

# Civil Rights Training

## **Food Distribution Programs:**

The Emergency Food And Assistance Program (TEFAP)  
The Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)

State Fiscal Year 2027

## ▶ Civil Rights Review Areas

- Assurances
- Public Notification Requirements
- Race and Ethnicity Data Collection (CSFP)
- Complaints of Discrimination
- Compliance Reviews
- Resolution of Noncompliance
- Limited English Proficiency (LEP)
- Individuals with Disabilities
- Religious Organizations
- Conflict Resolution
- Customer Service

# AGENDA

- ▶ Civil Rights Training Importance
- ▶ Civil Rights Authorities
- ▶ What is Discrimination

## The Importance of Civil Rights Training

- ▶ To provide equal treatment for all applicants and program recipients.
- ▶ To provide your participants with knowledge of their rights and responsibilities as a program recipient.
- ▶ To eliminate barriers that prevent or deter people from receiving benefits.
- ▶ To promote dignity and respect for everyone.

## Continued

- ▶ Knowledge of civil rights applies to most areas of food distribution programs.
- ▶ Training must be conducted annually.
- ▶ New employees/volunteer must receive Civil Rights training before participating in Program activities.

All front-line workers, including volunteers and supervisors, must receive annual civil rights training.

## Civil Rights Authorities

The following policies prohibit discrimination based on race, color, national origin, disability, age, and sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation).

Civil Rights Laws	Protected Classes
Title VI- Civil Rights Act of 1964 Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987: Clarifies the Scope of the Civil Rights Act of 1964	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Race</li> <li>✓ Color</li> <li>✓ National Origin</li> </ul>
Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 ADA Amendments Act of 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Disability</li> </ul>
Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Sex (gender identity and sexual orientation)</li> </ul>
Age Discrimination Act of 1975	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Age</li> </ul>

Civil Rights Authority	Policy
7 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 15 (a) (b) (c)	USDA implementing regulations for Federally assisted programs
7 CFR 16, Equal opportunity for Religious Organizations	Gives equal footing to religiously affiliated organizations
28 CFR 35	Covers nondiscrimination on the basis of disability in State/local government services (public entities)
28 CFR 42	Covers nondiscrimination in Federally assisted programs.
Executive Order 13166 (65 FR 50121, August 20, 2000)	Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency
Executive Order 13988 (86 FR 7023, January 20, 2021)	Preventing and Combating Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation
79 FR 229, November 28, 2014	USDA Guidance to Federal Financial Assistance Recipients Regarding the Title VI Prohibition Against National Origin Discrimination Affecting Persons with Limited English Proficiency
USDA Department Regulation 4300-003	Equal Opportunity Public Notification Policy
USDA Department Regulation 4330-002	Prohibits discrimination in program and activities funded in whole or in part by the USDA

Program Authorities	Food Distribution Program
The Emergency Food Assistance Act of 1983 (Public Law 98-8), as amended.	TEFAP
7 CFR Parts 250 & 251	TEFAP
7 CFR Parts 247 & 250	CSFP
Sections 4 (a) and 5 of the Agriculture and Consumer Protection Act of 1973 (Public Law 93-86), as amended.	CSFP

## What is Discrimination

“Different treatment which makes a distinction of one person or a group of persons from others; either intentionally, by neglect, or by the action or lack of actions based on a protected class”

### ► Protected Classes

- Age
- Color
- Disability
- National Origin
- Race
- Sex
  - Including gender identity and sexual orientation

## Types of Discrimination

- Unequal Treatment
- Unequal Impact
- Retaliation

## Unequal Treatment

Is when a person is intentionally discriminated against as a member of a protected class.

*Example:* Members of religious groups are denied service because their beliefs do not match the religious teachings of the organization that is distributing food.

## Unequal Impact

Is when actions that appear neutral have a negative impact on a protected class.

*Examples:* A distribution site has set hours they will only serve specific populations to provide a better pantry experience:

- Non-English speakers
- Those of a certain age
- Those with a disability

These efforts create situations where participants do not have equal access to your services.

Coveted food items may not be available to persons during this set time frame.

All participants should have equal access to visit your facility during your open hours of distribution.

## Retaliation

Is the negative treatment of a member of a protected class in response to previous civil rights activity. This includes actions against their family and/or their associates.

*Example:* Family and/or friends of a participant are denied services after the participant filed a complaint against the agency.

