Partner Agency Civil Rights Training

Last update: October 2026

USDA Partner Agencies are required to complete civil rights training at a minimum of once a year.

Ensure that your new volunteers or staff review the information in this presentation as they join your team.

If there is a concern that any volunteer cannot understand and/or abide by the training and Civil Rights requirements, then that individual should not interact in any way with program applicants and participants or handle personal information.

After completing Civil Rights training, have each participant sign a Civil Rights Training Log.

Keep your training log in your records.

Lowcountry Food Bank staff will look for this at your routine site visits.

The training log can be found on the Lowcountry Food Bank website.

FEED. ADVOCATE. EMPOWER.

lowcountryfoodbank.org

LOWCOUNTRY FOOD BANK

Civil Rights Training Log

Agency Name and Code: _____

By signing this log, you certify that you have received Civil Rights training. No typed signatures or signatures all signed by the same person will be accepted.

Remember to keep a copy of this training log on-site at your agency. This training is mandatory for all Lowcountry Food Bank partner agencies receiving USDA commodities.

Printed Name	Signature	Date

What is discrimination?

It is treatment which makes a distinction of one person or a group of persons from others; either intentionally, by neglect, or by the actions or lack of actions based on a protected class.

We must treat our neighbors and each other fairly and equitably, with dignity and respect. We have a legal obligation not to unlawfully discriminate either for or against anyone on the basis of protected classes.

It is impermissible to discriminate against someone based upon

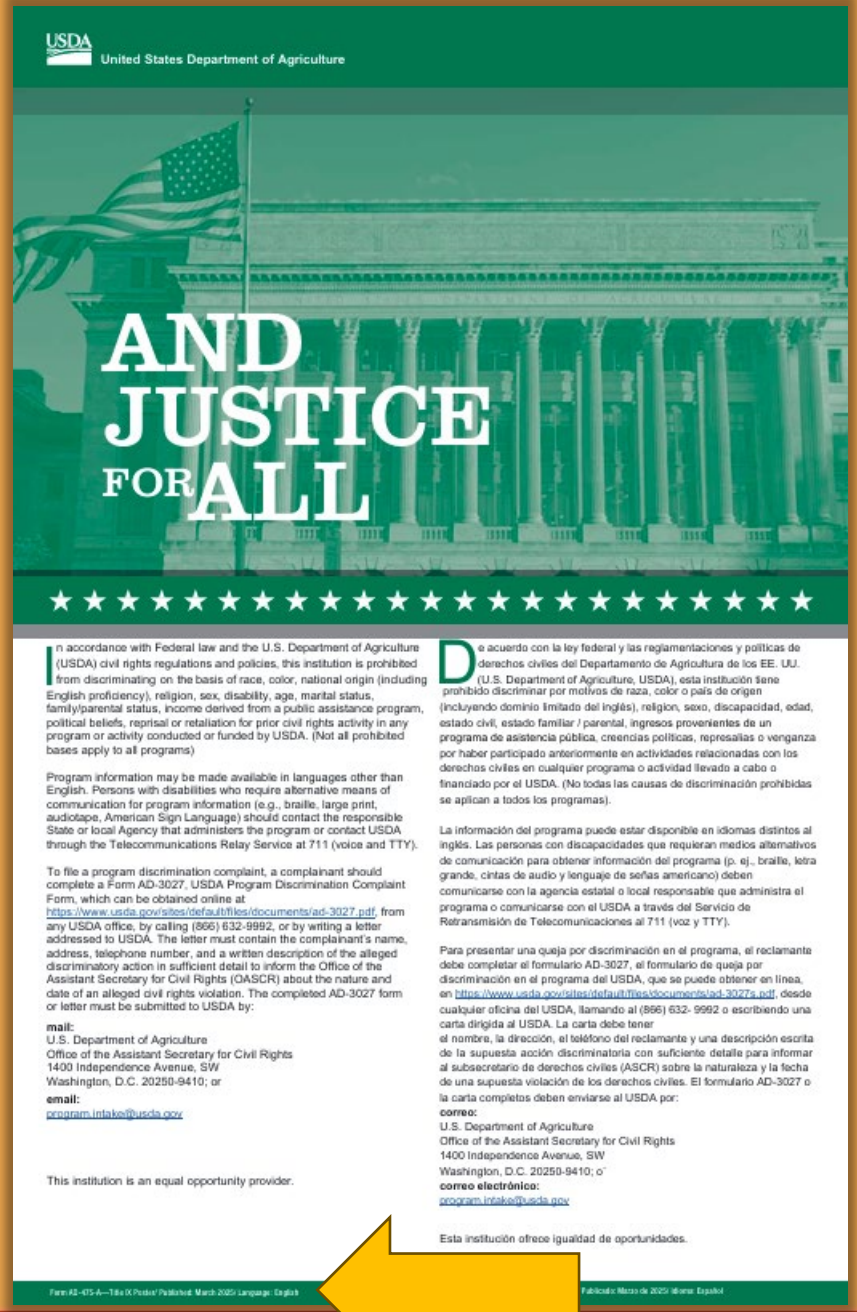
- Race
- Age
- Color
- Religion
- Sex
- Gender identity or expression
- Sexual orientation
- National origin
- Disability
- Political beliefs

Some examples of discrimination:

- Providing less food to a person based on their age or sex.
- Denying service to a person because of a disability.
- Becoming disruptive towards someone based on their national origin or sexual orientation.
- Retaliation against a person for expressing their religion or political beliefs.

