

**CIVIL RIGHTS TRAINING CHECKLIST  
FOR  
FNS PROGRAMS VOLUNTEERS**

- When do civil rights rules apply? Civil rights rules apply any time there is any federal financial assistance. Federal financial assistance is receiving anything of value from the federal government – not just cash. It can include commodities, training, equipment, and other goods and services.
- Goals of civil rights – fairness and equality of treatment and benefit delivery.
- Types of Discrimination – Disparate treatment (intentional), disparate impact (neutral rule impacts disproportionately on a group), reprisal/retaliation against complainant or his/her family, associates or others involved in complaint process or exercising civil rights.
- Sexual harassment is prohibited. Do not engage in or tolerate unwanted or unwelcome sexual behavior including jokes, touching, requests for sexual favors, etc. Report violations to management, state, or federal officials.
- Exceptions - Congress can establish a program that is intended for certain groups of people, and it is not discrimination to exclude those who do not meet eligibility requirements. For example, Congress can set age limits, and this is not age discrimination or disability discrimination for those who do not meet the age limits.
- Collect racial/ethnic data in CSFP and use it to target outreach and to assess participation. Make sure individual data are kept confidential.
- Maintain confidentiality - It is not appropriate to talk about who is receiving benefits and to make remarks about them. Never share information with others regardless of an expression of good intentions. Refer all requests for information to managers. What happens at the site stays at the site. The exception, of course, is any illegal or inappropriate behavior that should be reported to state or federal officials.
- Legal prohibitions – discrimination is prohibited on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, sex, and disability in special nutrition programs funded by the USDA, Food and Nutrition Service. (The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly the Food Stamp Program) and Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations also prohibit discrimination based on religion and political beliefs in addition to the bases listed above.)
- Conduct outreach to insure that potentially eligible persons and households are aware of the program and have information on how to apply. Provide suggestions about how to make more people aware of the program and how to receive benefits.
- Include the USDA non-discrimination statement on all materials that mention USDA funded programs and make sure the statement is also on web sites that mention USDA funded programs.

Advise people who allege discrimination how to file a complaint. Write USDA, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call toll free (866) 632-9992 (Voice). Individuals who are hearing impaired or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339; or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. Almost all complaints are actually investigated by staff from the FNS field offices located in the state where the complaint originated.

Display the USDA "And Justice for All..." non-discrimination poster in a place where it can be seen by all who visit the premises.

Cooperate with State and Federal reviewers. They are required to conduct periodic compliance reviews to help insure that program and civil rights rules are being obeyed.

If there is non-compliance, correction of problems and voluntary compliance is sought. Failure to abide by civil rights rules can lead to loss of Federal financial assistance.

Make sure people with disabilities are accommodated. Sites should be accessible to people with all types of disabilities (e.g. mobility, sight, hearing, other) or alternate means of service delivery should be advertised and provided.

Provide other language assistance to persons with limited English proficiency who could not gain meaningful access to the program without other language assistance. Assistance must always be provided to LEP households, but the level or type of assistance can vary based on circumstances.

If a conflict occurs, remain calm. Follow your agency policy on dealing with complaints. Call for assistance immediately if you feel threatened. Consider mediation or a third party to help resolve the situation.

Treat all people equally, with dignity and respect.

Remember to follow the Platinum Rule!

"Treat people the way *they* would like to be treated" and be aware of what that is!

Checklist reviewed by:

Name:

Review Date:

**Federal regulations require Civil Rights training annually.  
This institution is an equal opportunity provider.**

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