

How to Recognize a Civil Rights Complaint

If a person says their **civil rights** are being affected, the complaint must be treated as a civil rights complaint. Other legitimate complaints may only be voiced or observed as being unequal treatment. In all cases, the established procedure is to use a complaint form, the Civil Rights Complaint log, refer the request to the civil rights authority in the school district or facility, and report the complaint to the Michigan Department of Education (MDE). The complaint can be investigated locally, resolved locally, and MDE can be notified of the resolution.

Potential issues for a civil rights complaint may start with a phone call, letter, email, fax, or any form of communication where someone feels they or someone they know has received unequal treatment in the operation of any Child Nutrition Program.

There are six protected classes in Child Nutrition Programs and these are **race, color, sex, age, national origin, and disability**.

Discrimination is defined as different treatment which makes a distinction of one person or a group of persons from others either intentionally, by neglect, or by the actions or lack of actions based on race, color, sex, age, national origin, or disability.

To quickly identify a civil rights violation, remember **4 D's**:

1. **Deny** program benefits unfairly
2. **Delay** program benefits unfairly
3. Treat **differently** (a policy or practice that has an adverse impact or any form of intimidation or retaliation)
4. Give **Disparate** Treatment (defined as a policy or practice which, "on the face of it" is not discriminatory, but has a discriminatory impact in practice, also known as the "effects test")