



Civil Rights - FAQs

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EO Guidance Document

FNS-GD-2019-0006

Resource Type

FAQs/Q&As

Guidance Documents

What is the responsibility of the FNS Civil Rights Division (CRD)?

CRD provides leadership and comprehensive protection against discrimination in FNS employment practices and delivery of programs to the public.

What is the difference between a CR complaint and an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) complaint?

- A **CR complaint** is a verbal or written allegation of discrimination that an FNS program is administered or operated in a manner that results in disparate treatment or services being provided to persons or groups of persons because of one or more protected basis(es).
- An **EEO complaint** involves any employee or applicant for employment who believes that he or she has been discriminated against based on one of the covered protected basis(es)

What are the protected classes for filing a discrimination complaint against an FNS program?

The protected classes for filing a discrimination complaint against an FNS program is race, color, national origin, age, sex, disability, religion, and political affiliation (not all bases apply to all programs)

How do you file a discrimination complaint against one of FNS programs?

Follow the procedures listed at this [link](#).

How long does it take to process a complaint against FNS programs?

All program discrimination complaints must be filed within 180 days of the alleged discriminatory action. FNS will determine within 10 working days of receipt whether USDA has jurisdiction based on CR laws and regulations. If USDA has jurisdiction, the FNS Civil Rights Division will process all discrimination complaints within 180 days of receipt. If there is insufficient information available, or special circumstances or accommodations are involved, some cases may take more than the established timeframe to reach an agreement or final decision.

How do I file an EEO complaint and who should I contact?

Follow the procedures listed at this [link](#).

What are the types of discrimination covered by EEO law?

The various types of discrimination prohibited by the laws enforced by EEOC are described [here](#).

Where can I find an overview of the EEO complaint process?

An overview Of Federal Sector EEO Complaint Process can be viewed [here](#).

What is Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR)?

Federal Sector Alternative Dispute Resolution information is available [here](#)

What are the benefits of ADR?

See the [EEOC Fact Sheet on ADR](#) on benefits of ADR.

Who should I contact about a CR program discrimination complaint?

To file a program discrimination complaint write a letter to:

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Director, Center for Civil Rights Enforcement
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250-9410

Links

Please find below links to CR-related FAQs. The FAQs include FNS General CR FAQs and USDA FAQs specific to Program Complaints and EEO Complaints.

- [USDA Program Complaint FAQs](#)
- [USDA EEO Complaint Filing FAQs](#)

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The contents of this guidance document do not have the force and effect of law and are not meant to bind the public in any way. This document is intended only to provide clarity to the public regarding existing requirements under the law or agency policies.

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