## Eligibility Requirements vs Discrimination

- ▶ It is not considered discrimination to exclude those who do not meet eligibility requirements for certain programs.
- ▶ For example, Congress can set age limits, and this is not age discrimination for those who do not meet those age limits.
  - CSFP

## Civil Rights Review Areas

## Public Notification Requirements

- ▶ All FNA assistance programs must include a public notification system.
- ▶ The purpose of this system is to inform applicants, participants, and potentially-eligible persons of:
  - Program availability
  - Program rights and responsibilities
  - The policy of nondiscrimination
  - The procedure for filing a complaint

## Assurances

To qualify for Federal financial assistance (USDA Foods), an application must be accompanied by a written assurance that the entity to receive financial assistance (USDA Foods) will be operated in compliance with all nondiscrimination laws, regulations, instructions, policies, and guidelines.

- ▶ A Civil Rights assurance statement must be incorporated in all agreements between:
  - Federal and State agencies (FNS Form 74)
  - State agencies and local agencies or subrecipients
  - Local agencies and subrecipients (if applicable)

## Public Notification

- ▶ There are civil rights requirements for notifying the public about TEFAP and CSFP.
  - All materials, including websites and social media sites, must contain the USDA nondiscrimination statement.
  - Convey a message of equal opportunity through photos and graphics in USDA program-related information.
  - Information should be provided in different formats and languages to meet all levels of ability.
  - Special efforts should be made to reach under-served groups who may qualify for services using appropriate media.

# Nondiscrimination Statement

- ▶ The “USDA Nondiscrimination Statement” must be included on all materials that mention USDA programs (i.e., TEFAP, CSFP).
- ▶ The statement provides contact information for anyone to file a complaint of discrimination directly with the USDA.
- ▶ There is a full version and a short version of the nondiscrimination statement.
- ▶ Font size for the full version may be smaller than the rest of the publication, but it must be readable.

# Full Version USDA Nondiscrimination Statement

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at:

<https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. USDA by mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, D.C., 20250-9410; or
2. By fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. By email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

# Short Version USDA Nondiscrimination Statement

## **This institution is an equal opportunity provider**

- ▶ The short version may be used where the longer statement does not fit.
- ▶ The short version **MUST** be in a font size no smaller than the font size used in the publication.
- ▶ The short version may not be used in place of the long statement on client rights documents (such as an application).
- ▶ Any other version of the Nondiscrimination statement is not approved.
- ▶ Use of short statement on the internet should be hyperlinked to the full statement.

# “And Justice for All” Poster

- ▶ The poster must be prominently displayed for all to view.
- ▶ This poster serves as a trademark indicating the site provides a USDA program without discrimination.
- ▶ The poster has contact information so that anyone has information to file a discrimination complaint directly with the USDA.

## The current “And Justice For All” Poster

Used for CSFP  
& TEFAP



## Complaints of Discrimination

- ▶ Everyone has the right to file a complaint of discrimination.
- ▶ Every employee and volunteer must know what to do if someone wants to file a complaint.
  - What is your agency’s process?
- ▶ If a complaint is elevated to the State or Federal office, the maximum time to process the complaint is **180 days**.
- ▶ Be aware of the basis for which complaints may be filed:
  - race, color, national origin, age, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, or reprisal or retaliation.
- ▶ Always attempt to resolve the complaint at the lowest level.
- ▶ **Never** discourage someone from filing a complaint or voicing concerns of discrimination.

## Collection and Use of Data: CSFP Only

- ▶ TEFAP is exempt from data collection.
- ▶ CSFP regulations require annual reporting of client racial and ethnic data (FNS-191 Report).
  - Applicants self-declare racial/ethnic data (CSFP)
  - If an applicant refuses to provide racial/ethnic data, they are to be advised that the information will be collected based on your observation (CSFP).
- ▶ Outreach efforts can be targeted to groups not adequately represented in program participation.
- ▶ Maintain all records for three years plus the current fiscal year
- ▶ All data collected must be kept secure and confidential.

## Complaints

Complaints should include:

- ▶ Contact Information
  - Name,
  - Address, **and**
  - Telephone number, **or**
  - Other means of contacting the person alleging the discrimination.
- ▶ The location and name of the organization or office that is accused of discriminatory practices.
- ▶ The nature of the incident or action.
- ▶ The Name(s), Title(s), and business address of persons who may have knowledge of the discriminatory action.
- ▶ The date(s) during which the alleged discriminatory actions occurred.
- ▶ The basis for the alleged discrimination.

# Complaints continued

- ▶ Complaints can be provided in writing, verbal or anonymous.
- ▶ Try to resolve the issue if possible. If you are unable to resolve the issue:
  - Forward complaints based on race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), and disability to Civil Rights Division within five (5) calendar days of receipt.
  - Forward complaints based on age (or a combination of age and other bases) to Civil Rights Division within five (5) business days of receipt.
- ▶ Notify the food bank of any civil rights complaints you receive.
- ▶ Do not discuss the civil rights complaint with others.
  - This can lead to the complainant being invertedly discriminated against because they filed a complaint.

