

## **FOR USDA AGENCIES ONLY**

### **NON DISCRIMINATION POLICIES AND FORMS**

**ALL USDA AGENCIES MUST POST THESE THREE DOCUMENTS at your Food Distribution Site, in clear view of your clients**

- 1) Your Non-Discrimination Policy**
- 2) Your Complaint Procedure**
- 3) A Notice of the Beneficiary Rights**

These steps ensure that food from the Food Bank and the USDA is ***given out for free to the ill, needy and children based solely on eligibility, and that any client who feels they are being discriminated against may have ready access to complaint procedures and/or alternative resources for obtaining food.***

THE FOLLOWING PAGES can be completed by your agency and posted at your point of distribution. If you prefer to use or already have your own internal version of these procedures, you may use those instead, if they also provide the same kind of information to a client who might want to file a complaint.

**A COPY OF YOUR NON DISCRIMINATION & COMPLAINT POLICY must be provided to the Food Bank with your completed application.**

**For your convenience you may use the following TEMPLATES to create your non-discrimination and complaint flyers.**

## NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

\_\_\_\_\_ (organization name) **does not discriminate** against food recipients because of race, color, citizenship, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, disability, sexual orientation including gender identity, unfavorable discharge from the military or status as a protected veteran, reprisal, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, if all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA. We will handle discrimination complaints from program participants in the following manner.

**STEP ONE:** Any program participant who feels they have been a victim of discrimination or denied equal access is encouraged to contact the USDA directly or discuss the problem with the program supervisor.

*If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination and contact the USDA directly, 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. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at 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; or (800) 845-6136 (in Spanish). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer."*

**If you wish to discuss the problem with the program supervisor, please follow the steps below:**

**STEP ONE:** Any program participant who feels they have been a victim of discrimination or denied equal access are encouraged to discuss the problem with the program supervisor.

**STEP TWO:** The second step is to file a written complaint with the Executive Director of the program. The Executive Director will then have 5 working days to investigate the complaint and meet with the parties involved to resolve it.

**STEP THREE:** If the complaint remains unresolved, the Executive Director will turn over the complaint to the Board of Directors who will initiate their policy on addressing these types of issues.

**STEP FOUR:** If the matter remains unresolved, the program participant can file a discrimination complaint by notifying the contacts below:

Agency and Community Relations Manager at Food Bank of North Alabama  
PO Box 18607, Huntsville AL 35804 PH: 256-382-0296

“The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees, and applicants for employment on the bases of race, color, citizenship, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, disability, sexual orientation including gender identity, unfavorable discharge from the military or status as a protected veteran, reprisal, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, if all or part of an individual’s income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA. We will handle discrimination complaints from program participants in the following manner. (Not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.)

## PROCEDURE FOR FILING DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINTS

**Step One:** Discuss problem with \_\_\_\_\_  
(Your Program’s Supervisor)

**Step Two:** Submit a written complaint to \_\_\_\_\_  
(Ex. Director or Organization Leader)

Program Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Agency Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Step Three:** If the matter remains unresolved, the program participant can file a discrimination complaint by notifying the contacts below:

*Agency and Community Relations Manager  
Food Bank of North Alabama  
PO Box 18607  
Huntsville AL 35804  
PH: 256-382-0296*

### Option 2:

If you wish to go to the USDA directly and file Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, 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. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at 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; or (800) 845-6136 (in Spanish). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

## NOTICE OF BENEFICIARY RIGHTS

Because we are a recipient of TEFAP food commodities, we are required to let you know that—

- **We may not discriminate against you** on the basis of religion or religious belief, a refusal to hold a religious belief, or a refusal to attend or participate in a religious practice;
- **We may not require you to attend or participate in any explicitly religious activities** that are offered by us, and any participation by you in these activities must be purely voluntary;
- **We must separate in time or location any privately funded explicitly religious activities** from activities supported with USDA direct assistance;
- **If you object to the religious character of our organization**, we must make reasonable efforts to identify and refer you to an alternate provider to which you have no objection. We cannot guarantee, however, that in every instance, an alternate provider will be available; and
- **You may report violations of these protections** (including denials of services or benefits) by an organization to the State agency (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/food-distribution-contacts>). The State agency will respond to the complaint and report the alleged violations to their respective USDA FNS Regional Office (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns-regional-offices>).

### Alternate Service Providers:

Food Bank of North Alabama web site [www.foodbanknorthal.org](http://www.foodbanknorthal.org) offers information on approximately 200 food pantries across 11 north Alabama counties. State-wide phone service (Call 2-1-1) provides information on all kinds of assistance, including food. In Madison County, call FoodLine at 256-534-2424.

If you object to receiving services from us based on the religious character of our organization, we must make reasonable efforts to identify and refer you to an alternate provider to which you have no objection. We cannot guarantee, however, that in every instance, an alternate provider will be available.

**( ) Please check if you want to be referred to another service provider.**

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone / Email: \_\_\_\_\_

### FOR STAFF USE ONLY

1. Date of objection: \_\_/\_\_/\_\_

2. Referral (check one):

- ( ) Individual was referred to (name of alternate provider and contact information):
- ( ) Individual was given State agency-provided referral information (i.e. a website, hotline, or list of other service providers funded by the State agency)
- ( ) Individual left without a referral
- ( ) No alternate service provider is available—summarize on back page what efforts you made to identify an alternate provider (including reaching out to State agency or local or eligible recipient agency):

## Written Notice of Beneficiary Rights

Name of Agency Partner Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Because \_\_\_\_\_ is supported in whole or in part by financial assistance  
Agency Partner Organization Name

from the Federal Government, we are required to let you know that:

1. We may not discriminate against you on the basis of religion, a religious belief, a refusal to hold a religious belief, or a refusal to attend or participate in a religious practice;
2. We may not require you to attend or participate in any explicitly religious activities (including activities that involve overt religious content such as worship, religious instruction, or proselytization) that are offered by our organization, and any participation by you in such activities must be purely voluntary;
3. We must separate in time or location any privately funded explicitly religious activities (including activities that involve overt religious content such as worship, religious instruction, or proselytization) from activities supported with direct Federal financial assistance; and
4. You may report violations of these protections, including any denials of services or benefits by an organization, by contacting or filing a written complaint with the:  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights Executive Director  
Center for Civil Rights Enforcement  
1400 Independence Avenue SW  
Washington, DC 20250-9410, or by email to [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)
5. If you would like to seek information about whether there are any other federally funded organizations that provide these kinds of services in your area, please contact:

**Food Bank of North Alabama:** 256-539-2256

web site: [www.foodbanknorthal.org](http://www.foodbanknorthal.org)

State-wide phone service (Call 2-1-1)

In Madison County, call FoodLine at 256-534-2424

AND/OR

**The USDA Hunger Hotline:** By Phone: 1-866-3-HUNGRY or 1-877-8-HAMBRE to speak with a representative from 7:00 AM – 10:00 PM Eastern Time.

By Text: 914-342-7744 with a question that may contain a keyword such as "food," "summer," "meals," etc. to receive an automated response to resources located near an address and/or zip code.

This written notice must be given to you before you enroll in the program or receive services from the program, unless the nature of the service provided or exigent circumstances make it impracticable to provide such notice before we provide the actual service. In such an instance, this notice must be given to you at the earliest available opportunity.