Arizona Department of Economic Security
Child and Community Services Division - Coordinated Hunger Relief Program

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: _____

See page 3 for USDA/EOE/ADA disclosures

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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.

In accordance with federal civil rights law and USDA civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its agencies, offices, employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

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 state or local agency that administers the program or contact USDA through the Telecommunications Relay Service at 711 (voice and TTY). Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at 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, Mail Stop 9410, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
2. **Fax:** (202) 690-7442; or
3. **Email:** program.intake@usda.gov.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

To request this document in alternative format or for further information about this policy, contact your local office; TTY/TDD Services: 7-1-1. • Free language assistance for DES services is available upon request. • Disponible en español en línea o en la oficina local