# Complaints & Confidentiality

- ▶ Title 7 Code of Federal Regulation CSFP
- ▶ §247.36(b)
  - ***Can the State or local agency disclose the identity of persons making a complaint or allegation against another individual participating in or administering the program?*** The State or local agency must protect the confidentiality, and other rights, of any person making allegations or complaints against another individual participating in, or administering CSFP, except as necessary to conduct an investigation, hearing, or judicial proceeding.

# Complaints & Confidentiality

- ▶ Title 7 Code of Federal Regulation TEFAP:
- ▶ §251.10(c)(3)
  - **Limits on disclosing the identity of persons making a complaint or allegation against an individual participating in or administering the program.** The State and local agency must protect the confidentiality, and other rights, of any person making allegations or complaints against another individual participating in, or administering TEFAP, except as necessary to conduct an investigation, hearing, or judicial proceeding, as applicable.

# Compliance Reviews

- ▶ State and federal governments are required to conduct reviews to determine compliance with civil rights laws, regulations, and requirements.
- ▶ Cooperation with state and federal reviewers is required as a condition of receiving federal financial assistance.
  - USDA Food is considered financial assistance.
- ▶ There are three types of reviews:
  - Pre-award: a review conducted before an agency starts distributing TEFAP and/or CSFP.
  - Post-award: in Iowa, this is part of your review conducted by your food bank.
    - Your food bank conducts their review at least every other year.
    - HHS reviews a select number of sites on an annual basis.
  - Special compliance review: a review conducted by HHS and/or USDA for significant civil rights concerns.

# Resolution of Noncompliance

- ▶ Corrective actions may be assigned as a result of the review process.
- ▶ Agencies are required to cease inappropriate actions and institute proper procedures.
- ▶ Failure to comply with civil rights requirements can result in the loss of federal assistance from all federal sources.

# Limited English Proficiency (LEP)

- ▶ Limited English Proficiency (LEP):
  - Individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English because of their national origin.
- ▶ Recipients of federal financial assistance (USDA Foods) must take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to their programs and activities by persons with LEP.

# LEP Continued

- ▶ Failure to provide “meaningful” access to persons with LEP could be discrimination on the basis of national origin.
- ▶ Service must be provided, but there is some flexibility on methods used.
- ▶ Volunteers may be used as interpreters and must maintain participant confidentiality.
- ▶ There is a potential for discrimination based on national origin when accommodations are not made for LEP individuals.
- ▶ I Speak...Language Identification Guide.
  - Appendix A

# What is Meaningful Access?

- ▶ Language assistance that results in accurate, timely, and effective communication at no cost to the LEP individual.
- ▶ For LEP individuals, meaningful access denotes access that is not significantly restricted, delayed, or inferior as compared to programs or activities provided to English proficient individuals.

# LEP and Program Access

## Factors included in assuring “meaningful” access

- ▶ The number or proportion of LEP people eligible to be served or likely to be encounter by the program.
- ▶ The frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with the program.
- ▶ The resources available to the recipient.

# Accommodations

- ▶ Is your distribution site accessible?
  - Consider the parking lot, entrances, exits, hallways, elevators, and restrooms.
- ▶ Do you have access to interpreters:
  - Non-English languages
  - Sign Language
- ▶ Do you have signage and paperwork in:
  - Braille
  - Non-English languages
- ▶ Do you allow service animals in your facility?
  - Therapy animals are not services animals.
  - It is up to your agency if you allow therapy animals into your facility.
- ▶ Do you provide home delivery?

# Individuals with Disabilities

- ▶ A reasonable accommodation is a change in rules, policies, practices, or services so that a person with a disability will have an equal opportunity to apply for and receive USDA Foods.
  - The agency should do everything they can to assist a person with disabilities.
  - The agency is not required to make changes that would fundamentally alter the program or create an undue financial and administrative burden.
  - Proxy distribution must be allowed.
  - Reasonable accommodations may be necessary at all stages of the process, including application, receipt of benefits, and participant notification.

# What is Reasonable

When do I have to translate USDA Program applications into another language or place a ramp to gain entry to the building?

- ▶ Consider the following factors to help make that decision. Keep in mind that shortage of resources does not eliminate meeting this requirement except in cases of extreme hardship.
  - What is the percentage of disabled/LEP persons being served?
  - What is the percentage of disabled/LEP persons in the eligible local population?
  - What is the frequency of disabled/LEP persons contact with program?
  - How vital is the service to the participants?
  - What are the agency’s available resources and cost of services?

