

Office of the Secretary, USDA

§ 15d.5

Secretary may hereafter delegate, the authority to act in his or her stead under the regulations in this part.

[79 FR 41410, July 16, 2014]

§ 15d.3 Discrimination prohibited.

(a) No agency, officer, or employee of the USDA shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or gender identity, exclude from participation in, deny the benefits of, or subject to discrimination any person in the United States under any program or activity conducted by the USDA.

(b) No person shall be subjected to reprisal for opposing any practice(s) prohibited by this part, for filing a complaint, or for participating in any other manner in a proceeding under this part.

[79 FR 41411, July 16, 2014]

§ 15d.4 Compliance.

(a) *Compliance program.* OASCR shall evaluate each agency's efforts to comply with this part and shall make recommendations for improving such efforts.

(1) OASCR shall oversee the compliance reviews and evaluations, and issue compliance reports that monitor compliance efforts to ensure that there is equitable and fair treatment in conducted programs.

(2) OASCR shall monitor all settlement agreements pertaining to program complaints for compliance to ensure full implementation and enforcement.

(3) OASCR shall oversee Agency Head Assessments to ensure that Agency Heads are in compliance with civil rights laws and regulations.

(4) OASCR shall monitor all findings of non-compliance to ensure that compliance is achieved.

(5) OASCR shall require agencies to collect the race, ethnicity and gender of applicants and program participants, who choose to provide such information on a voluntary basis, in USDA-conducted programs, for purposes of civil rights compliance oversight, and evaluation.

(b) *Agency data collection and compliance reports.* (1) Each Agency shall, for civil rights compliance, collect, maintain and annually compile data on all program applicants and participants in conducted programs by county and State, including but not limited to, application and participation rate data regarding socially disadvantaged and limited resources applicants and participants. At a minimum, the data should include:

(i) Numbers of applicants and participants by race, ethnicity, and gender, subject to appropriate privacy protections, as determined by the Secretary and in accordance with law; and

(ii) The application and participation rate, by race, ethnicity, and gender, as a percentage of the total participation rate.

(2) Each Agency shall submit to the OASCR timely, complete and accurate program application and participation reports containing the information described in §15d.4(b)(1), on an annual basis, and upon the request of the OASCR independently of the annual requirement.

(c) *Complaint reporting compliance.* OASCR shall ensure compliance with mandated complaint reporting requirements, such as those required by section 14006 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (Pub. L. 110-246).

[79 FR 41411, July 16, 2014]

§ 15d.5 Complaints.

(a) Any person who believes that he or she (or any specific class of individuals) has been, or is being, subjected to practices prohibited by this part may file (or file through an authorized representative) a written complaint alleging such discrimination. The written complaint must be filed within 180 calendar days from the date the person knew or reasonably should have known of the alleged discrimination, unless the time is extended for good cause by the ASCR or designee. Any person who complains of discrimination under this part in any fashion shall be advised of the right to file a complaint as herein provided.

(b) All complaints under this part should be filed with the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights,

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1400 Independence Ave. SW., U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250, who will investigate the complaints. The ASCR will make final determinations as to the merits of complaints under this part and as to the corrective actions required to resolve program complaints. The complainant will be notified of the final determination on the complaint.

(c) Any complaint filed under this part alleging discrimination on the basis of disability will be processed under 7 CFR part 15e.

(d) For complaints OASCR deems appropriate for ADR, OASCR shall offer ADR services to complainants.

[79 FR 41411, July 16, 2014]

**PART 15e—ENFORCEMENT OF
NONDISCRIMINATION ON THE
BASIS OF HANDICAP IN PRO-
GRAMS OR ACTIVITIES CON-
DUCTED BY THE UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

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AUTHORITY: 29 U.S.C. 794.

SOURCE: 58 FR 57697, 57699, Oct. 26, 1993, unless otherwise noted.

§ 15e.101 Purpose.

The purpose of this part is to effectuate section 119 of the Rehabilitation, Comprehensive Services, and Developmental Disabilities Amendments of 1978, which amended section 504 of the

Rehabilitation Act of 1973 to prohibit discrimination on the basis of handicap in programs or activities conducted by Executive agencies or the United States Postal Service.

§ 15e.102 Application.

This part (§§ 15e.101–15e.170) applies to all programs or activities conducted by the agency, except for programs or activities conducted outside the United States that do not involve individuals with handicaps in the United States.

§ 15e.103 Definitions.

For purposes of this part, the term—
Assistant Attorney General means the Assistant Attorney General, Civil Rights Division, United States Department of Justice.

Auxiliary aids means services or devices that enable persons with impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills to have an equal opportunity to participate in, and enjoy the benefits of, programs or activities conducted by the agency. For example, auxiliary aids useful for persons with impaired vision include readers, Brailled materials, audio recordings, and other similar services and devices. Auxiliary aids useful for persons with impaired hearing include telephone handset amplifiers, telephones compatible with hearing aids, telecommunication devices for deaf persons (TTD's), interpreters, notetakers, written materials, and other similar services and devices.

Complete complaint means a written statement that contains the complainant's name and address and describes the agency's alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the agency of the nature and date of the alleged violation of section 504. It shall be signed by the complainant or by someone authorized to do so on his or her behalf. Complaints filed on behalf of classes or third parties shall describe or identify (by name, if possible) the alleged victims of discrimination.

Facility means all or any portion of buildings, structures, equipment, roads, walks, parking lots, rolling stock or other conveyances, or other real or personal property.

Historic preservation programs means programs conducted by the agency that