benefit.
 - The nature of the incident(s) or action(s) that led the complainant to feel discrimination was a factor
 - The basis on which the complainant feels discrimination exists (race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability).
 - The names, titles and addresses of persons who may have knowledge of the discriminatory action(s).
 - The date(s) during which the alleged discriminatory action occurred, or if continuing, the duration of such actions.