



## ***CROW WING COUNTY COMMUNITY SERVICES***

<b>Title:</b> Civil Rights Compliance Plan	
<b>Board Action:</b> June 1, 2006 <b>Implementation:</b> July 22, 2016	<b>Next Review Date:</b> 12/01/2025 <b>Last Review Date:</b> 12/01/2024
<b>Policy:</b> To ensure compliance with components of Federal Civil Rights legislation as it relates to customers of Crow Wing County Human Services.	

**Kara Terry, Director of Crow Wing County Community Services serves as the Civil Rights Compliance, Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) contact person:**

Crow Wing County Community Services  
Kara Terry, Director  
204 Laurel St. PO Box 686  
Brainerd, Minnesota 56401  
218-824-1140 (voice) or use your preferred relay service  
888-772-8211 (toll free)  
218-824-1117 (fax)  
[kara.terry@crowwing.gov](mailto:kara.terry@crowwing.gov)  
Agency e-mail: [cwcss@crowwing.gov](mailto:cwcss@crowwing.gov)



For accessible formats of this publication or assistance with additional equal access to human services, write to [dhs.equalopportunity@state.mn.us](mailto:dhs.equalopportunity@state.mn.us), or call 651-431-3040.

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### **A. Purpose of the Plan:**

The purpose of the Civil Rights Compliance Plan is to ensure compliance with Federal Civil Rights law in all its application to the business of Crow Wing County Community Services. As a recipient of federal financial assistance, Crow Wing County Community Service is responsible for providing core services to assist and support Minnesota's most vulnerable individuals and families so they can meet their basic needs and be treated with respect and dignity. Crow Wing County Community Service has a civil rights plan to ensure that all eligible individuals receive equal access to program services and information. Its programs are operated in a nondiscriminatory way, without regard to race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, religion, political beliefs, creed and public assistance status. In medical programs, sex includes sex stereotypes and gender identity under any health program or activity receiving federal funds. The civil rights plan also serves as a source of information for county agency staff and the general public. The plan sets out the agency's civil rights administrative policies and procedures. The plan identifies the key contacts within the agency and linking the reader to applicable state and federal civil rights laws and resources.

### **B. Location of the Civil Rights Compliance Plan:**

The plan will be included in new employee orientation packets and posted on our employee share point site for easy access. A link to the Civil Rights Compliance Plan is on our web page.

### **C. Legal Authorities:**

#### Federal

1. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (race, color, national origin)
2. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (disability)
3. Section 508 Amendment of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (disability)
4. Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990; State and local government services (disability)
5. Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (age)
6. Community Service Assurance Provisions of the Hill-Burton Act (health facilities receiving Hill-Burton Funds)
7. Section 1557 of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (added sex discrimination in health care programs)
8. Nondiscrimination Provisions of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981 (Federal Block Grants):
  - Community Services Block Grant (race, color, national origin, sex) **Remaining block grants** (race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, religion)
  - Social Services Block Grant
  - Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant
  - Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness Block Grant
  - Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant
  - Community Mental Health Services Block Grant
  - Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant
9. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (sex)
10. Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, religion)
11. Food Stamp Act of 1977 [As Amended Through P.L. 108-269, 2004]
12. Nondiscrimination Compliance Requirements in the Food Stamp Program, Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture
13. Bilingual Requirements in the Food Stamp Program, Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture
14. FNS Instruction 113-1, Civil Rights Compliance and Enforcement – Nutrition Programs and Activities, Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture (2005)
15. Equal Opportunity for Religious Organizations in USDA Regulation

#### State

Minnesota Human Rights Act, Chapter 363A

#### **D. Civil Rights Contact Information**

Crow Wing County Community Services  
Kara Terry, Director  
204 Laurel St. PO Box 686  
Brainerd, Minnesota 56401  
218-824-1140 (voice) or use your preferred relay service  
888-772-8211 (toll free)  
218-824-1117 (fax)  
[kara.terry@crowwing.gov](mailto:kara.terry@crowwing.gov)  
Agency e-mail: [cwcss@crowwing.gov](mailto:cwcss@crowwing.gov)

#### **E. Written Equal Opportunity Policy (for service delivery)**

Refer to [Attachment 1](#) for a copy of written equal opportunity policy.

#### **F. Written Civil Rights Complaint Procedure (for resolving complaints)**

Refer to [Attachment 2](#) for a copy of civil rights complaint procedure. Note: The Complaint Procedure will be used for **all types of civil rights complaints**. A complaint log is maintained by the SNAP Program Coordinator.

#### **G. Written SNAP Non-Civil Rights Complaint Procedure**

Refer to [Attachment 3](#) for a copy of our SNAP non-civil rights complaint procedure.

#### **H. Complaint Notification Form:**

Use the complaint notification form, [Attachment 4](#), when you resolve a civil rights complaint on the county level. When the complaint investigation is completed, fill out the complaint notification form and send it to Department of Human Services (DHS) so DHS has a record of the complaint investigation and its outcome/decision that was resolved at the county agency. NOTE: Complaints MUST be completed within 90 days of the date the complaint was filed.

#### **I. Disability Policies, Procedures and Other Requirements:**

Crow Wing County Community has, as part of its Civil Rights Compliance Plan, incorporated the use of the DHS-4133 brochure “*Do You Have A Disability*”. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act are federal laws, and the Minnesota Human Rights Act is a state law. Each gives individuals with disabilities the same legal rights and protections as people without disabilities, including access to public assistance benefits. You will not be denied benefits because you have a disability. Your benefits will not be stopped because of your disability. If your disability makes getting benefits hard for you, Crow Wing County Community Services will help you access all of the programs that are available to you. The USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, statements and links are published on the Crow Wing County web page. Refer to [Attachment 5](#) for a copy of DHS-4133-ENG. A copy of the DHS-4133-Eng is posted in the lobby on 1<sup>st</sup> floor of the Community Services Building.

#### **J. Limited English Proficiency Plan:**

Refer to [Attachment 6](#) for a copy of the Limited English Proficiency Plan (LEP Plan). The LEP Plan sets out the agency’s language assistance resources, such as bilingual staff and spoken language interpreters from the Bridge-World Language Center. We use language assistance services set out in the LEP Plan when we need to communicate with individuals in their primary language.

#### **K. Snap Civil Rights Training Section:**

Refer to [Attachment 7](#) for a copy of the DHS PowerPoint presentation. Training is provided to our employees annually using the DHS PowerPoint presentation, training is also provided on an individual basis to new employees. The DHS PowerPoint Training presentation is posted on our employee share point site. A staff roster is kept by the SNAP Program Coordinator to assure all staff have been trained.

**L. Civil Rights Assurance of Compliance:**

Refer to **Attachment 8** for a copy of the signed civil rights assurance of compliance document.

**M. Civil Rights Plan Administration:**

Crow Wing County Community Services will follow the below to assure that the civil rights plan is available to the public, employees, volunteers and contractors.

- The comprehensive civil rights plan will be posted on our county web page, employee share point site, and on the employee bulletin board.
- Annually the comprehensive civil rights plan will be reviewed by all staff.
- Provide SNAP civil rights training annually using the DHS PowerPoint presentation.
  - A staff roster will be maintained by the SNAP Program Coordinator.
- The following documents will be displayed in our lobby:
  - Equal opportunity policy;
  - Complaint resolution procedures;
  - Disability policies and procedures; and
  - “Do You Have a Disability” (DHS-4133-ENG).



**CROW WING COUNTY COMMUNITY SERVICES  
EQUAL OPPORTUNITY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES  
INCLUDING EQUAL ACCESS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

**Equal Opportunity Policy**

It is the policy of Crow Wing County Community Services to make sure that program benefits and services are available to everyone and provided to all eligible individuals without discrimination, in compliance with civil rights laws.

Crow Wing County Community Services employees, services, programs, benefits and policies will not discriminate against applicants, clients or members of the public because of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, creed, religion, political beliefs, disability or public assistance status. "Sex" includes sex stereotypes and gender identity under any medical or health program receiving federal financial assistance, such as Medical Assistance, CHIP programs, health clinics, insurance companies and state health insurance exchanges.

This policy covers Crow Wing County Community Service's full range of services, programs and benefits, including, but not limited to, access to information about services, eligibility determinations and intake, admission procedures and treatment. The policy applies to the agencies and providers receiving federal and state funds under contracts, licenses and other arrangements with Crow Wing County Community Services. The Minnesota Human Rights Act also applies to the work of Crow Wing County Community Services and those agencies carrying out the work of Crow Wing County.

**Program Accessibility Policy for People with Disabilities**

Crow Wing County Community Service and all of its services, programs and benefits, are accessible to and usable by people with disabilities, including people with hearing loss, low vision and other sensory disabilities.

To avoid disability discrimination, Crow Wing County Community Services will:

- Notify the public about the rights and protections for people with disabilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- Designate an ADA Coordinator and maintain a complaint procedure.
- Make sure that its buildings are physically accessible for people with disabilities.
- Assist individuals with disabilities to apply and qualify for benefits based on their eligibility.
- Provide appropriate auxiliary aids and services, including accessible formats, to ensure effective communication with people with disabilities.
- Provide services, programs and benefits that are accessible to and usable by qualified people with disabilities.

**Physical access includes:**

- Convenient off-street parking designated specifically for people with disabilities.
- Curb cuts and ramps between parking areas and the Community Services building.
- Level access into the first floor of the Community Services building with elevator access to all other floors.

**Reasonable Modifications to Policies, Procedures or Practices**

Crow Wing County Community Services will make reasonable modifications to its policies, procedures or practices when necessary to avoid discrimination on the basis of disability, unless Crow Wing County Community Services can demonstrate that making the modifications would fundamentally alter the nature of the services, programs or benefits.

