

How to Recognize a Civil Rights Complaint

If a person says their ***civil rights*** are being affected, the complaint must be treated as a civil rights complaint. Other legitimate complaints may only be voiced or observed as being unequal treatment. In all cases, the established procedure is to use a complaint form, the log, referring the request to the civil rights authority in the school district or facility and reporting the complaint to the Michigan Department of Education (MDE). The complaint can be investigated locally, resolved locally and the MDE is notified of the resolution.

Potential issues for a civil rights complaint may start with a phone call, letter, email, fax or any form of communication where someone feels they or someone they know has received unequal treatment in the operation of any Child Nutrition Program.

There are six protected classes in Child Nutrition Programs and these are **race, color, sex, age, national origin, disability**.

Discrimination is defined as different treatment which makes a distinction of one person or a group of persons from others; either intentionally, by neglect, or by the actions or lack of actions based on race, color, sex, age, national origin, disability

To quickly identify a civil rights violation, remember **4 D's**:

1. **Deny** program benefits unfairly
2. **Delay** program benefits unfairly
3. Treat **differently** (a policy or practice that has an adverse impact or any form of intimidation or retaliation)
4. Give **Disparate** Treatment (defined as a policy or practice which, "on the face of it" is not discriminatory, but has a discriminatory impact in practice, also known as the "effects test")

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

Michigan Department of Education
P.O. Box 30008
Lansing, MI 48909

Office of Health and Nutrition Services
School Nutrition Programs
Phone: 517-241-5374
Fax: 517-241-5376
Email: MDE-schoolnutrition@michigan.gov

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.