

**Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention WIC Nutrition
Program**

Effective: October 1, 2011

Policy No. CR-4

Revised: October 1, 2024

Civil Rights Complaint Process

Authority

7 CFR §246.4(a)(17); §246.8(a)(4), (b); and §246.9

22 MRSA §255 and §1951

10-144 CMR Chapter 286, §V.A

Policy

1. Civil rights complaints may be made verbally or in writing, by any applicant/participant who believes she/he was discriminated against for any of the following reasons:
 - 1.1. Federally Protected Bases
 - 1.1.1 Race
 - 1.1.2 Color
 - 1.1.3 National Origin
 - 1.1.4 Age
 - 1.1.5 Sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation)
 - 1.1.6 Disability
2. The State Agency shall ensure that Maine CDC WIC Nutrition Program applicants and participants are informed where and how they may file a complaint of discrimination.
 - 2.1. All State and Local Agency staff shall be trained in what constitutes a civil rights complaint and the procedures that must be followed when such a complaint is made.
 - 2.2. If applicants/participants were not issued program benefits as a result of actions that led to a complaint and due to this complaint, fair hearing procedures shall be followed as outlined in Policy OM-17, Fair Hearings Procedures.

Procedures

1. Persons seeking to file discrimination complaints may file them with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410
2. The complaint shall include the name of the agency and/or individual towards which the complaint is directed and a description of the alleged violation. Anonymous complaints shall be handled like any other complaint.
3. In the event a complainant makes a verbal allegation and is unable or declines to submit the complaint in writing, the person who receives the verbal complaint shall put the complaint in writing. The complainant will be asked to supply the following information:
 - 3.1 Name, address, email and telephone number of the complainant.
 - 3.2 The specific location (including county) and name of the Local Agency where the incident took place, and, the name of the individual(s) and organization(s) alleged to have engaged in discrimination.
 - 3.3 Description of the incident or action, including why the complainant believes that it was discriminatory.
 - 3.4 The date(s) during which the alleged discriminatory action occurred.
 - 3.5 The names, titles, and addresses of persons who may have knowledge of the discriminatory action
4. Discrimination complaints must be filed within 180 days of the alleged discriminatory action.
5. State and local agency staff shall maintain a log of all civil rights complaints including documentation, findings from any investigation, and a description of the final disposition of the complaint including any corrective action planned or taken. (Appendix CR-4-A).