

The Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended:

This law, and other state and federal laws, insures that people in the United States have equal treatment, rights and opportunities no matter what their race, color, or national origin. This law prohibits discrimination in programs paid for with federal money.

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended:

This law says that if people are eligible for benefits or services, they cannot be denied those benefits or services because they are handicapped or disabled. Any program or activity that gets federal money may not discriminate against people who are disabled.

The Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, as amended:

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, political beliefs or disability. Benefits must be given equally to all people who apply and are eligible.

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), as amended:

This law requires that agencies and the organizations that agencies pay to do work for them must give people who are disabled equal opportunity to participate in programs, activities and services. Even agencies that do not receive federal funds must provide equal access.

The Multiethnic Placement Act of 1994, as amended:

This law says that a foster care and adoption agency can not deny a person the opportunity to become a foster or adoptive parent based on race, color or national origin. That agency can not delay or deny placement of a child based on race, color or national origin.

South Carolina Reg. 43-1-80 Chapt. 114 Article II:

This state regulation requires the Department of Social Services to comply with all federal civil rights laws and outlines the department's authority to review for compliance and to investigate allegations of discrimination.

“The South Carolina Department of Social Services and its providers must serve the people of South Carolina without discrimination.”

Compliance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Multi-Ethnic Placement Act of 1994 and all federal and state civil rights laws.

What does ‘discrimination’ mean?

Discrimination means to treat someone less favorably because that person is a member of a ‘protected group’. This may be done by denying services, by providing a different service or by segregating or treating someone separately when providing the service.

What is a ‘protected group’?

A protected group is a group of people of the same race, color, national origin, age, sex, disability, religion or political belief.

What does this mean to me?

It means that all people, no matter their race, color, national origin, age, sex, disability, religion or political belief, should get the same treatment and service at the Department of Social Services. Anyone may apply for a DSS service, even if that person has a disability or a ‘special need’. DSS will help these people apply for benefits and services. It also means that YOU must tell the receptionist or your DSS worker what your special needs are.

How will DSS help me with my ‘special needs’?

DSS will use special aids for people who need them. People with special needs may be visually impaired, deaf or hard of hearing, in a wheelchair or may not be able to speak English well. Examples of special aids are language interpreters, forms in large print or Braille or Spanish, ramps or setting up the appointment at another place that is more accessible.

What if I think DSS discriminated against me?

You should file a complaint of discrimination. You should file this complaint in writing as quickly as possible. You must file within 180 days. If the complaint concerns the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), you may file it verbally.

What information should I include in my complaint?

- What happened to you
- When and where it happened
- Why you believe it happened to you (protected group)
- Who discriminated against you
- Sign and date the complaint (not required for SNAP complaints)

If I need help to file a complaint, whom do I ask?

If you need help in writing and filing your complaint, ask your county worker or supervisor. You may also get help from the DSS Office of Individual and Provider Rights, Office of Civil Rights.

You may file a complaint with one of the following:

- Director, Office of Civil Rights
South Carolina Department of Social Services
P.O. Box 1520, Columbia, SC 29202
Fax: (803) 898-7269
Voice: Toll-free 1-800-311-7220 statewide or (803) 898-8080 in the Columbia area
TTY: 1-800-311-7219 (toll-free)
- Director, Office for Civil Rights
U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services
Sam Nunn Atlanta Federal Center/
Suite 16T70
61 Forsythe Street, S.W.
Atlanta, GA 30303-8909
Voice: (800) 368-1019
Fax: (404) 562-7881
TDD: (800) 537-7697

For SNAP only:

Director, Office of Adjudication,
U.S. Dept. of Agriculture (USDA)
1400 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410
Voice: Toll-free (866) 632-9992
Individuals who are hearing impaired or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339; or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish).

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.