**Effective Communication and Auxiliary Aids and Services**

Crow Wing County Community Services will take appropriate steps to ensure that communications with people with disabilities and companions with disabilities are as effective as communications with others. To ensure effective communications, Crow Wing County Community Services will provide appropriate auxiliary aids and services, including accessible formats, so that people with disabilities can receive services, programs and benefits and participate in them in the same way as people without disabilities. Auxiliary aids and services include qualified readers, writers and interpreters who convey information effectively, accurately and impartially using any necessary specialized vocabulary.

To determine what types of auxiliary aids or services are necessary, Crow Wing County will give primary consideration to the requests of people with disabilities. Crow Wing County will honor the choice of the person requesting the auxiliary aid or service unless it would fundamentally alter the nature of the service, program or benefit or cause an undue administrative or financial burden. If this happens, Crow Wing County will find another equally effective auxiliary aid or service.



## COMPLAINT RESOLUTION PROCEDURE

### Crow Wing County Community Services Agency Civil Rights Complaint Procedure

You have the right to equal access to services, if you are an applicant, client or member of the public trying to gain access to human services program information or benefits. Crow Wing County Community Services has a civil rights complaint procedure that provides prompt and thorough resolution of civil rights complaints.

Civil rights complaints allege discrimination. You have a right to file a civil rights complaint if you believe you have been discriminated against because of your race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, creed, religion, political beliefs, disability or public assistance status. **Sex** includes sex stereotypes and gender identity discrimination that occurs in medical or health programs and clinics receiving federal financial assistance, such as Medical Assistance, MNCare, CHIP programs and insurance companies and state health insurance exchanges.

It is against the law for anyone who works for Crow Wing County to retaliate against a person who files a complaint or who cooperates in the investigation of a civil rights complaint.

To file a complaint, ask for the agency's equal opportunity policy, complaint resolution procedure, and complaint form. Use the contact information below to file a complaint. You can also review the law and regulations that outlaw discrimination in the Civil Rights Contact's office.

Crow Wing County Community Services  
Kara Terry, Director  
204 Laurel St. PO Box 686  
Brainerd, Minnesota 56401  
218-824-1140 (voice) or use your preferred relay service  
888-772-8211 (toll free)  
218-824-1117 (fax)  
[kara.terry@crowwing.gov](mailto:kara.terry@crowwing.gov)  
Agency e-mail: [cwcss@crowwing.gov](mailto:cwcss@crowwing.gov)

#### Procedure:

1. Civil rights complaints **must** be submitted to the Civil Rights Contact within 90 days of the date the alleged discrimination occurred.
2. A complaint **must** be in writing and contain the name and address of the person filing it. Other important contact information is telephone number, relay number and email address. The complaint **must** state the problem or action alleged and the relief desired. If you need assistance with your complaint, the Civil Rights Contact will help you. Please use Complaint Form attached. (Appendix C)
3. The county agency **must** conduct an investigation of the complaint, if it is a true civil rights complaint. The investigation may be informal, but it **must** be thorough and timely. People who have an interest in the complaint **must** have an opportunity to submit relevant evidence about the complaint. The county agency will issue a written decision on the complaint within 120 days after its filing. The county will maintain the complaint records and files for three years. Complaints about program rules are not civil rights complaints and will be resolved through a different complaint process.
4. The person filing the complaint may appeal the decision by writing to the Director of Community Services within 15 days of receiving the written decision. The Director of Community Services **must** issue a written decision in response to the appeal, no later than 30 days after the appeal is filed. This decision is final. This



appeal process is not the same as filing a fair hearings appeal with the DHS Appeals and Regulations Division.

5. The person filing the complaint must be informed that he/she can file a discrimination complaint **directly** with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office for Civil Rights or the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for the SNAP Program.

(a) The **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office for Civil Rights** prohibits discrimination in its programs because of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex and religion. **Sex** includes sex stereotypes and gender identity discrimination that occurs in medical or health programs and clinics receiving federal financial assistance; these are programs, such as Medicaid, CHIP programs and insurance companies and state health insurance exchanges under Title I of the Affordable Care Act. Contact the federal agency directly:

**U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Office for Civil Rights**

Region V  
233 N. Michigan Avenue Suite 240  
Chicago, IL 60601  
312-886-2359 (voice)  
800-368-1019 (toll free)  
800-537-7697 (TTY)

(b) USDA requires that the following nondiscrimination statement be provided **exactly** as it is shown below:

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, religious creed, disability, age, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who required 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](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: (This institution is an equal opportunity provider)

(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](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)

## 6. Filing Complaints with State Agencies:

The person filing the complaint **must** also be informed that he/she can file a discrimination complaint **directly** with the Minnesota Department of Human Rights and the Minnesota Department of Human Services.

(a) The Minnesota Department of Human Rights prohibits discrimination in public services programs because of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, disability, sex, sexual orientation, or public assistance status. Contact the Minnesota Department of Human Rights directly:

Minnesota Department of Human Rights  
Freeman Building, 625 North Robert Street  
St. Paul, MN 55155  
651-539-1100 (voice)  
800-657-3704 (toll free)  
711 or 800-627-3529 (MN Relay)

(b) The **Minnesota Department of Human Services** prohibits discrimination in its programs because of race, color, national origin, creed, religion, sexual orientation, public assistance status, age, disability, or sex, including sex stereotypes and gender identity discrimination that occurs in health programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance, such as Medical Assistance, MNCare, CHIP programs and insurance companies and state health insurance exchanges. Contact the Equal Opportunity and Access Division **directly** only if you have a discrimination complaint:

Minnesota Department of Human Services  
Equal Opportunity and Access Division  
P.O. Box 64997  
St. Paul, MN 55164-0997  
651-431-3040 (voice) or use your preferred relay service

(c) County agencies are not permitted to investigate civil rights complaints in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) because counties directly administer SNAP benefits. County agencies **must** refer SNAP civil rights complaints to DHS or the USDA regional office in Chicago. The USDA regional address is:

Civil Rights Director  
Midwest Regional Office  
USDA/Food and Nutrition Service  
77 W. Jackson Blvd., 20<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Chicago, IL 60604-3591  
(312) 353-6657 (voice) or use your preferred relay service

## 7. Arrangements for People with Disabilities

Crow Wing County **will** make appropriate arrangements to ensure that people with disabilities are provided reasonable modifications or effective communications, if needed, to participate in the complaint process. Reasonable modifications or effective communications include, but are not limited to, providing interpreters for people who are deaf or hard-of-hearing; providing taped cassettes and accessible formats for people who are blind or have low vision; and assuring a physically accessible location for complaint proceedings. The Civil Rights Contact (or designee) is responsible for working with people who file complaints to make appropriate arrangements.



## COMPLAINT RESOLUTION PROCEDURE

### Crow Wing County Community Services Agency Civil Rights Complaint Procedure

You have the right to equal access to services, if you are an applicant, client or member of the public trying to gain access to human services program information or benefits. Crow Wing County Community Services has a civil rights complaint procedure that provides prompt and thorough resolution of civil rights complaints.

Civil rights complaints allege discrimination. You have a right to file a civil rights complaint if you believe you have been discriminated against because of your race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, creed, religion, political beliefs, disability or public assistance status. **Sex** includes sex stereotypes and gender identity discrimination that occurs in medical or health programs and clinics receiving federal financial assistance, such as Medical Assistance, MNCare, CHIP programs and insurance companies and state health insurance exchanges.

It is against the law for anyone who works for Crow Wing County to retaliate against a person who files a complaint or who cooperates in the investigation of a civil rights complaint.

To file a complaint, ask for the agency's equal opportunity policy, complaint resolution procedure, and complaint form. Use the contact information below to file a complaint. You can also review the law and regulations that outlaw discrimination in the Civil Rights Contact's office.

Crow Wing County Community Services  
Kara Terry, Director  
204 Laurel St. PO Box 686  
Brainerd, Minnesota 56401

218-824-1140 (voice) or use your preferred relay service OR 888-772-8211 (toll free)  
218-824-1117 (fax)  
[kara.terry@crowwing.gov](mailto:kara.terry@crowwing.gov)  
Agency e-mail: [cwcss@crowwing.gov](mailto:cwcss@crowwing.gov)

#### Procedure:

1. Civil rights complaints **must** be submitted to the Civil Rights Contact within 90 days of the date the alleged discrimination occurred.
  2. A complaint **must** be in writing and contain the name and address of the person filing it. Other important contact information is telephone number, relay number and email address. The complaint **must** state the problem or action alleged and the relief desired. If you need assistance with your complaint, the Civil Rights Contact will help you. Please use Complaint Form.
  3. The county agency **must** conduct an investigation of the complaint, if it is a true civil rights complaint. The investigation may be informal, but it **must** be thorough and timely. People who have an interest in the complaint **must** have an opportunity to submit relevant evidence about the complaint. The county agency will issue a written decision on the complaint within 120 days after its filing. The county will maintain the complaint records and files for three years. Complaints about program rules are not civil rights complaints and will be resolved through a different complaint process.
  4. The person filing the complaint may appeal the decision by writing to the Director of Community Services within 15 days of receiving the written decision. The Director of Community Services **must** issue a written decision in response to the appeal, no later than 30 days after the appeal is filed. This decision is final. This appeal process is not the same as filing a fair hearings appeal with the DHS Appeals and Regulations Division.
  5. The person filing the complaint must be informed that he/she can file a discrimination complaint **directly** with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office for Civil Rights or the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for the SNAP Program.
- (a) The **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office for Civil Rights** prohibits discrimination in its programs because of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex and religion. **Sex** includes sex stereotypes and gender identity discrimination that occurs in medical or health programs and clinics receiving federal financial assistance; these are programs, such as Medicaid, CHIP programs and insurance companies and state health insurance exchanges under Title I of the Affordable Care Act. Contact the federal agency directly:

**U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**  
**Office for Civil Rights**  
Region V  
233 N. Michigan Avenue Suite 240, Chicago, IL 60601  
312-886-2359 (voice) 800-368-1019 (toll free) 800-537-7697 (TTY)

(b) USDA requires that the following nondiscrimination statement be provided **exactly** as it is shown below:

In accordance with federal civil rights law and 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, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), religious creed, disability, age, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), 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.

