

Student Complaints and Grievances In the Federal Meals Program

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, 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, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

All students shall have the right to peaceably and responsibly advocate change of any law, policy or regulation. Adequate opportunities shall be provided for students to exercise their rights through channels established for considering such complaints involving Food Service.

A complaint is an assertion by a student that there has been a violation or misinterpretation, or inequitable application of district policies, regulations and procedures, existing laws, or their actions that adversely and directly affect the student personally.

It is the intent of this procedure that student complaints shall be identified and corrected at the earliest possible time, and at the lowest level of supervision.

Complaint processing should be viewed as a positive and constructive effort, which seeks to establish the facts upon which the complaint is based and come to a fair conclusion. Students will not be discriminated against nor will reprisal be attempted against a student because he/she filed a complaint.

Procedures:

Complaints shall be processed according to the step-by-step procedures outlined below:

At any point in time, the student may contact the Washington Office of Agriculture by following the guidance within the non-discrimination statement. The Superintendent and/or designee can help in this process, as needed.

1. Building Site Level (Step 1)
 - a. A complaint concerning Food Service will be presented by student(s) to the classroom teacher. If the complaint is not resolved, the complaint will be placed in writing and presented to the administrator of the building.
 - b. Within 5 workdays of receiving the complaint, the administrator of the building will render a decision in writing to the complainant and the person or persons originally involved in the complaint.
2. Site Level (Step 2)
 - a. Within 5 workdays after receiving the decision at step 1, the complainant may appeal the decision, in writing, to the principal.
 - b. The principal, within 10 workdays of receipt of the appeal, investigate and render a decision, in writing, to the complainant, the immediate supervisor and to the person or persons originally involved in the complainant.
3. District Level (Step 3)
 - a. Within 5 workdays after receiving the decision at Step 2, the complainant may appeal the decision, in writing, to the Superintendent, or official designee.

- b. The Superintendent, or official designee, will, within 10 workdays of receipt of the appeal, investigate and render a decision, in writing, to the complainant, the principal, or immediate supervisor, and to the person or persons originally involved in the complain.

Beyond these local steps, the complainant may register their complaint with the State Agency, the Northeast Regional Office and/or Food & Nutrition Services in Washington, DC.

USDA Nondiscrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, 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, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](#), (AD-3027) found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter 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;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

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