Civil Rights Complaint Procedures - Food and Nutrition Services

Note: This template is being provided to school food authorities (SFAs) to assist in establishing their civil rights complaint procedures. SFAs may choose to use this template or may create their own procedures provided they meet the minimum requirements.

Coast Unified School District is a sponsor of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) Child Nutrition Programs. The Coast Unified School District provides benefits to all eligible individuals without discrimination in accordance with Federal civil rights laws and USDA policy, as governed by https://www.fns.usda.gov/cr/fns-instruction-113-1. 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 (including gender identity and sexual orientation), age, disability, and reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity. Below are the procedures for receiving and processing complaints alleging civil rights discrimination within FNS school meal programs.

Accepting a Complaint

- Civil rights complaints should be directed to:
  Christie Cosme
  805-927-3880
  CCosme@coastusd.org
- In the event a complainant makes the allegations verbally or in person and refuses (or is not inclined) to place such allegations in writing, the person to whom the allegations are made must write up the elements of the complaint for the complainant.
- An anonymous complaint must be handled the same as any other complaint.
- If complaints forms are used, notify complainants where they can be obtained. A complaint form is not a prerequisite for accepting a complaint.
- There will be no attempt by Coast Unified School to resolve the complaint, nor will the complaint process be a prerequisite for accepting a complaint.
- Any person or representative alleging discrimination based on a prohibited basis has the right to file a complaint within **180 days** of the alleged discriminatory action. Only the Secretary of Agriculture may extend this time under special circumstances.

Transcribing a Complaint

The Civil Rights Complaint Coordinator should maintain a complaint log that must include, at a minimum, the following information:

- The name, address, and phone number or other means of contacting the complainant, such as an e-mail address (if not anonymous)
- The specific location and name of the entity delivering benefits
- The nature of the complaint or action that led to the charges being filed
- Whether the allegation was made verbally or in person

The California Department of Education (CDE) Nutrition Services Division recommends that the Civil Rights Complaint Coordinator collect, in addition to the information above, the following information:

- The nature of the incident or action that led the complainant to feel discrimination was a factor, and an example of the method of administration that is having a disparate effect on the public, potential eligible persons, applicants, or participants.
- The basis on which the complainant believes discrimination exists. The basis for nondiscrimination is race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

- The names, telephone numbers, titles, and business or personal addresses of persons who may have knowledge of the alleged discriminatory action.
- The date(s) during which the alleged discriminatory actions occurred or, if continuing, the duration of such actions.

Forwarding a Complaint

To file a program or Civil Rights complaint, please contact the state agency below:

Child Nutrition Programs
Civil Rights and Program Complaint Coordinator
California Department of Education
Nutrition Services Division
1430 N Street, Room 4503
Sacramento, CA 95814-5901
or 800-952-560
CNPComplaints@cde.ca.gov

Forward all complaints alleging discrimination within **5 calendar days** of receipt to the USDA:

USDA
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410
Phone: 866-632-9992
Fax: 833-256-1665
program.intake@usda.gov

Note: The USDA will investigate and process complaints alleging discrimination.

Resources

- CDE Civil Rights and Complaints web page (https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/cr/)
- USDA FNS Civil Rights web page (http://www.fns.usda.gov/civil-rights)

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. **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. **fax:**
   (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. **email:**
   Program.Intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.