

E Agency Principles - Right to File a Discrimination Complaint

Anyone who feels they have been discriminated against has the right to file a complaint.

A complaint may be requested in writing or verbally. (See [Verbal Complaints](#))

The complaint must be filed within 180 calendar days of the alleged act at any of the locations listed in addresses of [Discrimination Complaint Offices](#).

Each local office must appoint a staff member to act as a specialist for the DES Director's Office of Equal Opportunity (DOEO).

When any person expresses an interest in filing a written discrimination complaint, the DOEO specialist or designated staff must complete the following:

- Explain the discrimination complaint process using the Discrimination Complaint Process (J-098) form as necessary.
- Complete the Discrimination Complaint (J-020) form.
- Document the discrimination complaint on the Complaint Log (FAA-1280A). Local office management maintains the FAA-1280A.
- FAX or Interoffice Mail the J-020 to the Administrative Director of DES.

The J-098 and J-020 forms are available in Public Folders/ADES Forms. The FAA-1280A is available in Public Folders/DBME Public Folders/FAA/FAA Forms.

WARNING

Keep all discussions regarding the discrimination complaint confidential. Conferences must be held in private. DO NOT place copies of the J-020 or J-098 in the case file. Do NOT document anything about the complaint on CADO.

DO NOT deny services or benefits to any participant because they filed a complaint against FAA, its providers, or their employees.

When complaints are filed through DES, DOEO completes the following:

- Notifies in writing the person or participant filing the complaint that a written response is sent upon completion of the investigation.
- Notifies in writing the person or participant filing the complaint of the right to file directly with the correct federal office when a resolution is not effected through the DOEO procedure.
- Provides a copy of the complaint charges to the Assistant Director of the appropriate division.
- Conducts an investigation.

When complaints are filed through Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), the Secretary of **USDA** may extend the 180-day filing period. All complaints sent to FNS must contain the following:

- The name, address, and telephone number (when known) of the person or participant filing the complaint
- The name and location of the staff or office accused of the claimed discrimination
- A statement describing what happened to lead up to the claim of discrimination
- A statement describing the type of discrimination being claimed (age, sex, color, etc.)
- Names and addresses of anyone who has knowledge of the claimed discrimination
- The date of the claimed discrimination