Civil Rights Compliance and Enforcement Training for Frontline Staff

Illinois State Board of Education
Nutrition Programs Division
800/545-7892 or 217/782-2491
www.isbe.net/nutrition
cnp@isbe.net
Discrimination is defined as different treatment which makes a distinction of one person or a group of persons from others; either intentionally, by neglect, or by actions or lack of actions based on . . .
What Is a Protected Class?

Any person or group of people who have characteristics for which discrimination is prohibited based on a law, regulation, or executive order. Protected classes in special Nutrition Programs are race, color, national origin, age, sex, and disability.
Goals of Civil Rights

- Equal treatment for all applicants and beneficiaries
- Knowledge of rights and responsibilities
- Elimination of illegal barriers that prevent or deter people from receiving benefits
- Dignity and respect for all
Sites need to establish a system to collect racial and ethnic data.

- Self-identification preferred; for example, on the household application.

- Alternatively, staff can make an observation of ethnicity and race.

RATIONALE: Discrimination is often based on perception, and others would probably have a similar perception to the person doing the coding.
Why do I have to collect racial and ethnic data?

The data is used to determine how effectively your program is reaching potentially eligible children and where outreach may be needed.

How long do I have to keep the data?

- Three years plus the current year
- Data should be kept secure and confidential
Types of Compliance Reviews

• Pre-Award Reviews—Take place before the site is approved for operation.
• Post-Award Reviews—Take place after a site has been approved for operation.
• Special Reviews—Take place after a site has been approved due to a complaint, data collection, or as follow-up to previous non-compliance.
Who do I contact?

- To file a complaint, write to: USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call (866) 632-9992 or (202) 720-6382 (TTY) or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish)

- In the Midwest Region you can write to: Regional Director, Civil Rights/EEO, 77 West Jackson Boulevard, 20th Floor, Chicago, IL 60604-3591 or call (312) 353-3353.

- Contact the Illinois State Board of Education, Nutrition Programs at: 100 North First St., Springfield, IL 62777, by phone at (800) 545-7892 or by email at cnp@isbe.net.
Outreach and Education Are Important Because:

• You want to reach as many potential eligibles as possible
• You want to ensure program access
• You need to pay attention to under-represented groups
• You need to ensure information is available in other languages as needed
All sites must provide informational materials in the appropriate translation concerning the availability and nutritional benefits of the meal programs (NSLP, SBP, SMP, ASP, CACFP).
Outreach and Education

Include non-discrimination statement on all materials that mention USDA programs (including websites). However, you do not need to include the statement on your menus.
The USDA And Justice for All Poster

- Prominently display this poster in the food service area so it is visible to participants.

- Posters are available free of charge from ISBE. Email: cnp@isbe.net or telephone 800/545-7892 or 217/782-2491.
Definition:

- Individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and have a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English.
- Recipients of Federal financial assistance have a responsibility to take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to their programs and activities by persons with limited English proficiency (LEP).
ENSURE ACCESS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES!

- Parking lot, entrances and exits, halls, elevators, rest rooms, sign language interpreters, Braille signage, and service animals
- Alternative arrangements for service
Customer Service

PLATINUM RULE

*Treat others the way they want to be treated*(or at least be aware of what that is).
School-Based Child Nutrition Scenario #1

Through your data collection procedures, you recognized that even though the community is composed of a large Hispanic population (40 percent), only 2 percent of Hispanics are eligible for meal benefits.

What outreach efforts would you take to increase Hispanic program participation?
Answer to Scenario #1

• Good job on data collection!
• Educational information or materials may be needed in other languages.
• Provide outreach to other programs in the area which serves the Hispanic population.
• There are many outreach efforts which could increase program participation.
On occasion, the cafeteria will have leftovers following the last lunch period and will offer them to the boys in the group.

*Is this practice discriminatory and if so on what basis?*
Answer to Scenario #2

- Yes, it is discriminatory. Even though cafeteria staff may not intentionally be discriminating against anyone, they are discriminating based on sex.
- If leftovers are going to be offered they need to be offered to everyone.
“Pizza Day” is the most popular day in the school cafeteria. Near the end of the lunch period three African-American boys come through the line and are told by a Caucasian school lunch employee that the cafeteria is “out of pizza.” They can see two pieces of pizza remain.
Shortly thereafter, a Caucasian boy comes through the line and the school lunch employee gives him one of two remaining pieces of pizza. You ask the employee why he gave the Caucasian child a piece of pizza after he told the three African-American children the cafeteria was out. The employee tells you the Caucasian child is his neighbor and he promised he would save him a piece of pizza the next time it was served in the cafeteria.
• Even though the cafeteria worker probably thought they were just being nice and saving a piece of pizza for the neighbor boy, it definitely looks discriminatory.

• The two slices of pizza should go to the first two children through the line that ask for it.
From time to time the cafeteria will have leftovers after the final lunch period. With your permission, cafeteria servers are allowed to offer students a second helping. All three cafeteria servers are known to be big boosters of the high school football team and only offer leftovers to football players.

- *Is this practice permissible under the Civil Rights Act?*
- *On what basis is this practice discriminatory?*
Answer to Scenario #4

This is a tricky one. Yes, it is permissible. It is not discriminatory based on sex because by law girls can be on the football team and sports teams are not a protected class. Therefore, this is not discrimination.
Child Care Scenario #1

A child care center does not provide infant foods and/or formula to infants in their care and requires parents to supply these items.

*Is this a civil rights issue?*
Yes. All children who attend a center must be provided equal access to the benefits of the CACFP. Therefore, infant formula and food must be offered to infants at the center and parents cannot be asked or required to supply these items. To withhold the program from any eligible age group is age discrimination.
Child Care
Scenario #2

Children whose first language is Spanish are asked to sit together at a Spanish-speaking table.

Is this a civil rights issue?
Yes, segregating or separating children who share a particular characteristic into groups would be considered a civil rights issue and discrimination based on the protected class of national origin.

NOTE: Be careful of implied segregation, such as seating all boys or girls at separate tables. This is a questionable practice unless it is done for disciplinary or other legitimate reasons.
A family does not want to identify their race or ethnic background on the household application.

What should the center staff do?
Answer to Child Care Scenario #3

- Staff should explain to the family that self identification is voluntary. Program applicants or participants are NOT required to furnish information on their race or ethnicity. When an applicant does not provide the information the data collector must, through visual observation, record the information for them.

- Center staff can point out that the collection of this information is strictly for statistical reporting requirements and has no effect on determining their eligibility.