

## **MN The Emergency Food Assistance Program TEFAP Civil Rights Training Checklist for Staff and Volunteers-updated 1/20**

**Directions** - *Civil Rights Training must be provided to all staff and front-line volunteers on an annual basis. After reviewing this checklist, please have all individuals sign and date to document their training.*

### **Goals of Civil Rights – fairness and equality, elimination of barriers, and knowledge of rights**

**Legal Prohibitions** – discrimination is prohibited on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistant program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the USDA.

### **Staff and Volunteer Requirements**

- Treat all people with dignity and respect.
- Maintain confidentiality. It is not appropriate to talk about who is receiving benefits and to make remarks about them. Never share information with others regardless of an expression of good intentions. Refer all requests for information to managers. What happens at the site stays at the site. The exception, of course, is any illegal or inappropriate behavior that should be reported to local, state or federal officials.
- Make sure personal data is kept confidential. This includes names, dates of birth and addresses.
- Sexual harassment is prohibited. Do not engage in or tolerate unwanted or unwelcome sexual behavior including jokes, touching, requests for sexual favors, etc. Report violations to management or to state or federal officials.
- Everyone has a right to file a complaint. Contact your supervisor immediately if anyone says they feel discriminated against and refer to your program's grievance procedure.
- If conflicts occur, remain calm. Call for assistance immediately if you feel threatened.
- Follow the platinum rule – treat people the way they would like to be treated!

### **Special Circumstances**

- Accommodate people with disabilities. Sites should be accessible to people with all types of disabilities (e.g., mobility, sight, hearing, other). Ask your supervisor about alternate means of service if needed.
- Provide language assistance to persons with limited English proficiency if needed. Ask your supervisor for assistance.

## Civil Rights Training Checklist for Staff and Volunteers (continued)

**When do Civil Rights rules apply?** – Civil rights rules apply any time there is any federal financial assistance. Federal financial assistance is receiving anything of value from the federal government – not just cash. It can include commodities, training, equipment, and other goods and services.

### Types of Discrimination –

- Disparate treatment (intentional);
- Disparate impact (neutral rule impacts disproportionately on a group);
- Reprisal/retaliation against complainant or his/her family, associates or others involved in complaint process or exercising civil rights.

### Program Requirements

- Conduct outreach to ensure that potentially eligible persons and households are aware of the program and have information on how to apply. Provide suggestions about how to make more people aware of the program and how to receive benefits.
- Display the USDA “And Justice for All...” non-discrimination poster in a place where it can be seen by all who visit the premises.
- Include the USDA non-discrimination statement on all materials that mention USDA funded programs and make sure the statement is also on web sites that mention USDA funded programs.
- Cooperate with State and Federal reviewers. They are required to conduct periodic compliance reviews to help ensure that program and civil rights rules are being obeyed.
- If there is non-compliance, correction of problems and voluntary compliance is sought. Failure to abide by civil rights rules can lead to loss of Federal financial assistance.
- Advise people who allege discrimination about how to file a complaint: If they wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, they may complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. They may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send the completed complaint form or letter by mail to U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov). Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Call (800) 845-6136 for Spanish.
- Make sure people with disabilities are accommodated. Sites should be accessible to people with all types of disabilities (e.g., mobility, sight, hearing, other) or alternate means of service delivery should be advertised and provided.

Provide other language assistance to persons with limited English proficiency who could not gain meaningful access to the program without other language assistance. Assistance must always be provided to LEP households, but the level or type of assistance can vary based on circumstances.