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/USDA-OASCR%20P-Complaint-Form-0508-0002-508-11-28-17Fax2Mail.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (833) 620-1071, 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 Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to: (This institution is an equal opportunity provider)

(1) mail: Food and Nutrition Services, USDA  
1320 Braddock Place, Room 334  
Alexandria, VA 22314

(2) fax: (833) 256-1665 or  
(202) 690-7442

(3) email: [FNSCIVILRIGHTSCOMPLAINTS@usda.gov](mailto:FNSCIVILRIGHTSCOMPLAINTS@usda.gov)

6. Filing Complaints with State Agencies: The person filing the complaint **must** also be informed that he/she can file a discrimination complaint **directly** with the Minnesota Department of Human Rights and the Minnesota Department of Human Services.

(a) The Minnesota Department of Human Rights prohibits discrimination in public services programs because of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, disability, sex, sexual orientation, or public assistance status. Contact the Minnesota Department of Human Rights directly:

Minnesota Department of Human Rights  
Freeman Building, 625 North Robert Street, St. Paul, MN 55155  
651-539-1100 (voice) 800-657-3704 (toll free) 711 or 800-627-3529 (MN Relay)

(b) The **Minnesota Department of Human Services** prohibits discrimination in its programs because of race, color, national origin, creed, religion, sexual orientation, public assistance status, age, disability, or sex, including sex stereotypes and gender identity discrimination that occurs in health programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance, such as Medical Assistance, MNCare, CHIP programs and insurance companies and state health insurance exchanges. Contact the Equal Opportunity and Access Division **directly** only if you have a discrimination complaint:

Minnesota Department of Human Services  
Equal Opportunity and Access Division  
P.O. Box 64997, St. Paul, MN 55164-0997  
651-431-3040 (voice) or use your preferred relay service

(c) County agencies are not permitted to investigate civil rights complaints in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) because counties directly administer SNAP benefits. County agencies **must** refer SNAP civil rights complaints to DHS or the USDA regional office in Chicago. The USDA regional address is:

Civil Rights Director  
Midwest Regional Office  
USDA/Food and Nutrition Service  
77 W. Jackson Blvd., 20<sup>th</sup> Floor, Chicago, IL 60604-3591

(312) 353-6657 (voice) or use your preferred relay service

7. Arrangements for People with Disabilities: Crow Wing County **will** make appropriate arrangements to ensure that people with disabilities are provided reasonable modifications or effective communications, if needed, to participate in the complaint process. Reasonable modifications or effective communications include, but are not limited to, providing interpreters for people who are deaf or hard-of-hearing; providing taped cassettes and accessible formats for people who are blind or have low vision; and assuring a physically accessible location for complaint proceedings. The Civil Rights Contact (or designee) is responsible for working with people who file complaints to make appropriate arrangements.



**COUNTY HUMAN SERVICE AGENCY COMPLAINT NOTIFICATION FORM  
COMPLAINTS ALLEGING DISCRIMINATION IN SERVICE DELIVERY**

**AUTHORITY:** U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service Instruction 113-1.

**REQUIREMENT:** County human service agencies must notify the DHS Civil Rights Coordinator within 90 days of all service delivery discrimination complaints (i.e., civil rights complaints) filed against them (see bottom of Page 2 for contact information).

**ACTION REQUIRED:**  
**Complete this form and send it to the DHS Civil Rights Coordinator within 90 days of the date the complaint was filed.**

1. Name, address, telephone number of complainant:

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2. Name and address of county agency delivering the benefits, including names of any employees accused of wrongdoing:

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3. Type of discrimination alleged.

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4. Describe the alleged discrimination, including the dates it happened. Give names and contact information of any witnesses:

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5. Give a summary of the investigation findings, including any corrective action ordered:

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**CONTACT INFORMATION:** DHS Civil Rights Coordinator  
Minnesota Department of Human Services  
Equal Opportunity and Access Division  
P.O. Box 64997  
St. Paul, MN 55164-0997  
651-431-3034 (voice) or use your preferred relay service  
651-431-7444 (fax)  
joann.daSilva@state.mn.us



## Do you have a disability?

**If you have a disability, you have the same rights as others.**

Please tell us if you have a disability so we can help you access county or Tribal Nation human services benefits and services.

### What medical conditions may be disabilities?

A disability is a physical, sensory, or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity.

Types of disabilities may include:

- Diseases like diabetes, epilepsy or cancer
- Learning disorders like dyslexia
- Developmental delays
- Mental health conditions
- Hearing loss or low vision
- Movement restrictions like trouble with walking, reaching or grasping
- History of substance use disorder, although current illegal drug use is not a disability.

If you are asking for or are getting benefits through either a county human services agency or a Tribal Nation, that office will let you know if you have a disability based on information from you and your doctor.

### What help is available?

If you have a disability, your county or Tribal Nation can help you by:

- Calling or meeting with you in another place if you are not able to come into the office

- Using a sign language interpreter
- Giving you letters and forms in other formats like computer files, audio recordings, large print or Braille
- Telling you the meaning of the information we give you
- Helping you fill out forms
- Helping you make a plan so you can work, even with your disability
- Sending you to other services that may provide help
- Helping you to appeal agency decisions if you disagree with them.

You will not have to pay extra for help. If you want help, ask your agency as soon as possible. An agency may not be able to accommodate requests made within 48 hours of need.

### How does the law protect people with disabilities?

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act are federal laws, and the Minnesota Human Rights Act is a state law. Each gives individuals with disabilities the same legal rights and protections as people without disabilities, including access to public assistance benefits. You will not be denied benefits because you have a disability. Your benefits will not be stopped because of your disability. If your disability makes getting benefits hard for you, your county human services agency or Tribal Nation will help you access all of the programs that are available to you.



## Civil Rights Notice

**Discrimination is against the law.** The Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) does not discriminate on the basis of any of the following:

- race
- color
- national origin
- creed
- religion
- sexual orientation
- public assistance status
- marital status
- age
- disability
- sex
- political beliefs

## Civil Rights Complaints

You have the right to file a discrimination complaint if you believe you were treated in a discriminatory way by a human services agency.

Contact **DHS** directly only if you have a discrimination complaint:

Civil Rights Coordinator  
Minnesota Department of Human Services  
Equal Opportunity and Access Division  
P.O. Box 64997  
St. Paul, MN 55164-0997  
651-431-3040 (voice) or use your preferred relay service

## Minnesota Department of Human Rights (MDHR)

In Minnesota, you have the right to file a complaint with the MDHR if you believe you have been discriminated against because of any of the following:

- race
- color
- national origin
- religion
- creed
- sex
- sexual orientation
- marital status
- public assistance status
- disability

Contact the **MDHR** directly to file a complaint:

Minnesota Department of Human Rights  
540 Fairview Avenue North, Suite 201  
St. Paul, MN 55104  
651-539-1100 (voice) 800-657-3704 (toll free)  
711 or 1-800-627-3529 (MN Relay)  
651-296-9042 (fax)  
mail to: [Info.mdhr@state.mn.us](mailto:Info.mdhr@state.mn.us)

## U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office for Civil Rights (OCR)

You have the right to file a complaint with the OCR, a federal agency, if you believe you have been discriminated against because of any of the following:

- race
- color
- national origin
- age
- disability
- sex
- religion

Contact the **OCR** directly to file a complaint:

Office for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Midwest Region  
233 N. Michigan Avenue Suite 240  
Chicago, IL 60601  
Customer Response Center:  
Toll-free: 800-368-1019  
TDD Toll-free: 800-537-7697  
Email: [ocrmail@hhs.gov](mailto:ocrmail@hhs.gov)

## U.S. Department of Agriculture

### Do Not Send Applications Here

In accordance with federal civil rights law and **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, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), religious creed, disability, age, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language), 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.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a [Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf) which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (833) 620-1071, 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 Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to:

1. mail:

Food and Nutrition Service, USDA  
1320 Braddock Place, Room 334  
Alexandria, VA 22314; or

2. fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or

3. email: [FNSCIVILRIGHTSCOMPLAINTS@usda.gov](mailto:FNSCIVILRIGHTSCOMPLAINTS@usda.gov)

### Do Not Send Applications Here

**Please return to your local county or tribal human services office.**

**This institution is an equal opportunity provider.**

agency



For accessible formats of this information, ask your county worker.  
For assistance with additional equal access to human services, contact  
your county's ADA coordinator. ADA4 (2-18)

**NO ENGLISH**



Attention. If you need free help interpreting this document, call the number in the box above.

