

PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING CIVIL RIGHTS
COMPLAINTS OF DISCRIMINATION
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION
AUGUST, 2007

A. Policy of Equal Opportunity

Michigan State University Extension prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, religion, age, height, weight, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, or veteran status related to participation in its programs, activities and benefits and provides a process for the filing and prompt resolution of complaints of discrimination.

B. Right to File a Complaint

Any person who believes that he/she has been discriminated against may file a written complaint with the Director, Office of Civil Rights, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250 or with the Director of Extension, Michigan State University Extension, East Lansing, MI 48824 within 180 days from the date of the alleged discrimination.

C. Complaint Transmittal Process

A complaint received by the Director, Office of Civil Rights, USDA shall be promptly referred to the State Extension Director for prompt investigation and resolution. A complaint received by the Director of Extension will be sent within three (3) work days of receipt to the Director, Office of Civil Rights, USDA for communication purposes.

D. Written Complaints

If a written complaint is received by an MSU Extension staff member, the following procedures are to be followed within three (3) work days from the receipt of the complaint.

1. Acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing indicating that the complaint will be forwarded to the Director of Extension who will take action to promptly conduct a thorough investigation. Instruct the complainant that he/she may also file a written complaint with the Director, Office of Civil Rights, USDA.
2. Forward the complaint to the Director of Extension immediately. Attach a copy of the correspondence that was sent to the complainant along with any comments that you may have regarding this matter.
3. Upon receipt of this material, the Director of Extension's Office will contact you and will advise you as to further action.

E. Verbal Complaints

If a complaint is communicated to you verbally, the following procedures are to be followed immediately, but no later than three (3) work days from the receipt of the complaint.

1. Inform the complainant that he/she may file his/her complaint in writing with the Director, Office

of Civil Rights, USDA or with the Director of Extension within 180 days from the date of the alleged discrimination and that it may be in the interest of the complainant to file a complaint sooner rather than later.

2. Explain to the individual that it is in the best interest of all concerned that the complaint be put in writing.
3. Immediately following your verbal discussion with the complainant, write a letter to the complainant documenting your discussion. Your letter should:
 - a. Clearly communicate that the individual has the right to file a complaint in writing with the Director, Office of Civil Rights, USDA or with the Director of Extension within 180 days from the date of the alleged discrimination.
 - b. Indicate that you will be forwarding the complaint when received to the Director of Extension and that the matter will be promptly and thoroughly investigated.
4. Forward a copy of your letter to the complainant to the Director of Extension immediately and provide any comments that you may have regarding the matter.
5. Upon receipt of this material, the Director of Extension's Office will contact you and will advise you as to further action.

F. Further Suggestions on Handling Complaints

1. Do not attempt to solve the complaint yourself. Inform the Director of Extension immediately after a complaint is received. You will be provided instructions as to the appropriate action to take.
2. Do not attempt to debate a complaint with the complainant. Listen carefully to obtain all pertinent details. All communications with the complainant should be handled in a positive, diplomatic and professional manner.
3. Document all verbal and written communications related to the complaint.

EMPLOYMENT RELATED COMPLAINTS

A. Policy of Equal Employment Opportunity

It is the policy of the Michigan State University Extension to assure equal employment opportunity without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, religion, age, height, weight, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, or veteran status.

The Program for Equal Employment Opportunity provides an informal and a formal process for the filing and prompt resolution of employment related complaints of discrimination. These processes are available to applicants for Extension employment, Extension employees and employees occupying positions that are supported by non-Extension funds and who are supervised by Extension employees.

When a complaint is brought to your attention, you are required to inform the complainant of his/her right to file a complaint according to the following processes:

B. Informal Complaint Process

The complainant may contact any of the MSUE EEO Counselors who are designed to consider, conciliate, mediate, resolve or refer complaints in consultation with the EEO Coordinator. The addresses of these counselors are posted in each county office.

All informal complaints will be heard and a decision made by the counselor in consultation with the EEO Coordinator within five working days after receipt.

C. Formal Complaint Process

If informal procedures do not attain a result satisfactorily to the complainant or if the complainant does not desire to follow the informal process, the complainant has the option to use the Formal Complaint Process.

A complainant may file a formal complaint with the President, Michigan State University, the Director of MSU Extension Service or with the MSUE EEO Coordinator. Complaints are to be filed in writing within 180 days from the date of the alleged discrimination.

A complainant may request a hearing of the complaint which will be conducted by the Anti-Discrimination Judicial Board of Michigan State University. The hearing will be arranged by the MSUE EEO Coordinator and will be conducted according to policies and procedures adopted by the MSU Board of Trustees within 60 days of the request at a time and location agreed on by the EEO Coordinator and the complainant.

The EEO Coordinator, the complainant and any person whose alleged conduct is the cause of the complaint shall have the right to call and cross-examine witnesses under oath.

The Anti-Discrimination Judicial Board will submit a decision including findings of fact, conclusions, and recommendations to the Director of Extension for action within thirty (30) days of the conclusion of the hearing. The Director of Extension will notify the complainant in writing of the decision or disposition of the complaint.

D. Other Options Available to the Complainant

1. The complainant may file a formal complaint with the Michigan Department of Civil Rights.
2. The complainant may file a formal complaint with the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Washington, D.C. 20506.
3. The complainant may seek relief through the civil courts.