

Maryland Department of Juvenile Services Procedures for Receiving and Processing Complaints Alleging Civil Rights Discrimination in USDA Child Nutrition Programs

Federal law prohibits discrimination on the basis of these protected classes: race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability and age. Any person alleging discrimination based on a protected class has the right to file a complaint within 180 days of the alleged discriminatory action. Complaints can be accepted verbally, in writing, anonymously, and from third party representatives.

Maryland Cts & Jud. Pr. Art. §3-8A-27(b) does not permit sharing juvenile information with the federal government.

Upon receipt of a complaint, the receiver of the complaint at DJS should immediately:

1. Contact the Youth Advocate at the facility, who will then forward the complaint to the School Food Authority (SFA) USDA Child Nutrition Programs Civil Rights Coordinator, Kristina Elsaesser, Director Nutrition and Food Service, Maryland Department of Juvenile Services, kristina.elsaesser@maryland.gov
2. The recipient of the complaint and/or SFA Civil Rights Coordinator must provide the individual with the information necessary to file a complaint and not impede on the individual's right to file.
3. Document the complaint: Utilize the [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](#)
 - Specific name and location of entity delivering the benefit or service,
 - The nature of the incident, action, or method of administration that led the complainant to feel discriminated against,
 - The basis on which the complainant feels discriminated (race, color, national origin, sex, etc.),
 - The names, titles, business addresses, and phone numbers of persons who may have knowledge of the discriminatory action,
 - The date(s) during which the alleged discriminatory actions occurred, or if continuing, the duration of such actions.
 - Either the complainant, the receiver of the complaint, or the SFA Civil Rights Coordinator, should document the complaint. If a complainant makes the allegations verbally or refuses to place such allegations in writing, the person to whom the allegations are made must write up the elements of the complaint.
 - DJS will not report name, address, and phone number of complainant.
 - If the USDA responds to the complaint with a requirement for the identifying information, the youth will be advised of the situation and given the opportunity to discuss the options with attorney /parent/guardian and make a decision whether to proceed or not.
4. All verbal, written, or anonymous complaints received by the SFA must be forwarded to the USDA Civil Rights Office **within five days** of receiving the complaint.
5. All Civil Rights complaints received must be tracked on a civil rights complaint log. This log should be maintained in a confidential manner and only available to SFA staff members who have a legitimate need to know. A [Civil Rights Complaint Log Template](#) is available on the School Nutrition Team civil rights webpage.

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, audiotope, 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.