ማሳሰቢያ፡- ስለ ዶክመንቱ ነፃ ገለፃ ከፈለጉ፣ ሠራተኛዎን ያነጋግሩ። Amharic

انتباه. إذا احتجت الى مساعدة مجانية في ترجمة هذه الوثيقة، اتصل بالرقم الموجود في المربع أعلاه. Arabic

মেনাযোগ দিন। যিদ আপিন বিনামূলেয এই নিখটিৰ বযাযাৰ জেনয সহায় চান তাহেন উপেক্ষাকত বাকেস থাকা নমবৰটিতে কল কৰুন। Bengali

သတိပြုရန်။ ဤစာတမ်းကို ဘာသာပြန်ဆို့ရန်အတွက် အခမဲ့အကူအညီ လိုအပ်ပါက၊ အထက်ဖော်ပြပါ အကွက်ရှိ နံပါတ်ကို ခေါ်ဆိုပါ။ Burmese

ការយកចិត្តទុកដាក់។ ប្រសិនបើអ្នកត្រូវការជំនួយឥតគិតថ្លៃ ដើម្បី បកស្រាយឯកសារនេះ សូមហៅទូរសព្ទទៅលេខក្នុងប្រអប់ខាងលើ។ Cambodian

注意！如果您需要免費的口譯支持，請撥打上方方框中的電話號碼。 Cantonese (Traditional Chinese)

wán. héčínhanj niyé wačhínjAñ wayúiyeska ki de wówapi sutá, ečíyA kin wóiyawa ed ophíye wanj. Dakota

Paunawa. Kung kailangan mo ng libreng tulong sa pag-unawa sa kahulugan ng dokumentong ito, tawagan ang numero sa kahon sa itaas. Filipino (Tagalog)

Attention. Si vous avez besoin d'aide gratuite pour interpréter ce document, appelez le numéro indiqué dans la case ci-dessus. French

સાવધાન. જો તમને આ દસ્તાવેજને સમજવા માટે નિ:શુલ્ક મદદની જરૂર હોય, તો ઉપરના બોક્સ પૈકીના નંબર પર કોલ કરો. Gujarati

ध्यान दें। यदि आपको इस दस्तावेज़ की व्याख्या में निशुल्क सहायता की आवश्यकता है, तो ऊपर बॉक्स में दिए गए नंबर पर कॉल करें। Hindi

NO ENGLISH



Lus Ceeb Toom. Yog tias koj xav tau kev pab txhais lus dawb ntawm cov ntaub ntawv no, ces hu rau tus nab npawb xov tooj nyob hauv lub npov plaub fab saum toj no. Hmong

ဟ်သုဉ်ဟ်သး. နမ့ၢ်လိဉ်ဘဉ် တၢ်မၤစၢၤကလီၤလၢ ကကိၣ်းထံလံာ်တီလံာ်မိတဖဉ်အယိ, ကိးနီဉ်ဂံၢ်လၢ အအိဉ်ဖဲတၢ်လွံၢ်နၢဉ် လၢတၢ်ဖီခိဉ်အပူၤတက့ၢ်. Karen

이 문서의 내용을 이해하는 데 도움이 필요하시면 위에 있는 전화번호로 연락해 무료 통역 서비스를 받으실 수 있습니다. Korean

تکایه سهرنج بده. ئەگەر بۆ وەرگیرانی ئەم بەلگەنامەیە پێویستت بە یارمەتی بێهەرامبەرە، ئەوا پەڕێوەندی بەو ژمارەیەوه بکە کە لە بۆکسەکەی سەرەو هەیە. Kurdish Sorani

Baldarî. Ger ji bo wergerandina vê belgeyê hewcedariya we bi alîkariya belaş hebe, ji kerema xwe bi hejmara li qutiya jorîn re telefon bikin. Kurdish Kurmanji

Hoŋpín. Tóhán wanǵí thí wíyukčanpi kin yuhá níyunspe héčha čhéya, lé tkíčhun kin k'é nánpa opáwinyan. Lakota

ເອົາໃຈໃສ່. ຖ້າທ່ານຕ້ອງການຄວາມຊ່ວຍເຫຼືອພຣີໃນການຕີຄວາມເອກະສານນີ້, ໃຫ້ໂທຫາເບີທີ່ຢູ່ໃນບ່ອງຂ້າງເທິງ. Lao

注意！如果您需要免费的口译帮助，请拨打上方方框中的电话号码。  
Mandarin (Simplified Chinese)

P̥alɛ ɾɔ piny: Mi gööri luäk lɔrä kɛ luɔɕ kä mɛmɛ, yɔtni nāmbär ɛmɔ tɛɛ nhial guäth ɛmɛ. Nuer

Mah Biz'sin'dan.

Keesh'pin nan'deh'dam'mun chi'wee'chi'goo'yan chi'nis'too'ta'man oo'weh ooshii'be'kan.

Ishi'kidoon ah'kin'das'soon ka'ooshi'bee'kadehk ish'peh'mik ka'shi ka'ka'kak. Ojibwe

**NO ENGLISH**



Hubachiisa:-Yoo barreeffama kana hiikuuf gargaarsa bilisaa barbaaddan, lakkoofsa saanduqa armaan olii keessa jirun bilbilaa Oromo

Atenção. Se você precisar de ajuda gratuita para interpretar este documento, ligue para o número na caixa acima. Portuguese

Внимание! Если Вам нужна бесплатная помощь в переводе этого документа, позвоните по телефону, указанному в рамке выше. Russian

Pažnja. Ukoliko vam je potrebna besplatna pomoć u tumačenju ovog dokumenta, pozovite broj naveden u kvadratu iznad. Serbian

Fiiro gaar ah. Haddii aad u baahan tahay caawimo bilaash si laguugu turjumo dukumiintigan, wac lambarka ku jira sanduuqa sare. Somali

Atención. Si necesita ayuda gratuita para interpretar este documento, llame al número que aparece en el recuadro superior. Spanish

Zingatia. Iwapo unahitaji msaada usio na malipo wa kutafsiri hati hii, piga simu kwa namba iliyo kwenye kisanduku hapo juu. Swahili

ልቢ በሉ፡ ነዚ ሰነድ ንምትርጓም ነፃ ሓገዝ እንተ ደልዮም፣ በቲ ኣብ ላዕሊ ኣብ ውሽጢ ሰደጅ ተቐሚጡ ዘሎ ቁጽሪ ይደውሉ። Tigrinya

Увага! Якщо Вам потрібна безкоштовна допомога в перекладі цього документа, зателефонуйте за номером, вказаним у рамці вище. Ukrainian

Xin lưu ý: Hãy liên hệ theo số điện thoại trong ô trên nếu bạn cần bất kỳ sự hỗ trợ miễn phí nào để hiểu rõ về tài liệu này. Vietnamese

Àkíyèsí. Tí o bá nílò ìrànlówọ pẹ̀lú tí tú mọ àkòólẹ̀ yìí, pe nọmbà tó wà nínú àpótí tí wà ló kẹ̀. Yoruba

## CROW WING COUNTY COMMUNITY SERVICES POLICY AND PROCEDURE

<b>Title: Limited English Proficiency Plan</b>	
Effective Date: 6/1/01 Board Approved: 5/22/01	Author: Sara McKusick, supervisor Last Reviewed: 03/17/2023
<b>Policy:</b> Crow Wing County Community Services is committed to assuring equal access to services for all persons, regardless of race, color or national origin, including those persons with limited English proficiency (LEP). The following document will outline the strategies and procedures to be taken to ensure that persons receive the language assistance necessary to afford them meaningful access to their services, free of charge.	
<b>Attachments:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. List of Bilingual Staff and Contracted Interpreter Service Information</li> <li>2. Language Line Access Information</li> <li>3. Helpful Hints for Using Interpreter Services</li> </ol>	

### I. Background:

Title VI of the Civil Rights act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. 2000d et.seq. and its implementing regulation at 45 CFR Part 80 provide that no person shall be subjected to discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin under any program or activity that receives Federal financial assistance. On August 30, 2000, the Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights, issued a Policy Guidance on the Prohibition Against National Origin Discrimination as It Affects Persons with Limited English Proficiency. [65 Fed. Reg. 52762 (2000)].

This policy is created in response to Bulletin #16-89-01 from the Minnesota Department of Human Services, requiring each County Social Services Agency to develop and implement a plan to assure compliance with those federal requirements.

### II. Definitions:

**Interpretation:** a spoken or visual explanation provided to help two or more people who do not speak the same language to communicate with each other.

**Translation:** A written version of a document provided in a different language than the original document.

**Vital Documents:** According to the Office of Civil Rights, a vital document includes, but is not limited to, applications, consent forms, letters containing information regarding eligibility or participation criteria, notices pertaining to the reduction, denial, or termination of services or benefits, notices that require a response from beneficiaries, and documents that advise of free language assistance.

### III. Assessment:

Crow Wing County Community Services (CWCCS) used the following mechanisms to assess unique language needs in Crow Wing County:

A. Local Agency Survey. Administrative staff indicated that the need for LEP services has historically been very limited. In that past four years, only four situations requiring language assistance could be recalled anecdotally.

B. Census Data: This data indicates that Crow Wing County has few individuals with LEP. A total of 279 persons from all age groups in the 2010 indicated that they either did not speak English at all or did not speak it well. However, 981 people indicated that they may speak some other language at home. It is speculated that the number of Spanish-speaking persons in the area may increase in the next few years.

C. Other Data Sources. DHS data shows that no Crow Wing County residents have requested services through their multi-lingual referral line. School districts indicated that 10 children in K-12 had families who spoke another language at home. Six cases indicated another spoken language for case applicants in financial programs.

As information becomes available through the Minnesota Department of Human Services or other resources, CWCCS will modify its policies and procedures as appropriate.

