

CIVIL RIGHTS POLICY AND COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

Civil Rights Policy for Service Delivery

DCYF prohibits discrimination, harassment, and retaliation based on age, color, creed, disability, familial status, gender identity, marital status, national origin, public assistance status, race, religion, sex, or sexual orientation (protections vary by program). This policy applies to all aspects of DCYF services—such as access, eligibility, intake, and treatment—and extends to recipients, sub-recipients, contractors, and vendors receiving state or federal human services funding.

Accessibility for People with Disabilities

To ensure DCYF programs and services are accessible and usable by people with disabilities, DCYF

- Informs the public of disability rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- Has an ADA Coordinator and a complaint process for disability-related issues.
- Ensures DCYF buildings are physically accessible.
 - Convenient off-street parking designated for people who have disabilities.
 - Curb cuts and ramps connecting parking to DCYF buildings.
 - Level entry to the first floor and elevator access to other floors.
- Assists people who have disabilities in applying for and receiving benefits they are eligible for.
- Provides accessible program benefits and services.

Effective Communication

DCYF offers free language assistance for people who have LEP and provides free auxiliary aids and services for people who have a disability.

Reasonable Modifications to Policies, Procedures, or Practices

Unless doing so would fundamentally change program benefits or services or impose an undue hardship, reasonable modifications to policies, procedures, or practices will be made to prevent disability discrimination.

Requests for communication assistance or reasonable modifications can be made via:

- Phone: 651-539-7700 or your preferred relay service;
- Fax: 651-539-0012; or
- Email: ADA.DCYF@state.mn.us.

Civil Rights Complaint Procedure

Discrimination is against the law. If you are applying for or receiving benefits or are seeking access to programs, benefits, or information, you have the right to file a complaint if you believe you have been treated differently due to age, color, creed, disability, familial status, gender identity, marital status, national origin, public assistance status, race, religion, sex, or sexual orientation (protections may vary by program).

Filing a Complaint with DCYF

1. Complaints must be filed within 12 months of the alleged discriminatory action.
2. Preferably, complete and submit DCYF's Civil Rights Complaint Form to the Civil Rights Coordinator:
Civil Rights Coordinator
Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families

Equal Opportunity and Access Division
Phone: 651-539-8332 (voice) or use your preferred relay service
Fax: 651-539-0012
Email: EOAD.DCYF@state.mn.us

3. If you choose to file a complaint by letter, email, or verbally, you must include:
 - a. Your full name;
 - b. Your contact information, include at least one of the following:
 - i. Address;
 - ii. Telephone number or relay service number; or
 - iii. Email address.
 - c. Name of human services agency you are reporting;
 - d. Contact information for agency you are reporting, include at least one of the following:
 - i. Address;
 - ii. Telephone number or relay service number; or
 - iii. Email address.
 - e. Detailed description of the specific differential treatment you are reporting, including estimated dates.
 - i. Clearly connect how the treatment is occurring because of a protected class.

****If you need assistance with your complaint, contact the Civil Rights Coordinator****

DCYF Complaint Process

1. DCYF will review your complaint and aim to notify you within 30 days if it has authority to investigate.
 - a. If DCYF has authority, an investigation will begin.
 - b. If DCYF does not have authority, you may be provided a recommendation of who may have authority.
2. Investigations may be informal but are thorough.
3. DCYF will make every effort to share findings within 90 days.
 - a. If discrimination is found, the appropriate authorities will be notified and corrective recommendations made—we are not an enforcement agency and only have the authority to make recommendations.
4. You may appeal the decision if you disagree with the outcome.
 - a. Within 15 days of receiving decision, submit a written request to the Civil Rights Coordinator
 - i. Briefly explain why you disagree
 - ii. Include additional important information.
 - b. A designated investigator will issue a final decision within 30 days of your appeal.
5. Filing a complaint with DCYF does not limit your right to pursue other legal or administrative actions. However, it is important to note:
 - c. It does NOT pause (toll) legal time limits (statute of limitations).
 - d. A judge may consider DCYF findings but is not required to.

Retaliation—such as punishment or intimidation—for filing a complaint or participating in an investigation is prohibited. Please immediately inform the investigator if you believe such actions have been taken**

Other Ways to File a Complaint

Your County Human Services Agency

You may file a discrimination complaint directly with your county agency. Call them and ask for their civil rights complaint procedure.

Minnesota Department of Human Rights (MDHR)

You may also file a complaint with MDHR if you believe you were discriminated against based on age, color, creed, disability, familial status, gender identity, marital status, national origin, public assistance status, race, religion, sex, or sexual orientation (protections may vary by program) or due to reprisal for filing a complaint or participating in an investigation.

Minnesota Department of Human Rights Freeman Building
625 North Robert Street
St. Paul, MN 55155
Phone: 651-539-1100
Toll Free: 800-657-3704
MN Relay: 711 or 800-627-3529
Fax: 651-296-9042
Email: Info.MDHR@state.mn.us

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights (OCR)

You may also file a complaint federally with the OCR if you believe you have been discriminated against because of race, color, national origin, age, disability, religion, or sex (including sexual orientation or gender identity).

Director
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office for Civil Rights
200 Independence Avenue SW
Room 509F HHH Building
Washington, DC 20201
Phone: 800-368-1019
TDD: 800-537-7697
Complaint Portal: <https://ocrportal.hhs.gov/ocr/portal/lobby.jsf>