Considerations for Partner Agencies

- Civil Rights complaints and program complaints may be different. Civil Rights complaints are based on protected classes whereas program complaints may be based on dissatisfaction with an agency's policies or procedures.
- Partner Agencies should have procedures in place to assist those with disabilities. Keep in mind a disability may not be visible.
- Partner Agencies should have high customer service expectations and conflict resolution standards for their staff and volunteers. We want your neighbors to have a positive experience.



USDA United States Department of Agriculture

AND JUSTICE FOR ALL

In accordance with Federal law and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin (including English proficiency), religion, sex, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs)

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language) should contact the responsible State or local Agency that administers the program or contact USDA through the Telecommunications Relay Service at 711 (voice and TTY).

To file a program discrimination complaint, a complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, which can be obtained online at https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (OASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

mail:
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or

email:
program.intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

De acuerdo con la ley federal y las reglamentaciones y políticas de derechos civiles del Departamento de Agricultura de los EE. UU. (U.S. Department of Agriculture, USDA), esta institución tiene prohibido discriminar por motivos de raza, color o país de origen (incluyendo dominio limitado del inglés), religión, sexo, discapacidad, edad, estado civil, estado familiar / parental, ingresos provenientes de un programa de asistencia pública, creencias políticas, represalias o venganza por haber participado anteriormente en actividades relacionadas con los derechos civiles en cualquier programa o actividad llevado a cabo o financiado por el USDA. (No todas las causas de discriminación prohibidas se aplican a todos los programas).

La información del programa puede estar disponible en idiomas distintos al inglés. Las personas con discapacidades que requieran medios alternativos de comunicación para obtener información del programa (p. ej., braille, letra grande, cintas de audio y lenguaje de señas americano) deben comunicarse con la agencia estatal o local responsable que administra el programa o comunicarse con el USDA a través del Servicio de Retransmisión de Telecomunicaciones al 711 (voz y TTY).

Para presentar una queja por discriminación en el programa, el reclamante debe completar el formulario AD-3027, el formulario de queja por discriminación en el programa del USDA, que se puede obtener en línea, en https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027s.pdf, desde cualquier oficina del USDA, llamando al (866) 632- 9992 o escribiendo una carta dirigida al USDA. La carta debe tener el nombre, la dirección, el teléfono del reclamante y una descripción escrita de la supuesta acción discriminatoria con suficiente detalle para informar al subsecretario de derechos civiles (ASCR) sobre la naturaleza y la fecha de una supuesta violación de los derechos civiles. El formulario AD-3027 o la carta completos deben enviarse al USDA por:

correo:
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; o

correo electrónico:
program.intake@usda.gov

Esta institución ofrece igualdad de oportunidades.

Form AD-475-A—Title IX Poster/ Published: March 2025/ Language: English

Publicado: Marzo de 2025/ Idioma: Español

The *And Justice For All* poster must be displayed in view of neighbors and volunteers.

This poster explains the nondiscrimination policy of the USDA program and includes instructions for handling a discrimination complaint.

Make sure you use the March 2025 version.

Collecting Race/Ethnicity and Disability Data in Link2Feed

This data is collected to ensure Civil Rights compliance with federal programs. Inform applicants that information is **requested** solely for the purpose of determining compliance with federal civil rights laws and has no effect on eligibility for USDA food.

Agencies should select “Prefer Not to Answer” in Link2Feed (where applicable) if the applicant declines to self-identify.

Agencies should not visibly assume a person’s ethnicity or whether a person has a disability.

It may feel uncomfortable to ask neighbors about their race or disability status. Some ways to ask the questions could be “do you have a disability you would like to declare?” or “what race(s) would you prefer on your file?”

You may select only one ethnicity in Link2Feed:

Hispanic or Latino / Non-Hispanic or Non-Latino.

Inform applicants that they may choose one or more races.

The Interpretive Services poster must be posted so that individuals that need a language interpreter know how to obtain the services.

Please make sure your volunteers are aware of this free service and understand how to utilize it.

Instruction Card: Telephone Interpreting Services

200+ Languages
Available 24/7/365
Direct Dial: 503-484-2425

NEED AN INTERPRETER?

