

USDA CIVIL RIGHTS COMPLAINT / GRIEVANCE

TEFAP CSFP FMNP SFMNP SNAP-O

COMPLAINANT'S INFORMATION

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address (No., Street): _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP Code: _____

Home Phone No.: _____ Cell No.: _____ Email Address: _____

Check Type of Discrimination:

Race Color National Origin Sex Age Disability Reprisal or Retaliation

Status of Person Filing Complaint/Grievance:

Individual Organization Employee Other: _____

Statement of complaint / grievance (Include type of discrimination charged and the specific incident and date(s) in which it occurred):

Complainant's Signature: _____

Routing (send one copy to):

- Agency/Civil Rights Coordinator
- Department of Economic Security / Coordinated Hunger Relief Program
1789 West Jefferson Street
Mail Drop 6282
Phoenix, AZ 85007
CoordinatedHungerReliefProgram@azdes.gov
- Keep original for your records

You may also send a discrimination complaint directly to:

- 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
- 3) email: program.intake@usda.gov
- 4) call: (866) 632-9992 (toll free), (202) 260-1026, or (202) 401-0216 (TDD)

You may also call:

DES/Hunger Relief Program (480) 521-5700 or (480) 387-9096

AGENCY CIVIL RIGHTS OFFICE USE ONLY

Date Complaint Received: _____ Complaint No.: _____

Agency Location of Incident: _____

Name of Person Receiving Complaint: _____ Signature: _____

CIVIL RIGHTS COMPLAINT/GRIEVANCE

Arizona Department of Economic Security / Coordinated Hunger Relief Program

COMPLAINT INSTRUCTIONS

The USDA has found that many “civil rights” complaints are actually customer service issues (claims of rudeness, impatience, lack of understanding or compassion) and, as much as possible, want these matters resolved on a local level. Ultimately our goal is to ensure that civil rights are honored and the complainant is satisfied that their complaint has been taken seriously, addressed, and resolved. If a client reports unfair treatment that they perceive to be based on any of the “protected classes” or if they simply feel that they have been discriminated against and want to make a complaint, you must assist them.

- Keep copies of the Complaint Grievance Form on file for those who wish to file a written complaint, and inform all staff and volunteers serving clients on how to use it to record a complaint. If a client declines to complete the form in writing you must complete it for them from their verbal complaint.
- Notify your ERA about the complaint and forward a copy of the complaint form. Your ERA representative will forward the complaint to DES/HRP. Your ERA representative will follow-up with DES/HRP for advice and guidance in identifying corrective action to be taken, if necessary, to satisfy the complainant and to prevent further complaints against the agency.
- DES/HRP will also notify ERA of their determination of whether the complaint involves a “protected class” and suggest the plan for resolution. If the complaint involves a protected class, it is forwarded to the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) for processing. (Once the complaint is with the FNS a decision letter must be issued within 90 days.)
- The complaint can be sent directly by mail to: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; by phone to (866) 632-9992 (toll free), (202) 260-1026 or (202) 401-0216 (TDD); by fax to: (202) 690-7442; or by email to: program.intake@usda.gov.
- Often the complaint describes poor customer service or a misunderstanding due to language or other reason. Using their good judgment, ERA, and local agency staff should accomplish resolution of the conflict within thirty days.
- A letter describing the final outcome of the complaint and copies of correspondence related to resolution of the complaint will be forwarded by the ERA to DES/HRP and local agency within 60 days.

DOCUMENTATION

- It is critical that you fully document each step from the initial complaint to the resolution.
- Use the Complaint Grievance Form, whenever possible, and take good notes!
- Document in writing each conversation and action taken. Keep a copy of all documentation and post in Complaint Grievance Log.

VERBAL COMPLAINTS

- If a verbal complaint is received and the client is not willing to place allegations in writing, the person receiving the complaint may write up the elements of the complaint for the complainant using the Complaint Grievance Form. The client may directly register a complaint of discrimination by mail to: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250; by phone to: (866) 632-9992 (toll free), (202) 260-1026 or (202) 401-0216 (TDD); by fax to: (202) 690-7442; or by email to: program.intake@usda.gov. The client may also call: DES/Hunger Relief Program (480) 521-5700 or (480) 387-9096.
- Every effort needs to be made to obtain: Name, address, telephone number, or other means of contacting the complainant.
- Specific location and organization delivering service/benefit.
- Nature of the incident or action that led the complainant to feel discriminated against.
- Basis on which the complainant feels discrimination occurred (*race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, political beliefs, disability, reprisal or retaliation etc*).
- Names, titles, and business address of persons who may have knowledge of the discriminatory action.
- Date(s) during which the alleged discriminatory actions occurred, or if continuing, the duration of such actions.
- Anonymous complaints are to be handled just as any other complaint, though of course, full resolution will not be possible.