### IV. Need for Language Assistance and Resources

**A. Case finding.** The specific language needs of each applicant with LEP will be identified at the time of intake or application. This will primarily be done by reviewing the language preference questions on the Health Care Application (HCAPP) and the Combined Application Form (CAF) in Income Maintenance. If a receptionist or intake person on the Social Services staff suspects that an applicant is a person with LEP, the worker will present the LEP person with a card that lists the eight major languages in order to determine which language is involved, if any. Language preferences will be entered into the applicant's primary language field in the MAXIS system. If an interpreter is needed, it will be entered into the MAXIS system or noted on the Social Services application. Translated forms will be offered to anyone who wants or needs assistance.

**B. Point of Contact:** The greatest likelihood of need for interpreter services will be at the point of intake – at the time of an emergency or application for financial assistance or social services. Currently, intakes are completed at the agency main office in Brainerd. Interpreter services may be necessary to complete an application for services, financial assistance or health care. Another likely point of contact is field-based when conducting child protection or vulnerable adult assessments, commitment pre-screenings or nursing home pre-admission screenings. These contacts would typically occur in a medical setting or a person's home.

**C. Offering Language Assistance:** Staff will initiate an offer for language assistance to clients who appear to have difficulty communicating in English, or when a client asks for language assistance. Whenever possible, staff are encouraged to follow the client's preferences. For example, if a client wants a

family member or friend to interpret rather than using an agency-contracted interpreter, staff should allow this if doing so will not violate the client's data privacy rights and the friend/family member can demonstrate that he/she is competent to interpret. Staff must offer free interpretation and/or translation services to persons with LEP in a language they understand, in a way that preserves confidentiality, and in a timely manner.

**D. Resources:** Crow Wing County Community Services will use the following resources to assist LEP clients:

1. "I Speak" cards in the eight most common languages will be available at reception desks to assist clients in identifying their primary language. Language ID brochures will be distributed to all employees.
2. The Minnesota Department of Human Services web site: <http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/Forms/default.htm> has forms available in Arabic, Cambodian, Hmong, Laotian, Russian, Somali, Spanish and Vietnamese.
3. Language Line Solutions provides 24-hour phone interpretation services in over 240 languages.
4. Bridge World Language Services, 110 2<sup>nd</sup> Street S., Waite Park, MN 56387, provides phone and in-person interpreters in American Sign Language, Dutch, Estonian, Ethiopian, French, German, Fijian, Hindi, Hmong, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Laotian, Malay, Polish, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Sudanese, Swedish and Vietnamese.
5. Other interpretation services vendors contracted with the Minnesota Department of Administration can be accessed as necessary. See Section V.B.3 for website information.

#### **E. Assisting Clients That Do Not Read Their Language**

1. Staff must assist a client with LEP who does not read his/her primary language to the same extent as staff would assist an English speaker who does not read English.

### **V. Procedures for Using Interpretation**

#### **A. Verification of Client's Identity**

CWCCS staff should continue the existing practice of verifying the identity of the client before releasing case-specific information. Bilingual staff, Language Line staff, or other private companies providing interpretation or translation services through contracts with the State (hereafter called "contractors") may be used in making verifications.

#### **B. Language Assistance Resources-Order of Preference**

As much as possible, staff should use the language assistance services in the order set out below. Please check with your supervisor before using any service other than internal bilingual staff.

1. Bilingual Staff



A list of bilingual staff appears in Attachment 6A. This list will be updated as appropriate.

## 2. Telephone Interpreter Services

Staff should use the Language Line Solutions for interpreter assistance when a bilingual staff person familiar with that language is not available. Attachment 6B contains information on how to access the Language Line. Attachment 6C contains hints on how to use telephone interpreters.

## 3. Contracted Interpretation and Translation Services

Use the Bridge World Language Services in Waite Park for in person interpretation. (Attachment 6A). The Minnesota Department of Administration hold contracts with various interpretation and translation services and Crow Wing County can access these services at the contracted rate.

A list of contracts for interpreter services is available at:

<http://www.mmd.admin.state.mn.us/mn05022.htm>.

A list of translation service providers is available at:

[www.mmd.admin.state.mn.us/mn05014.htm](http://www.mmd.admin.state.mn.us/mn05014.htm).

## 4. Using Family and/or Friends as Interpreters

Staff are asked to accommodate clients' wishes to have family or friends serve as interpreters whenever possible. However, staff must keep in mind both client confidentiality and interpreter competency and should follow the rules set below.

Crow Wing County Community Services may expose itself to liability under Title VI if it requires, suggests, or encourages a client with LEP to use friends, minor children, or family members as interpreters because they may not be competent to serve in that role. They may not be proficient enough in both languages, may lack training in interpretation, and/or have little familiarity with specialized program terminology.

Use of family or friends could result in a breach of confidentiality or reluctance on the part of clients to reveal personal information critical to their situations.

If a client still prefers a family member or friend to interpret after the offer of free interpreter services by the county, they may be used as long as doing so does not compromise the effectiveness or confidential nature of the communication. Staff should document their offer of interpreter assistance and the client's decision to decline the service in the case file.

Bilingual staff or contracted interpreters should be used in circumstances where a client is giving information that may negatively impact his/her eligibility for services—e.g. deadlines or certifications. They should also be preferred in situations where a client must answer complicated or detailed questions. Although these situations can be handled by family or friends, they should also be referred to bilingual staff, Language Line or contractors for follow-up calls or letters.

#### 5. Minor Children as Interpreters

Staff should never use minor children as interpreters.

### **VII. Notice of Rights to Language Assistance**

Crow Wing County will use “I Speak” cards and prominently displayed “I Speak” posters to inform all clients of the availability of free interpreter services. The public will be informed that free interpreter services will be provided in a timely manner and during regular business hours.

### **VIII. Translation of Agency Forms and Documents**

#### **A. State Produced Documents**

For Income Maintenance programs, the State has translated many documents into Spanish, Russian, Somali, Hmong, Cambodian, Lao, Vietnamese and Arabic. A number of forms are available in MAXIS in POLI/TEMP Manual at TE12.01.13. English and translated versions of the Health Care Application Form, the Renewal Form and the Household Report Form can also be found on the Internet at [www.dhs.state.mn.us/Forms](http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/Forms).

#### **B. Local Agency Documents**

Crow Wing County Community Services will translate vital documents and relevant information into non-English languages when a significant number or percentage of the population eligible to be served needs documents in that language in order to communicate effectively. CWCCS has determined that the significant number that will trigger translation is 1000 individuals within an LEP language group. Vital documents are defined in section II of this policy.

### **IX. LEP Training for Staff**

CWCCS will distribute the LEP policy/plan to all staff so they can learn the policies and procedures required to make language assistance available to clients with LEP. All staff with ongoing client contact will be informed of the policy at their unit meetings. New employees will receive information regarding LEP and a copy of the policy during new employee orientation.

LEP training will include information on the following topics:

- The legal obligation to provide language assistance to clients with LEP
- The substance of Crow Wing County’s LEP plan
- Policies and procedures to access language assistance services
- Tips on working with interpreters
- How to properly document information about a clients language needs in the case file

### **X. Monitoring of the LEP Plan**

An annual evaluation of the LEP plan will include the following activities:

- Assessment of the numbers of persons with LEP in the service delivery area
- Determination if existing language assistance services are meeting the needs of clients with LEP

- Assessment of whether staff understand the county’s LEP policies and procedures, how to carry them out and whether language assistance resources and arrangements for those resources remain current and accessible.
- Seeking feedback from LEP communities, including clients, community organizations and advocacy groups working with local LEP communities, about the effectiveness of the LEP plan.

## **XI. Availability of LEP Plan to the Public**

The LEP plan will be available to anyone on request. The “I Speak” posters in the lobby of CWCCS will inform the public of their right to request a copy. The LEP plan will be in English, translation will be made available on request at no charge for anyone wishing to read it.

## **XII. Responsible Authority/Complaint Process—Contact Persons**

Each division within CWCCS is responsible for implementing the LEP plan in its area. The contact persons designated to provide technical assistance and respond to inquiries and complaints from the public are listed below. CWCCS will use existing civil rights complaint resolution procedures to resolve any LEP-related disputes/complaints. The LEP Coordinator will provide information about this process to all clients with a complaint. The information will be in a language that they will understand.

**LEP Coordinator:** Community Services Director.....218-824-1205

**Social Services Contact:** Programs Manager.....218-824-1159

**Income Maintenance Contact:** Income Maintenance Supervisor.....218-824-1259

## **CROW WING COUNTY LEP SERVICE RESOURCES**

### **I. Bilingual Staff**

A. No current bilingual staff.

### **II. In-Person Interpretation Resource**

Bridge - World Language Center, Inc.  
110 2<sup>nd</sup> Street South, Suite 213  
PO Box 646  
Waite Park, MN 56387  
(320)259-9239

For interpretation that may lead to involvement with the court system, e.g. child protection assessments or commitments, must ask for a court-certified interpreter.

Free PMAP Interpreting Service

## Instructions for Language Line Solutions Interpreter Services

Following are instructions on how to use the Language Line over-the phone Interpretation Service. Please make sure that you are familiar with the phone conference features on your phone before using the service. To hear a free recorded demonstration of typical call scenarios, call 1-800-821-0301.

