

Civil Rights Training for Frontline Staff

Per FNS Instruction 113-1, Local agencies are responsible for training their subrecipients, including "frontline staff." "Frontline staff" who interact with program applicants or participants, and those persons who supervise "frontline staff," must be provided civil rights training on an annual basis.

Read this entire handout front and back. Sign the training log to certify that you read the information in its entirety and understand your civil rights responsibilities as frontline staff.

PURPOSE OF CIVIL RIGHTS TRAINING Civil rights training upholds compliance, enforcement, and prohibition of discrimination in USDA-funded Child Nutrition Programs, like the School Breakfast Program operating in the classroom. **Training all frontline staff and volunteers in Civil Rights ensures that program recipients are given equal access and treated without discrimination while participating in the USDA Meal programs.** Civil rights training must occur before staff and volunteers assume their duties in USDA Meal programs, and annually thereafter.

Civil rights are in place to protect children and families from being discriminated against while participating in USDA meal programs.

DISCRIMINATION

Discrimination occurs when participants are:

- ⇒ **DENIED** benefits or services that others receive.
- ⇒ **DELAYED** in receiving benefits or services that others receive.
- ⇒ Treated **DIFFERENTLY** than others, resulting in a disadvantage.

Examples of discrimination:

- ⇒ Refusing a person's enrollment in a program based on disability.
- ⇒ Failure to provide reasonable accommodation to disabled individuals.
- ⇒ Serving meals at a time, place, or in a manner that is discriminatory.
- ⇒ Failing to provide materials that give non-English speaking persons full and equal opportunity to receive benefits.



PROTECTED CLASSES

A protected class is a group of people with a common characteristic who are legally protected from discrimination on the basis of that characteristic. **The six protected classes recognized in USDA programs are race, color, national origin, age, sex, and disability.**

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION SYSTEMS

Sponsors of the USDA meal programs are required to notify the public about the availability of their program in the following ways:

- ⇒ Prominently displaying the "And Justice for All" poster in all offices where there is a USDA presence and where it may be read by customers. →
- ⇒ Including non-discrimination statements on all media mentioning USDA meal programs, including menus, flyers, internet pages, and other food related program announcements.
- ⇒ Providing information in other formats for those with disabilities. An example of this may be providing large print or braille menus for those who are visually impaired.
- ⇒ Conveying equal opportunity when using photographs to include a good representation of various ages, races, genders, etc.



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COLLECTION & USE OF DATA

Sponsors of the USDA Programs are required to collect participant data by ethnic and racial category one time per program year to help determine areas of potential need and help prevent any discrimination of the participants. **Frontline staff will not be involved with this data collection.**

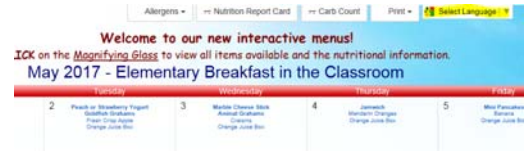
NO ONE MAY ASK A CHILD HIS OR HER RACE OR ETHNICITY.

LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE

Civil rights requirements state that provisions must be made for non-English speaking program participants.

Examples of language assistance:

- ⇒ Translating enrollment forms or menus into Spanish in areas where Spanish is necessary for families to comprehend the information.
- ⇒ Providing braille or large print for visually impaired program participants.



REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS

Each entity that receives federal financial assistance must designate at least one employee to coordinate compliance with its responsibilities under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Their responsibility is to prevent discrimination against students, employees, and others on the basis of disability; and to handle all accommodation requests.

Know your Section 504/ADA Coordinator at your facility/district to assist you to comply with Civil Rights requirements.

Civil rights requirements state that reasonable accommodation must be made for persons with disabilities.

Examples of reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities in USDA programs:

- ⇒ Serving meals in a location that has ramps to allow for those in wheelchairs to have access to the site.
- ⇒ Having food component substitutions available for those with medically documented food allergies.

For further questions review the *Modifications to Accommodate Disabilities in School Meals Programs* video here: <https://youtu.be/LZirTL7CImE>.

USDA Western Regional Civil Rights Officer contact:

Joe Torres, Regional Civil Rights Director, Food And Nutrition Services-USDA Western Region, 90 Seventh Street, Suite 10-100, San Francisco, CA. 94103

COMPLIANCE REVIEW TECHNIQUES & RESOLUTION OF NONCOMPLIANCE

The following list represents the flow of information for civil rights compliance:

USDA regional office is responsible for the review of State agencies → State agency is responsible for review of local agencies → State agency must report any significant finding(s) to the regional USDA office → State and local agencies must receive a pre-approval visit for civil rights compliance determination before receiving funds → If State agency reports a finding, corrective action will be put in place until noncompliance is resolved → All reports must be maintained as part of records for future review

CONFLICT RESOLUTION & CUSTOMER SERVICE

The process for **CONFLICT RESOLUTION** includes making sure all complaints alleging discrimination on the basis of race, age, color, national origin, sex, or disability are forwarded to the State agency within three days and must be processed by USDA within ninety days.

CUSTOMER SERVICE involves treating all program participants and their families fairly and equally. All staff should be enabled to provide the best customer service possible to families and recipients of meals. **Awareness of discrimination, and accountability, is a key component to good customer service.**

CIVIL RIGHTS COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

All USDA meal program sites must keep a civil rights binder with the following required civil rights complaint documents:

- ⇒ A written civil rights complaint procedure.
- ⇒ An annually dated civil rights complaint log.
- ⇒ Copies of the civil rights complaint form in appropriate languages.

All frontline staff should know where the binder is located and what to do if they receive a complaint.

In most cases all staff should immediately contact the food service supervisor if they are made aware of a complaint in USDA programs.



This institution is an equal opportunity provider.