

Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972

What is Title IX?

Title IX is a law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any federally funded education program or activity. Specifically, the law provides that no person shall, “on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.”

This law requires federally funded education institutions (e.g., school districts and colleges or universities) or programs (e.g., 4-H) to widely disseminate information on Title IX protections against discrimination on the basis of sex and the name address, and telephone number, or other contact information of the designated Title IX Coordinator.

Sex Discrimination

Sex discrimination involves treating someone (anyone participating in an educational program, service, or activity, e.g., an applicant, employee, participant, or student) less favorably because of that person's sex. This includes discrimination on the basis of sex stereotypes and sex-related characteristics, including sexual orientation, gender identity, and pregnancy and related conditions.

Sex-based harassment is a form of sex discrimination. Sex-based harassment can be sexual in nature, such as unwelcome sexual advances or pressure, sexual assault, requests for sexual favors, verbal harassment such as jokes of a sexual nature or discussion of sexual topics and sharing explicit digital media. Sex-based harassment also includes harassment of an individual because of sex-related characteristics, such as that person's sexual orientation, gender identity, or nonconformance with gender stereotypes.

Retaliation

Title IX also prohibits retaliation against individuals for making a complaint, participating in a civil rights-related investigation, or opposing an allegedly discriminatory practice or policy. Retaliation may involve intimidation, threats, coercion, harassment or any other form of discrimination.

WHO CAN FILE A TITLE IX COMPLAINT?

Anyone who has experienced sex-based discrimination while participating in an education program, service, or activity, has knowledge of sex-based discrimination by a recipient (e.g., university, college, education institution, or education program or activity) or has experienced retaliation for making a complaint, participating in a civil rights-related investigation, or opposing an allegedly discriminatory practice or policy may file a complaint with USDA.

HOW TO FILE A TITLE IX COMPLAINT

Filing Process

To file a discrimination complaint, fill out the following complaint form ([link](#)) and send it to CR-Info@usda.gov. You may also obtain a complaint form by sending an email to OAC@usda.gov. You or your authorized representative must sign the complaint form. More info can be found on at usda.gov/non-discrimination-statement. **Incomplete information will cause a processing delay.**

National Resources:

US Department of Education Office of Civil Rights: 800-421-3481

Need to Write a Complaint?

You can also write a letter containing all the information requested in the complaint form, along with your signature or the signature of your authorized representative and send this letter via email to OAC@usda.gov. You may also send by postal mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Center for Civil Rights Enforcement, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, DC 20250-9410. Fax: (202) 690-7442.

When to File a Title IX Complaint?

A complainant needs to file a Title IX complaint within **180 days** of the date of the allegedly discriminatory act unless the time for filing is extended by USDA.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON THE COMPLAINT PROCESS

How do I request a waiver of the 180-day filing deadline?

A waiver may be granted for the following reasons: (1) the discriminatory act could not reasonably be expected to be known within the 180-day period; (2) illness or incapacitation; (3) the same complaint was filed with another Federal, state, or local agency; and (4) any other basis determined by the Center for Civil Rights Enforcement.

How is my discrimination complaint processed?

The first stage of the program discrimination complaint process is the intake stage. At this stage, the Center for Civil Rights Enforcement determines whether your complaint meets the legal requirements to be accepted for processing. Next, during the investigation stage, the Center for Civil Rights Enforcement will assign an investigator to the complaint. Finally, during the adjudication stage, the Center for Civil Rights Enforcement will review the Report of Investigation and perform a legal and factual analysis of the complaint to determine whether discrimination occurred.

Filing a USDA program discrimination complaint does not waive or toll any applicable requirements for filing a lawsuit. Complainants are advised that they may wish to consult a lawyer at their earliest convenience to determine what, if any, relief they may be entitled to receive through private litigation.

Whom may I contact for further information on filing a discrimination complaint?

You may contact the Office of Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Information Research Service at (866) 632-9992 (toll free) or (202) 260-1026 or send an email to the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights at OAC@usda.gov. For inquiries related to discrimination complaints, email: program.intake@usda.gov. For other inquiries, email: askusda@usda.gov.

Need Help Filling Out a Form?

(202) 260-1026 (Local)
(866) 632-9992 (Toll-free Customer Service)
(800) 877-8339 (Local or Federal relay)
(866) 377-8642 (Relay voice users)
(800) 845-6136 (Español/Spanish)

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).

USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture Equal Opportunity Staff:
<https://nifa.usda.gov/nifa-office-equal-opportunity-and-civil-rights>