OUTBOUND CALLS	INBOUND CALLS
1. <b>DIAL</b> Language Line Solutions at 1-800-874-9426.	1. <b>PLACE</b> the non-English speaker on <b>CONFERENCE HOLD</b> .
2. <b>GIVE</b> the Answer Point the <b>Account Information</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language Needed</li> <li>• Our I.D. # <b>(209146)</b></li> <li>• Our Name: Crow Wing County Community Services</li> <li>• Personal Code # (Use your telephone extension number)</li> </ul>	2. <b>DIAL</b> Language Line Solutions at 1-800-874-9426.
3. <b>WAIT</b> for the Answer Point to <b>CONFERENCE IN</b> your Interpreter.	3. <b>GIVE</b> the Answer Point the <b>Account Information</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language Needed</li> <li>• Our I.D. # <b>(209146)</b></li> <li>• Our Name: Crow Wing County Community Services</li> <li>• Personal Code # (Use your telephone extension number)</li> </ul>
4. <b>BRIEF YOUR INTERPRETER</b> on the nature of the call. Summarize what you want to accomplish and give any special instructions.	4. <b>ADD NON-ENGLISH SPEAKER</b> to the line.
5. <b>ADD NON-ENGLISH SPEAKER</b> to the line. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For Domestic calls, Language Line Solutions will place the call for you at no extra charge.</li> <li>• For International calls, they will need to bill long distance charges to a calling card or to a third party.</li> </ul>	5. <b>WAIT</b> for the Answer Point to <b>CONFERENCE IN</b> your interpreter.

## **Crow Wing County Community Services Helpful Hints for Using Telephone Interpreters**

1. Tell the interpreter the purpose of your call – describe the type of information you are planning to convey.
2. Enunciate your words and try to avoid contractions, which can be easily misunderstood as the opposite of your meaning. e.g. “can’t –cannot”.
3. Speak in short sentences, expressing one idea at a time.
4. Speak slower than your normal speed of talking, pausing after each phrase.
5. Avoid the use of double negatives. e.g. “If you don’t appear in person, you won’t get your benefits.” Instead, “You must come in person in order to get your benefits.”
6. Speak in the first person. Avoid the “he said/she said.”
7. Avoid using colloquialisms and acronyms, e.g. “MFIP”, “HCAPP”, “CD” etc. If you must do so, please explain their meaning.
8. Provide brief explanations of technical terms, or terms of art, e.g., “*Spend-down* means you must use up some of your monies or assets in order to be eligible for services.”
9. Pause occasionally to ask the interpreter if he/she is understanding the information that you are providing, or if you need to slow down or speed up in you speech patterns. If the interpreter is confused, so is the client.
10. Ask the interpreter if, in his/her opinion, the client seems to have grasped the information that you are conveying. You may have to repeat or clarify certain information by saying it in a different way.
11. ABOVE ALL, BE PATIENT with the interpreter, the client and yourself!
12. Thank the interpreter for performing a very difficult and valuable service.

# **Civil Rights Requirements in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Training**



**Joann daSilva**  
**Department of Human Services**  
**Equal Opportunity and Access Division**  
**Minnesota Department of Human Services**

# LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Learn about Food and Nutrition Service Instruction 113-1 and the laws that create civil rights protections
- Understand your legal obligations – 10 civil rights requirements
- Know your role in carrying out your agency's legal obligations
- Be able to identify a civil rights complaint and what to do with SNAP complaints
- Know your contacts and resources – who to call if you have questions.



## **CIVIL RIGHTS and SNAP**

Generally, you must learn about the civil rights laws your agency must comply with in administering the SNAP program. The laws are codified in the USDA guidance document called *FNS Instructions 113-1*.



# WHAT ARE CIVIL RIGHTS?

Civil rights are personal rights. They apply to individuals and groups.

Some civil rights that are well known to us are constitutional rights such as:

- freedom of speech;
- the right to vote;
- due process of law; and
- equal protection under the law.

These rights are guaranteed and protected by the U.S. Constitution; and federal laws enacted by Congress, such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

# CIVIL RIGHTS LAWS?



There are more civil rights laws we must become familiar with.  
They outlaw discrimination on a variety of bases.  
These bases are called “protected classes or characteristics”.

# FEDERAL CIVIL RIGHTS LAWS

The next two screens list the Laws that apply to the SNAP program. They create legal obligations for us as agents of the welfare system.

We learn these laws in the codification known as *FNS Instruction 113-1*.

In the SNAP program, these laws form the basis of our civil rights obligations.

In Minnesota, *Instruction 113-1* applies to the Minnesota Department of Human Services and county human services agencies, as well as other entities that administer the SNAP program (e.g., state and county contractors and vendors), whether the entities are federally funded in whole or in part.

# **FEDERAL CIVIL RIGHTS LAWS** (continued)

- FNS Instruction 113-1 – also known as the Civil Rights Handbook
- Title 6 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 – Race, Color, National Origin
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 – Disability
- Title 2 of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 – Disability
- Age Discrimination Act of 1975 – Age
- Title 9 of the Education Amendments of 1972 – Sex
- Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 – Race, Color, National Origin.

# **FEDERAL CIVIL RIGHTS LAWS** (continued)

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) program statutes and regulations that provide protections on the basis of:
  - race
  - color
  - national origin
  - sex
  - age
  - disability
  - political beliefs and
  - religion
- Food Stamp Program Regulation found at 7 CFR sections 271-284
- United States Department of Agriculture regulations found at 7 CFR section 5 et seq.
- Equal Opportunity for Religious Organizations found at 7 CFR section 16 – nondiscrimination on the basis of religion-
  - Faith-based organizations have the same right to become USDA service providers as do state and county agencies

# **PROTECTIONS - CIVIL RIGHTS LAWS**

It's important to know that some State laws offer greater protections than federal law.

Minnesota has its own State human rights law called the Minnesota Human Rights Act and this law protects against discrimination on more bases than federal law.

# STATE CIVIL RIGHTS LAW

**The Minnesota Human Rights Act** prohibits discrimination in public services on the bases of 9 protected classes. In this case, State law provides greater protections than Federal law.

The protected classes are:

- Race
- Color
- Sex
- National Origin
- Disability
- Creed
- Religion
- Sexual Orientation
- Status with Regard to Public Assistance.



# **WHAT IS FEDERAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE?**

- Federal financial assistance is anything of value received from the Federal government
- It can include cash grants and loans, commodities, training, property donations such as excess computers
- It can be permission to use Federal property, and similar items and services.

# WHAT IS A PROTECTED CLASS?

Any person or group of people who cannot be targeted for discrimination because of something about them that the law seeks to protect.

- Protected classes are based on immutable characteristics; unchangeable characteristics that should not be used to single people out for negative action
- Protected classes in the SNAP program are: race, color, national origin, age, sex, disability, religion, and political beliefs.

# **WHO IS A COVERED ENTITY?**

- State, county, tribal, and local health and public assistance agencies
- Hospitals and nursing homes
- Managed health care organizations
- Grantee agencies
- Head Start and WIC programs
- Contractors and vendors of covered entities.

# TYPES OF DISCRIMINATION

- **Disparate Treatment**
- **Disparate Impact**
- **Reprisal/Retaliation**



# **TYPES OF DISCRIMINATION:**

## **Disparate Treatment**

**Disparate treatment is theory of discrimination that equates to**

**“intentional discrimination against an individual.”**

# Disparate Treatment

- A person is discriminated against because the person belongs to a protected class or is perceived as belonging to a protected class.
- This type of discrimination is intentional...against that person.
- A person can sue an agency that engages in such discrimination.

# **Disparate Treatment** (continued)

Disparate impact is a theory of discrimination that equates to “unintentional discrimination that negatively impacts a group of people who have protected class status.” The harm is about how members of the group are impacted by the policy or practice that was not intended to harm anyone.

# TYPES OF DISCRIMINATION: Disparate Impact

- A person or group experiences discrimination because a rule or policy that appears neutral on its face disproportionately impacts members of a certain protected group. This type of discrimination is often not intentional...against the person or group.
- Complainant's remedy is to pursue relief through the Federal agency that supplied the financial assistance to the program or activity.
- A person or group of similarly situated people wanting to sue under a disparate impact claim no longer has the right to sue directly for discrimination. The remedy would be to file an administrative complaint with the federal agency that supplies the financial assistance to the program or activity under which the person's or group's rights were allegedly violated.



# **TYPES OF DISCRIMINATION:**

## **Reprisal or Retaliation**

- A person is treated badly or given a hard time because of previous civil rights activity, such as filing a civil rights or employment discrimination complaint.
- This treatment can result in a finding of discrimination even if the original complaint filed by the person is groundless.

# GOALS OF CIVIL RIGHTS

- Equal treatment for all applicants and beneficiaries
- Knowledge of program rights and responsibilities
- Elimination of illegal barriers that prevent or deter people from receiving benefits
- Dignity and respect for all.

# **CIVIL RIGHTS PLAN & ASSURANCE OF COMPLIANCE**



- Civil rights plans demonstrate an agency's intent to comply with civil rights laws
- Assurance of compliance is a written agreement by an agency promising to comply
- Helps clarify expectations
- Intended to eliminate discrimination against applicants and beneficiaries
- Intended to prevent future discrimination
- Helps address effects of past discrimination.

# **10 CIVIL RIGHTS REQUIRED TRAINING TOPICS**

1. Annual training
2. Effective public notification systems
3. Accessibility for people with disabilities
4. Language assistance
5. Collection and use of data on race and ethnicity
6. Complaint procedures
7. Compliance review techniques
8. Resolution of noncompliance
9. Conflict resolution
10. Customer service.

# **Number 1: Annual Training**

- County human service agencies must conduct annual SNAP civil rights training. The 10 civil rights requirements must be covered.
- Staff who need the training are all SNAP program staff and other staff with direct contact with the public, such as receptionists and SNAP supervisors and managers.
- County agencies have some flexibility in how they develop and conduct their SNAP training. It can be on-line training. The training can be conducted in-person, face-to-face; or the training can be done as video conferencing.
- Again, all 10 civil rights requirements must be covered.

