

## **011 Civil Rights Procedure for VPS Nutrition Services Program**

**Background:** Civil Rights regulations are intended to assure that benefits of Child Nutrition Programs are made available to all eligible people in a non-discriminatory manner ensuring equal access to all participants. Sponsors participating in USDA Child Nutrition programs are required to administer program services and benefits in accordance with all Civil Rights laws, regulations, instructions, policies, and guidance related to nondiscrimination.

### **Requirements:**

- Provide all eligible participants the benefits of child nutrition programs in a nondiscriminatory manner.
- Prevent overt identification of participants eligible for and/or receiving meal benefits.
- Complete Annual Civil Rights Training
- Take reasonable steps to ensure program access and benefits to individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP).
- Make reasonable modifications in policies, practices, or procedure when the modifications are necessary to avoid discrimination on the basis of disability.
- Maintain a Public Notification System

### **VPS Civil Rights Procedures:**

- Complete Annual Civil Rights Training
  - o All VPS Nutrition Services employees must complete "Civil Rights in Foodservice" annually through Safe Schools by their Safe Schools training due date (first week of school).
- Special Dietary Needs
  - o When a program participant has a dietary restriction requiring modified meals, a dietary prescription form signed by a recognized medical authority must be provided.
  - o VPS NS Department provides a modified meal at no charge to students with a valid dietary prescription.
  - o Dietary prescription forms are honored until notified otherwise by the parent/guardian.
  - o See 003 Accommodating Students with Special Dietary Needs Procedures
- Public Notification:
  - o VPS NS Department includes USDA non-discrimination statements on all program materials distributed to the public.
  - o The USDA Civil Rights Nondiscrimination Statement is placed on items that are widely disseminated to students and families.
  - o The USDA "And Justice for All Poster" is displayed in all locations where program benefits are available.
- LEP Outreach
  - o VPS provides reasonable, timely, appropriate, and competent language services at no cost to individuals with LEP.
  - o VPS NS Department determines commonly spoken languages of households through Skyward.

- VPS Translation team assists NS Department in communicating meal program information in an understandable and uniform format and to the maximum extent practicable, in a language that parents and guardians can understand.
- Interpretation services are provided for individuals when written translations are not available in their primary language OR the individual has limited literacy.
  - Students or other children may not be used as interpreters. Parents may voluntarily decline an offer for an interpreter.
- Civil Rights Complaint Log
  - A Child Nutrition Program Complaint log is maintained by VPS NS Department.
  - Central office staff are trained on handling complaints of discrimination.

### **Procedures for Handling Complaints of Discrimination**

1. Complaints of discrimination must be filed within 180 days of the alleged discrimination.
2. New entries in the complaint log are addressed immediately. Complaints of discrimination shall be given to Child Nutrition Services director, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction as-needed.
3. Complaints of discrimination may be written or verbal. Use of a form is not required for a person filing a complaint. If a person is unwilling, unable, or not inclined to put the complaint in writing, the person taking the complaint shall do so on the complaint form.
4. Complaints of discrimination should contain as much as possible of the following information:
  - a. Name, address, e-mail address, and telephone number or other means of contacting the complainant.
  - b. The specific location and name of the entity providing the benefits.
  - c. A description of a specific action that caused the complainant to believe that discrimination was a factor.
  - d. Basis on which the complainant feels that discrimination occurred (race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity).
  - e. Name and titles, if known, and addresses of persons who may have knowledge of the discriminatory action. The date(s) the alleged discriminatory actions occurred or the duration of such action.

*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, audiotape, 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) <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USDA-OASCR%20P-Complaint-Form-0508-0002-508-11-28-17Fax2Mail.pdf> found online at: <https://www.usda.gov/oascr/how-to-file-a-program-discrimination-complaint>, 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](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)*