

Civil Rights Complaint Procedures for Vernon School Nutrition Programs

Vernon Public Schools (VPS) Food & Nutrition Services Department is a sponsor of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Services' (FNS) Child Nutrition Programs, including the *National School Lunch Program (NSLP)* and the *School Breakfast Program (SBP)*. The VPS Food & Nutrition Services Department provides benefits to all eligible individuals without discrimination in accordance with Federal civil rights laws and USDA policy, as governed by [FNS Instruction 113-1](#). 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, age, sex, and disability.

Program participants who feel they have been discriminated against while participating in the Child Nutrition Programs, including during the serving of meals, will be instructed to contact Director of Business and Finance, Raymond Engle, at 860-896-4659 for procedures to voice their complaint. All complaints alleging discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, or disability, either written or verbal, must be processed within the established time frames.

Right to File

Any person or representative alleging discrimination based on a prohibited basis has the right to file a complaint within **180 days** of the alleged discriminatory action. Only the Secretary of Agriculture may extend this time under special circumstances. The complainant must be advised of confidentiality and Privacy Act applications. The Director of Business and Finance will not attempt to resolve the complaint themselves, without first providing the complainant with information on how they can file a complaint.

Forms

The Director of Business and Finance will provide, all persons wishing to file a complaint, instructions on where to obtain the [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](#) online or where they can obtain a hard copy. However, use of this form will not be a prerequisite for acceptance of the complaint.

Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339; or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish) for assistance in filing a complaint.

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Filing a Complaint

The Director of Business and Finance will provide instructions to the complainant on where to forward the completed [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](#) by:

- mail: 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- e-mail: program.intake@usda.gov.

Verbal Complaints

In the event a complainant wishes to make the allegations verbally or in person and refuses or is not inclined to place such allegations in writing, the Director of Business and Finance will write up the elements of the complaint for the complainant utilizing the [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](#).

Acceptance of Written or Verbal

All complaints received by the Director of Business and Finance written or verbal, will be forwarded to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (OCR). Anonymous complaints will be handled as any other complaints, to the extent feasible, based on available information. Complaints will be forwarded to OCR via:

- mail: 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- e-mail: program.intake@usda.gov.

State Agency Notification

If the Director of Business and Finance is notified that a program participant has filed a Civil Rights complaint or they have filed a complaint on behalf of a program participant, they will notify their [county consultant](#) at the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE). The Director of Business and Finance will provide information as requested by the CSDE during the OCR investigation of the complaint.

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For more information, see the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) [Civil Rights for Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage or contact the [school nutrition programs staff](#) in the CSDE's Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103-1841.

This document is available at <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CivilRights/SNPCivilRightsComplaint.doc>.

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 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.

The Connecticut State Department of Education is committed to a policy of equal opportunity/affirmative action for all qualified persons. The Connecticut Department of Education does not discriminate in any employment practice, education program, or educational activity on the basis of age, ancestry, color, criminal record (in state employment and licensing), gender identity or expression, genetic information, intellectual disability, learning disability, marital status, mental disability (past or present), national origin, physical disability (including blindness), race, religious creed, retaliation for previously opposed discrimination or coercion, sex (pregnancy or sexual harassment), sexual orientation, veteran status or workplace hazards to reproductive systems, unless there is a bona fide occupational qualification excluding persons in any of the aforementioned protected classes.

Inquiries regarding the Connecticut State Department of Education's nondiscrimination policies should be directed to: Levy Gillespie, Equal Employment Opportunity Director/Americans with Disabilities Coordinator (ADA), Connecticut State Department of Education, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 607, Hartford, CT 06103, 860-807-2071, levy.gillespie@ct.gov.