# **Number 2: Effective Public Notification Systems**

Effective public notification systems include information about:

- SNAP program availability and rights and responsibilities
- The applicant's or client's right to file a civil rights complaint with USDA
- USDA's policy on nondiscrimination, also known as the long or short nondiscrimination statements.

# **Effective Public Notification Systems:**

## **SNAP Program Availability and Rights and Responsibilities**

- SNAP agencies must conduct outreach activities about the availability of the SNAP program to unserved and underserved groups of people.
- Display information on SNAP program rights and responsibilities.
- Display the *And Justice for All* poster.
- When conducting outreach, use the types of media that are appropriate for people who might qualify for SNAP benefits, such as people with low incomes and people who are new to the geographic area.

# **Effective Public Notification Systems:**

## **SNAP Program Availability and Rights and Responsibilities (continued)**

- Create informational materials, as needed, in the non-English languages of the people who live in the area.
- For people with disabilities, create informational materials in accessible formats, and provide effective communication and reasonable modifications to existing policies and procedures to ensure access to information and services.



# **Effective Public Notification Systems: Right to File a Civil Rights Complaint**

Applicants, clients, and potentially eligible members of the public, must be informed of:

- Their right to file a discrimination complaint directly with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Minnesota Department of Human Services.
- How to file a complaint, including complaint filing procedures, and what information should be included in the complaint.

Applicants, clients, and members of the public cannot file a SNAP complaint with their county agency because there might be the appearance of impropriety.

# **Effective Public Notification Systems: USDA's Nondiscrimination Statement**

The next screen shows the “long” nondiscrimination statement.

It must be included on:

- All USDA documents and publications that include information on SNAP program rights and responsibilities,

AND

- On those SNAP documents and publications that provide information on how to file a SNAP complaint.

# **Effective Public Notification Systems: USDA's Long Nondiscrimination Statement – Page 1**

USDA's long nondiscrimination statement reads:

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, religious creed, disability, age, political beliefs, 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, audiotope, 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.

# **Effective Public Notification Systems: USDA's Long Nondiscrimination Statement – Page 2**

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](#), (AD-3027) found online at: [USDA](#), 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](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

**This institution is an equal opportunity provider.**

# **Effective Public Notification Systems:**

## **USDA's Long Nondiscrimination Statement Page 3**

The SNAP program uses two nondiscrimination statements. One long statement and one short statement. The long nondiscrimination statement must be included on:

- All SNAP documents and materials for the public when they include information on SNAP program rights and responsibilities and when they provide information on how to file a SNAP complaint.
- Include the appropriate nondiscrimination statement on all SNAP and agency publications, websites, posters, and informational materials.
- Do not change the wording of the long nondiscrimination statement. It must be used exactly as it is provided by USDA.

# **Effective Public Notification Systems: USDA's Short Nondiscrimination Statement**

USDA's short nondiscrimination statement reads:

“This institution is an equal opportunity provider.”

The short nondiscrimination statement may be used:

- When the documents or materials do NOT include information on rights and responsibilities.
- When the long nondiscrimination statement does not fit.
- When the documents or materials contain general information on nutrition such as healthy eating tips.

The font size used must be no smaller than the font size used in the rest of the document.

Do not change the wording of the short nondiscrimination statement. It must be used exactly as provided by USDA.

# **Effective Public Notification Systems: Agency Websites**

Either the long or the short  
nondiscrimination statement must be  
included on all SNAP materials  
intended to be printed off your  
agency's website.

# **Effective Public Notification Systems:**

## **Agency Websites (Continued)**

Include the required nondiscrimination statement  
(long or short statement)  
on all appropriate USDA/FNS:

- Agency documents
- Publications
- Posters, and
- Websites.



# **Effective Public Notification Systems: Cover Letter and Appointment Letter**

Use the long or short nondiscrimination statement on county agency produced SNAP documents or materials.

- For the county cover letter, use the long statement.
- For the county appointment letter, use the short statement.

# **Number 3:**

## **Accessibility for People with Disabilities: The Law**

There are **two** important Federal laws that provide legal protections for people with disabilities:

1. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and
2. Title 2 of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

# **Number 3:**

## **Accessibility for People with Disabilities: The Law (Continued)**

1. **Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act** protects qualified individuals with disabilities from discrimination based solely on their disability when the discrimination occurs in **federally funded services and programs**.
2. **Title 2 of the Americans with Disabilities Act** protects qualified individuals with disabilities from discrimination on the basis of their disability when the discrimination occurs in **state or local government services**. Under Title 2 of the ADA, a state or local government agency does not have to receive federal funding for the law to apply to the agency.

The legal standards in these two laws ensure that people with disabilities can use state and local government programs and services equal to that of their non-disabled peers. Please review the ADA Toolkit for more information on best practices in state/local government.

# **Accessibility for People with Disabilities: Giving Public Notice About the ADA**

**Public entities must give notice to the public under the ADA. If a public entity has 50 or more employees, the entity must:**

- Designate an ADA Coordinator to manage the entity's ADA compliance;
- Establish and post an ADA notice about the ADA's requirements—see DHS disability brochure entitled “Do you have a disability?” You can find it on eDocs at DHS-4133; and
- Establish and publish a written grievance procedure.

**If a public entity has fewer than 50 employees, the entity must:**

- Establish and post an ADA notice about the ADA's requirements—see DHS disability brochure, “Do you have a disability?”

# **Accessibility for People with Disabilities: Standards of Access and Exceptions**

- **Reasonable Modifications**

- A public entity must make reasonable modifications to policies, practices, or procedures to avoid discrimination

- **Equally Effective Communications**

- A public entity must ensure equally effective communications for individuals with disabilities

- **Primary Consideration**

- A public entity must honor the choice of the individual requesting the communication method or service unless it results in a fundamental alteration to the nature of the program, or undue administrative or financial burden (significant difficulty or expense based on public entity's resources). When this happens, the public entity must find another equally effective means of communication that allows the person with the disability to receive the benefits or services provided by the entity.

# **Accessibility for People with Disabilities: Ensuring Different Types of Access**

- **Physical access** includes having accessible parking spaces available close to buildings; accessible entrances, exits, rest rooms, elevators; signage in appropriate places;
- Appropriate **auxiliary aids and services**; and materials in **accessible formats** such as large print, Braille signage;
- Access for **service animals**;
- **Programmatic access** so policies and procedures ensure equal access to program services;
- **Alternative arrangements** for services, such as separate or special programs when necessary; and
- **Effective communications** for companions with disabilities.

# **Number 4: Language Assistance: The Law**

- Title 6 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in programs receiving federal financial assistance.
- This national origin prohibition requires recipients of federal financial assistance to provide language assistance to persons with limited English proficiency.
- People have limited English proficiency when they cannot speak, read, write, or understand English well enough to allow them to interact effectively with human services agencies and other providers.

# **Language Assistance: Policy and Best Practice**

- Agencies must provide “meaningful access to information and services,” that is, effective communication.
- People with limited English proficiency must be served in their primary language.
- Agencies have flexibility in how they provide language assistance, for example, agencies may provide interpreting, translating, or qualified bilingual staff, depending on which services are appropriate.
- Children should never serve as interpreters for their parents or other adults.
- Check your county limited English proficiency plan for how your agency provides language assistance and speak with your agency’s Limited English Proficiency contact.
- Remember, a shortage of resources does not mean your agency does not have to provide language assistance.



# Number 5:

## Collection & Use of Data on Race & Ethnicity

- When applying for SNAP benefits, people are asked to self-declare their race and ethnicity.
- If they refuse, workers must advise them that they or someone else will code what they think the applicant's race and ethnicity is based on the worker's perception.
- Tell applicants that giving information on their race and ethnicity will not effect their eligibility.

**Reasoning:** If people think offering information on their race and ethnicity will cause someone to discriminate against them, assure them that it will not AND if the applicant offers their race and ethnicity, it will be accurate, and not based on the worker's best guess.

# **Collection & Use of Data on Race & Ethnicity: Reporting to Federal Agency**

- As a condition of receiving federal financial assistance, agencies that administer SNAP have civil rights data collection and reporting requirements. Agencies must collect and report information that shows the race and ethnicity of SNAP applicants.
- This information is important. It shows whether people are being served in proportion to their actual representation in their service delivery areas; showing disparities between the potentially eligible populations and the actual participating populations.
- It helps determine SNAP compliance and investigation outcomes.
- When agencies don't maintain a system of collecting data on race and ethnicity, the U.S. Department of Agriculture can order agencies to set up a system. It is easier and more cost effective for agencies to set up their own data collection and reporting systems.
- If agencies do not set up systems for data collection and reporting, they can lose their SNAP program funding.
- Any data collected on beneficiaries must be kept secure and confidential.

See DHS handout: Collection of Racial or Ethnic Data on Public Applicants and Clients, Why Government Agencies Collect It and How It's Used.

# Number 6: Complaints

- Be aware of the bases for which SNAP complaints may be filed: race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, political beliefs, or disability.
- Never discourage anyone from filing a civil rights complaint or from voicing allegations of discrimination.
- Know that county agencies do NOT handle SNAP civil rights complaints. Refer them to USDA or DHS.
- State and county agencies are required to have a procedure for responding to non-civil rights complaints:
  - USDA may request information on non-civil rights complaints during Management Evaluation reviews, complaints, or quarterly reporting.
  - Keep a log of non-civil rights complaints for your Management Evaluation reviews.

# **Complaints: Filing Options**

- SNAP complainants can file civil rights complaints directly with USDA by using:
  - The address,
  - Telephone number,
  - On-line link or
  - Email address from the SNAP nondiscrimination statement.
- County agency staff must:
  - Forward SNAP complaints to USDA's Midwest Office in Chicago; OR
  - Forward complaints to DHS' Equal Opportunity and Access Division.
  - Document or keep a log of where and to whom civil rights complaints have been forwarded.