1. Dial 1-800-CALL-CLI (1-**800-225-5254**)
2. When the operator answers, tell them:
   - If you need a third-party dial-out
   - Your customer code is **469521**
   - You are calling from **SC Dept of Agriculture**
   - The language you need
   - The **Name of the Food Pantry**
3. The operator will connect you promptly

CERTIFIED LANGUAGES INTERNATIONAL

Recommendations for Using a Telephone Interpreter

For Outbound Calls:

- If you need to reach a limited English proficient (LEP) individual at home or need a third-party dial-out, please first inform the CLI operator before the interpreter is connected.
- Once the interpreter is connected, you can tell the interpreter who to ask for (the LEP's name).
- At this time, you can also tell the interpreter how to proceed if the call goes to voicemail and what message to leave, if desired.

For Inbound Calls:

- Explain to the LEP individual that all information is confidential and encourage questions.
- Speak clearly.
- Smile and be kind; this helps the LEP individual feel more comfortable.
- If face-to-face and multiple people are in the room, speak one at a time.
- Speak freely; all CLI interpreters are sworn to confidentiality, neutrality, and the Interpreter Code of Professional Ethics.
- Encourage the interpreter to clarify terms with you if necessary.

Notice of Beneficiary Rights

Because TEFAP is financially supported by the federal government, partner agencies are required to let their neighbors know that

- Discrimination is not allowed
- Religious activities are not required to receive food and must not take place at the same time as food distribution
- Violations may be reported to the Department of Agriculture

Written Notice of Beneficiary Rights for CSFP and TEFAP

Written Notice of Beneficiary Rights

Name of Organization:

Because TEFAP and CSFP are supported in whole or in part by financial assistance from the Federal Government, we are required to let you know that:

1. We may not discriminate against you on the basis of religion, a religious belief, a refusal to hold a religious belief, or a refusal to attend or participate in a religious practice;
2. We may not require you to attend or participate in any explicitly religious activities (including activities that involve overt religious content such as worship, religious instruction, or proselytization) that are offered by our organization, and any participation by you in such activities must be purely voluntary;
3. We must separate in time or location any privately funded explicitly religious activities (including activities that involve overt religious content such as worship, religious instruction, or proselytization) from activities supported with direct Federal financial assistance; and
4. You may report violations of these protections, including any denials of services or benefits by an organization, by contacting or filing a written complaint with the U.S. Department of Agriculture
   Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights Executive Director
   Center for Civil Rights Enforcement
   1400 Independence Avenue SW
   Washington, DC 20250–9410, or by email to program.intake@usda.gov
5. If you would like to seek information about whether there are any other federally funded organizations that provide these kinds of services in your area, please contact:

The USDA Hunger Hotline:
By Phone: 1-866-3-HUNGRY or 1-877-8-HAMBRE to speak with a representative from 7:00 AM – 10:00 PM Eastern Time.
By Text: 914-342-7744 with a question that may contain a keyword such as "food," "summer," "meals," etc. to receive an automated response to resources located near an address and/or zip code.

This written notice must be given to you before you enroll in the program or receive services from the program, unless the nature of the service provided or exigent circumstances make it impracticable to provide such notice before we provide the actual service. In such an instance, this notice must be given to you at the earliest available opportunity.

Explicitly Religious Activities: Examples

It is acceptable to…	*It is unacceptable to…*
Having cross hanging on a wall at the food distribution facility.	Require participants to stand by the cross and recite a prayer prior to receiving USDA Foods.
Have a menorah on a table at the food distribution facility during the holiday season.	Refuse USDA Foods to participants who do not practice the Jewish faith.
Have a display stand at the front/back of the facility that contains faith-based pamphlets for anyone interested.	Insert faith-based pamphlets in bags or boxes when distributing USDA Foods.
Have a pastor or other religious official assist with the distribution of USDA Foods.	Force or encourage participants to have a religious conversation with the pastor or official prior to receiving USDA Foods.

USDA
United States Department of Agriculture
Food and Nutrition Service

USDA FOODS
HEALTHY CHOICES
AMERICAN GROWN

All required signage must be posted in view of your neighbors, even if you are distributing food in a drive-thru.

You may display your posters on a portable bulletin board during your distribution.

All signage can be found on the Lowcountry Food Bank’s website under the Partner Agencies tab.

What to do if you receive a Civil Rights complaint?

- All staff and volunteers must know how to assist participants in any of these matters and/or whom to refer questions and concerns to.
- Refer the complainant to the *And Justice for All* poster which contains instructions and contact information for the government department that investigates discrimination complaints.
- **We are obligated to make this info available.** Inform the neighbor that they have **180 days** after the incident to file a complaint.
- Racial/Ethnic Data must be collected at the point of application and reported to determine the effectiveness of the program; however, it does not affect eligibility.

This concludes your Civil Rights Training.

Please be sure to complete your
Civil Rights Training Log.

If you have any questions,
contact a member of the Agency Relations team.

Thank you for your hard work
serving your neighbors!