## Equal Opportunity for Religious Organizations

- ▶ USDA Regulations (7 CFR 16) require equal opportunity for Faith Based Organizations (FBO's) and Community Based Organizations (CBO's).
- ▶ Discrimination is prohibited on the basis of religion or religious belief or character.
- ▶ FBOs can use facilities for USDA food distribution without removing religious art or symbols.
- ▶ Religious organizations may not use USDA funds or supplies to support worship, religious instruction, or proselytization (attempt to convert).
- ▶ Religious schools can consider religion in admission practices and required curriculum.
- ▶ All organizations regardless of Religious affiliation must have the Written Notice of Benefits posted.

## Customer Service

- ▶ Treat everyone with dignity and respect and make people feel welcome.
- ▶ Be patient and polite.
- ▶ Make sure all participants receive equal treatment and service.
  - Equal does not mean identical.
  - For example, one participant receives corn, another receives green beans.
  - Staff or volunteers who need services should follow the same rules as participants.
- ▶ Do not do special favors for a participant if you are not prepared to do the same favor for all participants.
  - Disabilities and language needs are not considered special favors since they are required.

## Conflict Resolution

- ▶ Treat others the way they want to be treated or at least be aware of what that is.
- ▶ Have a written and posted policy for dealing with unacceptable behavior and conflicts.
- ▶ Remain calm.
- ▶ Listen and really hear the other person.
- ▶ Ask questions to gather information.
- ▶ Be empathetic.
- ▶ Explain situation (rules, expectations).
- ▶ Get help, especially if threats or if violence is possible.

## Continued

- ▶ Smile.
- ▶ Know and be able to explain policy and rules that must be followed.
- ▶ Don't be afraid to apologize.
- ▶ Do not treat people differently based on race, color, national origin, age, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), or disability.
- ▶ Do not impose policies that unfairly impact certain groups.
- ▶ Do not retaliate against anyone who files a complaint (or their family, friends or employees who cooperate with a civil right investigation).

# Customer Service Final Thoughts

In order to minimize the risk of a civil rights discrimination complaint, ask yourself the following questions each time an applicant and/or participant comes to your program:

- Am I treating this person in the same manner as I treat others?
- Have I clearly explained to this person what information I need to make a determination on the application?
- Have I given this person the opportunity to clarify all relevant factors or inconsistencies?
- Have I provided the person the information they need to make necessary decisions?
- Am I treating this person as I would wish to be treated?

# Civil Rights Final Steps

- ▶ Be sure to sign the Civil Rights Training Log after you have participated in this training.
- ▶ Talk to your food bank if you have questions about the information included in this training.
- ▶ Thank you for completing your annual Civil Rights training.

### Appendix A



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<input type="checkbox"/> Ես խոսում եմ <b>հայերեն</b> (Armenian)	<input type="checkbox"/> म नेपाली बोल्छु (Nepali)
<input type="checkbox"/> আমি বাংলা ভাষী (Bengali)	<input type="checkbox"/> Mówię <b>po polsku</b> . (Polish)
<input type="checkbox"/> Ja govorim <b>bosanski jezik</b> (Bosnian)	<input type="checkbox"/> Eu falo <b>Portugês</b> . (Portuguese)
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<input type="checkbox"/> 我说中文 (Chinese Simplified)	<input type="checkbox"/> Cunosc limba <b>Română</b> . (Romanian)
<input type="checkbox"/> 我说中文 (Chinese Traditional)	<input type="checkbox"/> Я робопю <b>но-русски</b> . (Russian)
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<input type="checkbox"/> اینجانب، به زبان فارسی صحبت می کنم (Farsi)	<input type="checkbox"/> Govorim <b>srpski</b> . (Serbian)
<input type="checkbox"/> Je parle <b>français</b> . (French)	<input type="checkbox"/> Waxaan ku hadlaa <b>Somali</b> . (Somali)
<input type="checkbox"/> Je parle le <b>Français haïtien</b> (French Creole)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yo hablo <b>español</b> . (Spanish)
<input type="checkbox"/> Μιλώ <b>ελληνικά</b> . (Greek)	<input type="checkbox"/> أتحدث <b>السودانية</b> (لغوي سوداني) (Sudanese)
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<input type="checkbox"/> Ana ma a su <b>igbo</b> (Igbo)	<input type="checkbox"/> میں اردو بولتا/بولتی ہوں۔ (Urdu)
<input type="checkbox"/> Parlo <b>Italiano</b> (Italian)	<input type="checkbox"/> Tôi nói tiếng <b>Việt</b> . (Vietnamese)
<input type="checkbox"/> 私は <b>日本語</b> を話します (Japanese)	<input type="checkbox"/> יידיש רעד איך (Yiddish)
<input type="checkbox"/> Mi chat <b>Jamiekian langwiji</b> (Jamaican Creole)	<input type="checkbox"/> Mo gbọ <b>Yoruba</b> (Yoruba)
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<input type="checkbox"/> 본인의 모국어는 <b>한국어</b> 입니다 (Korean)	
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