

BETHLEHEM AVTS

BETHLEHEM AREA VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL SCHOOL

3300 Chester Avenue, Bethlehem, PA 18020-2870 • 610-866-8013 • Fax: 610-866-6124

Procedure for Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) Civil Rights Complaints

- 1) Any BAVTS employee receives a Civil Rights complaint from the complainant (i.e. parent) – Forward the complaint to BAVTS Business Manager, who will complete the steps below.
 - a) BAVTS must inform complainant of Federal Civil Rights rules and regulations that have been established for protected classes. (A protected class is any person or group of people who are protected from discrimination based on):
 1. Race
 2. Color
 3. National Origin
 4. Age
 5. Sex
 6. Disability
 - b) BAVTS must provide complainant the necessary information to file a complaint, which is:
 1. Mailing address of the USDA: U.S.
Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
 2. USDA's Telephone/Fax numbers and Email address:
(866) 632-9992 / (202) 690-7442 F/ program.intake@usda.gov
 3. Electronic link to file a civil rights complaint:
http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html
 - Note:** If BAVTS is unsure if the complaint falls under a protected class, BAVTS should provide complainant the federal complaint information.
 - c) **After providing the complainant with the information on how to file a Civil Rights complaint directly at the Federal level**, BAVTS may attempt to resolve the complaint if it is a matter that can be resolved quickly. Resolving complaints in real-time at the lowest possible level is encouraged. (***Note:** This is not an investigation as neither BAVTS nor the State agency has the authority to conduct complaint investigations. This is simply trying to resolve the situation if it was potentially caused by a miscommunication.)

If the complainant refuses to discuss the matter any further with BAVTS or if the matter cannot be resolved quickly, then BAVTS should:

1. reiterate the complaint filing procedures in 1)b),
2. document the complaint and actions taken (i.e. referral to Federal complaint procedures) in a Civil Rights complaint log that is separate from any other complaint log, (***Note:** A separate Civil Rights complaint log is necessary due to confidentiality and privacy laws. See complaint log requirements in d) below.), and

"Providing Opportunities to Build Careers"

The Bethlehem Area Vocational-Technical School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability or age in its programs or activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. Inquiries may be directed to the Bethlehem Area Vocational-Technical School's Title IX Coordinator or the Section 504 Coordinator at 3300 Chester Ave., Bethlehem, PA 18020. www.bethlehemavts.org

3. notify the State agency of the discussion. (***Note:** it is important for BAVTS to notify the State agency because regular communication between BAVTS and State agency is key to operating the program successfully.)

If the complainant is willing to try to resolve the issue with BAVTS and a satisfactory resolution is achieved, then BAVTS should still remind the complainant (using the information in 1)b)) of his/her right to file at the Federal level if necessary. (***Note:** Complainants retain the right to file at the Federal level even if a resolution seems to have been reached at BAVTS level.) BAVTS needs to document the complaint and actions taken (i.e. how resolution was achieved) in a log that is separate from any other complaint log, and notify the State agency of the resolution.

- d) Regardless if the complainant wishes to file at the Federal level, BAVTS should document as much information as possible in their Civil Rights complaint log including, but not limited to, the following:

- Date Complaint Received
- Complainant's Name
- Complainant's Address
- Complainant's Telephone Number
- Complainant's Email Address
- Allegation of Discrimination/Issue (i.e. FNS program involved, protected class(es) involved, etc.)
- Date of Alleged Discriminatory Action

1. BAVTS **must forward** the information, **within 5 days of receipt of complaint** from complainant, to the State agency (process depicted below):

State Agency Civil Rights Coordinator State Agency Director* FNS Regional Office Civil Rights Contact FNS Headquarters Civil Rights Office Complainant

2. *State Agency level **must forward** complaint information, **within 5 days of receipt of complaint** from BAVTS, to the FNS regional office.
3. FNS team conducts complaint review and investigation, which includes contact with the complainant, State agency, BAVTS, etc.

2) Additional Information:

- a) Complainants must file within 180 days of the alleged action b)

Confidentiality is extremely important

- c) USDA complaint form:

- English version:

http://www.ocio.usda.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2012/Complain_combined_6_8_12.pdf

- Spanish version:

http://www.ocio.usda.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2012/Spanish_Form_508_Compliant_6_8_12_0.pdf