# Number 7:

## Compliance Review Techniques

The SNAP program conducts 3 types of compliance reviews:

- A **Pre-Award Review** is an “in compliance” determination of a State or County agency’s civil rights compliance status for the SNAP program – before approval for Federal financial assistance.
- A **Post Award Review** IS the Management Evaluation Review process. It is conducted every 1, 2, or 3 years depending on the size of the county. A post award review checks for evidence of nondiscrimination in the activities of the State and County agencies as they carry out the SNAP program in Minnesota; and
- A **Special Compliance Review** is conducted when USDA learns of significant civil rights concerns in Minnesota having a direct effect on the delivery of services.

# **Number 8:**

## **Resolution of Noncompliance**

- When an agency administering the SNAP program falls short of its civil rights obligations, a resolution of noncompliance is issued along with a corrective action plan.

**Noncompliance is a factual finding that there are significant civil rights concerns at the agency that are having a direct effect on the delivery of services.**

- Remember that you represent your agency and have an important role in maintaining its civil rights compliance.
- Know the law and how to treat members of your public.

**Failure or refusal to comply with a finding of noncompliance can result in a loss of federal assistance for your agency.**

# **Number 9: Conflict Resolution**

In general, when conflict arises:

- Try to remain calm.
- Try to explain the situation.
- Get help, especially if threats or violence are possible.
- Use alternative dispute resolution techniques, when possible.

## **Number 10: Customer Service Platinum Rule**

“Treat others the way they want to be treated  
(or at least be aware of what that is).”



# Case Study Number 1

**A complaint is received at a county agency office that someone who came to conduct a review was rude and disrespectful. The complaint states that the reviewer's tone was demeaning and generally unpleasant.**

**Questions:** Are there civil rights issues here and if so, what are they? Does it make a difference if the provider and reviewer are the same race, national origin, or gender?

**Answers:** Based on the information provided, there are no clear civil rights issues here because there are no allegations that the rude and disrespectful treatment was based on someone's race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, political beliefs, or disability.

If there were such allegations, it would not make a difference if the provider and reviewer are the same race, national origin, or gender. People can, and sometimes do discriminate against people who are like them.

# Case Study Number 2

**Questions:** Where does the USDA nondiscrimination statement need to be included?

What are the main differences between the long and short versions and when is one preferable over the other?

**Answer:** The USDA nondiscrimination statement must be included on all SNAP informational materials and sources, including websites, used by USDA-FNS, state agencies, and local agencies (counties), to inform the public about the right to file a civil rights complaint in the SNAP program.

The long nondiscrimination statement must be placed on materials that include information on “rights and responsibilities” and inform the public about how to file a civil rights complaint.

The short nondiscrimination statement should be used if materials and sources are too small to accommodate the long statement. The font size of the print on the short statement must be, at a minimum, no smaller than the text on the rest of the document. The short statement is: “This institution is an equal opportunity provider.”

Do not change the wording of either nondiscrimination statement. They must be used exactly as they are provided by USDA.

# Case Study Number 3

A family comes to a human services office, but they do not speak English. You cannot understand them and have no idea what language they are speaking. You write a note and give it to the family telling them to return with an interpreter.

**Questions:** Is this proper or should something else be done? What if their child knows some English, can the child be used as an interpreter?

**Answers:** It is unlawful to give someone a note and ask them to return with an interpreter. The human services office has the legal obligation to provide interpreter services when the program-related service is being provided in that office. Failure to provide language assistance (i.e., meaningful access to services) is considered discrimination on the basis of national origin and violates Title 6 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

You can find out the language a person speaks by using “I Speak” cards. If that doesn’t work, call Language Line Services and see if an interpreter can recognize the person’s language.

Children should not be used as interpreters. Children may not fully understand the content of the conversation; may not understand words being used in both languages; are not likely to understand data privacy concerns; and most important, children are likely to feel pressured to secure a “good” outcome in any interaction between a family member and a perceived authority figure. This pressure can lead to false translations and other undesirable outcomes.

# Case Study Number 4

In taking someone's application for the SNAP program, you ask for information on an applicant's race and ethnicity. The applicant refuses to provide the information.

**Question:** As a county worker, what are you supposed to do?

**Answer:** As a county worker, you are required to collect data on applicants' race and ethnicity. If applicants refuse to provide the information, you must make your best guess and code the information in MAXIS. It is always a good idea to tell applicants that the county is required to collect data on race and ethnicity **because** it helps USDA make sure SNAP benefits get to everyone who is eligible for them. If the county agency does not collect the information, this can effect the agency's continued participation in the SNAP program. Finally, it is important to tell the applicant that information on race and ethnicity is kept as SECURE and CONFIDENTIAL as the rest of the information the applicant provides on the Combined Application Form.

# Case Study Number 5

When conducting a review you find that a human services agency is not accessible to people using wheel chairs. Additionally, a deaf man comes into the office asking for information about an offered program, but is not able to communicate effectively with the office worker.

**Question:** What are some possible corrective actions?

**Answers:**

People with disabilities are entitled to equal access to programs. They must be provided an equally effective opportunity to participate in or benefit from a public entity's aids, benefits, and services, regardless of the disability.

The office must be made accessible. It can be remodeled or moved to an accessible location. In the interim, services must be provided at an accessible location.

For someone with sensory disabilities, such as someone who is deaf or hard of hearing, a public entity must take appropriate steps to ensure effective communications. The agency should engage in an interactive process with the person in need of the aid or service to learn what auxiliary aid or service will allow for effective communications. The man in our scenario may need the services of an American Sign Language Interpreter to effectively interact with agency staff.

Agencies must have policies and procedures in place to address how they will ensure an equal opportunity to participate for people with all kinds of disabilities.

# Contact Information

**For information and support, county agencies can contact the SNAP program directly at USDA:**

Tamara Early  
Regional Civil Rights Director  
Midwest Regional Office Food & Nutrition Service  
77 W. Jackson Boulevard, 20<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Chicago, IL 60604-3591  
312-353-6657 (voice) or use your preferred relay service  
[Tamara.earley@fns.usda.gov](mailto:Tamara.earley@fns.usda.gov)

**County agencies can also contact DHS directly:**

Joann daSilva  
Civil Rights Coordinator  
Minnesota Department of Human Services  
Equal Opportunity & Access Division  
P.O. Box 64997  
St. Paul, MN 55164-0997  
651-431-3034 (voice) or use your preferred relay service  
[joann.dasilva@state.mn.us](mailto:joann.dasilva@state.mn.us)

**Thank you!**

**MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
CIVIL RIGHTS ASSURANCE OF COMPLIANCE  
NONDISCRIMINATION IN STATE AND FEDERALLY FINANCED PROGRAMS**

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**CROW WING COUNTY HUMAN SERVICE AGENCY  
(HEREAFTER CALLED THE “COUNTY AGENCY”)**



THE COUNTY AGENCY provides this civil rights Assurance of Compliance (hereafter called the “Assurance”) in consideration of and for the purpose of obtaining any and all federal financial assistance from the United States Departments of Health and Human Services and Agriculture. The County Agency agrees that compliance with this Assurance is a condition of continued receipt of federal financial assistance and that it is binding upon the County Agency directly or through contract, license, or other provider of services, as long as it receives federal or state financial assistance; and shall be submitted with the required Comprehensive Civil Rights Plan update.

THE COUNTY AGENCY ASSURES that it will comply with:

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Department of Health and Human Services, Guidance to Federal Financial Assistance Recipients Regarding Title VI Prohibition Against National Origin Discrimination Affecting Limited English Proficient Persons; Age Discrimination Act of 1975, 42 U.S.C. 6101, as amended; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990; Section 1557 of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010; Federal Block Grant Programs of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981; as amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended; Family Violence Prevention and Services Act; Food Stamp Act of 1977, as amended, including the Nondiscrimination Compliance Requirements in the Food Stamp Program and the Bilingual Requirements in the Food Stamp Program; FNS Instruction 113-1, Civil Rights Compliance and Enforcement – Nutrition Programs and Activities, Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture (2005); and Interethnic Adoption Provisions of the Small Business Job Protection Act of 1996 (formerly Multiethnic Placement Act of 1994).

PURSUANT TO THE CIVIL RIGHTS PLAN for the Minnesota Department of Human Services, by accepting this Assurance, the County Agency agrees to allow access, by authorized personnel of the Minnesota Department of Human Services and the United States Departments of Health and Human Services and Agriculture, during normal working hours, to private and/or confidential data maintained by the County Agency (or other sub-recipient of federal financial assistance) to the extent necessary to conduct a full and complete investigation into any complaint of discrimination, including to compile data, maintain records and submit reports as required to determine compliance with the above mentioned laws, rules and regulations. The Minnesota Department of Human Services agrees to comply with all requirements of the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act (Minnesota Statutes, section 13.01 *et seq.*). No private and/or confidential data collected, maintained or used in the course of an investigation shall be disseminated except as authorized by statute, either during the period of the investigation or after it has been concluded. If there are any violations of this assurance,

DHS shall have the right to invoke fiscal sanctions or other legal remedies in accordance with Minnesota Statutes, section 256.017.



THE PERSON WHOSE SIGNATURE APPEARS BELOW is authorized to sign this Assurance and commit the County Agency to its terms.

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Date

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Director's Signature

I CERTIFY that the signatory for the County Agency has lawful authority to bind the County Agency to the terms of this civil rights Assurance.

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Date

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County Attorney's Signature