

CIVIL RIGHTS COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

NDSU Extension is committed to compliance with applicable federal, state and local rules and regulations pertaining to equal access to our programs and employment opportunities to all. Any individual, group of program participants or potential program participants may file a civil rights complaint directly with NDSU Extension, the NDSU Office of Vice Provost for Faculty and Equity (701-231-7708) or the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

USDA Client Complaint Procedures

Any individual, group of program participants or potential program participants may file a civil rights complaint. Complainants have three options for filing complaints: informal complaint procedure, formal complaint procedure and notification sent directly to the USDA. The public is told of this right through the use of the USDA “And Justice for All” poster.

This poster must be displayed visibly in all Extension offices. The USDA poster advises participants that they can file complaints directly with the Office of Civil Rights at the USDA, which investigates and resolves complaints of discrimination in programs operated or assisted by the USDA, including Cooperative Extension programs.

Extension encourages, but does not require, clients to try to resolve complaints with the Extension employee providing the program or service at the local level. When

a client voices a concern about possible discrimination in a program, the employee receiving the complaint should listen carefully and not argue with the client or respond defensively. The employee should try to resolve the complaint if possible.

Clients should be made aware that they have the right to take their concern to the county Extension coordinator as a step in the informal complaint process. In that process, the county Extension coordinator shall act promptly to mediate, conciliate or otherwise achieve informal resolution. Clients also should be made aware that they have the right to file a formal complaint with the NDSU Extension director or send notification of the complaint directly to the USDA.

www.ascr.usda.gov/directives-and-regulations
USDA Civil Rights Directives

Questions? See back of this page →

Program complaints:

1-866-632-9992 (toll-free); 202-260-1026 or 202-720-5964 (local)

Employment complaints:

1-800-795-3272 (toll-free); 202-401-0005 or 202-720-5964 (local)

Customers with disabilities:

1-866-377-8642 (relay voice users) or 1-800-877-8339 (local or federal relay)

Spanish speaking: 202-310-2424

IT equipment issues: 1-866-348-9629

OASCR web-related services: 202-720-5592 or email at ascrwebmaster@usda.gov

Questions About the USDA Client Complaint Procedures

Whom may I contact for further information on filing a program discrimination complaint?

You may contact the Office of Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Information Research Service, at 866-632-9992 (toll-free) or 202-260-1026, or send an email to the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights at CR-INFO@ascr.usda.gov. Individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact us through the Federal Relay Service at 800-877-8339 or 800-845-6136 (Spanish).

How do I file a USDA program discrimination complaint?

To file a program discrimination complaint, please complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form. You or your authorized representative must sign the complaint form.

However, you are not required to use the complaint form. You also may file a program discrimination complaint by writing a letter to the Center for Civil Rights Enforcement. For additional information about what to include in your letter, see How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint on our website.

For information on the discrimination complaint process, contact the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Information Research Service, at 202-260-1026 or 866-632-9992 (toll-free) or send an email to the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights at CR-INFO@ascr.usda.gov. Individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact us through the Federal Relay Service at 800-877-8339 or 800-845-6136 (Spanish).

How do I check the status of my program discrimination complaint?

To check the status of your program discrimination complaint, contact the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Information Research Service, at 202-260-1026 or 866-632-9992 (toll-free) or send an email to the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Information Research Service, at CR-INFO@ascr.usda.gov. Individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact us through the Federal Relay Service at 800-877-8339 or 800-845-6136 (Spanish).

How long do I have to file a USDA program discrimination complaint?

The Office of Adjudication has authority to investigate actions that took place no more than 180 days prior to the filing of your complaint unless a waiver of this filing deadline is granted.

How do I request a waiver of the 180-day filing deadline?

A waiver may be granted for the following reasons:

- The discriminatory act could not reasonably be expected to be known within the 180-day period
- Illness or incapacitation
- The same complaint was filed with another federal, state or local agency
- Any other basis determined by the assistant secretary for civil rightsIf you wish to request a waiver, make your request in your complaint letter and be sure to explain why you did not file within the 180-day period. For more information, contact the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Information Research Service, at 202-260-1026 or 866-632-9992 (toll-free) or send an email to the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights at CR-INFO@ascr.usda.gov. Individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact us through the Federal Relay Service at 800-877-8339 or 800-845-6136 Spanish).

Can I send my USDA program discrimination complaint to the Office of Adjudication by email?

No. A USDA program discrimination complaint cannot be sent by email. The Center for Civil Rights Enforcement requires an original, signed document to initiate the complaint process.

If I file a lawsuit in court after having filed a discrimination complaint with the Office of Adjudication, will the court waive the time limits for filing the lawsuit?

Filing a discrimination complaint with the Center for Civil Rights Enforcement does not waive requirements for filing a lawsuit. You may wish to consult a lawyer at your earliest convenience to ensure that your rights are preserved.

Where do I mail my program discrimination complaint?

Mail your program discrimination complaint to:
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Director, Center for Civil Rights Enforcement
1400 Independence Ave. S.W.
Washington, DC 20250-9410