



OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

Office for Civil Rights

U.S. Department of Health
and Human Services

200 Independence Avenue, SW.
H.H.H. Building, Room 509-F

Washington, D.C. 20201

TELEPHONE

1-800-368-1019

E-MAIL

ocrmail@hhs.gov

TDD

1-800-537-7697

www.hhs.gov/ocr

KNOW THE RIGHTS THAT PROTECT US FROM DISCRIMINATION BASED ON RACE, COLOR OR NATIONAL ORIGIN

What is Title VI?

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI) is a Federal law that protects persons from discrimination based on their race, color or national origin in programs and activities that receive Federal financial assistance. For example, if you are eligible for Medicaid or other health or human services provided by agencies or organizations that receive Federal government funding, those entities cannot deny you access to their programs or activities because of your race, color or national origin.

The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) ensures that entities that receive Federal financial assistance comply with Title VI as well as other civil rights laws.

Some of the institutions or programs that may receive Federal assistance and be covered by Title VI are:

- Hospitals and health clinics
- Medicaid and Medicare agencies
- Alcohol and drug treatment centers
- Extended care facilities
- Public assistance programs
- Nursing homes
- Adoption agencies
- Day care, mental health and senior citizen centers

Forms of illegal discrimination

A recipient of Federal financial assistance may not, based on race, color or national origin:

- Deny services, financial aid or other benefits provided as a part of health or human services programs.
- Provide a different service, financial aid or other benefit, or provide them in a different manner from those provided to others under the program.
- Segregate or separately treat individuals in any matter related to the receipt of any service, financial aid or other benefit.
- Fail to take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access by limited English proficient (LEP) persons to the recipient's programs or activities.

How to file a complaint of discrimination with the Office for Civil Rights (OCR)

If you believe that you or someone else has been discriminated against because of race, color or national origin by an entity receiving financial assistance from HHS, you or your legal representative may file a complaint with OCR. Complaints must be filed within 180 days from the date of the alleged discrimination.

You may send a written complaint or you may complete and send OCR the Complaint Form available on our webpage at www.hhs.gov/ocr. The complaint form is also available on our webpage in a number of other languages under the Civil Rights Information in Other Languages section.

The following information must be included:

- Your name, address and telephone number.
- You must sign your name on everything you write. If you file a complaint on someone's behalf — e.g. spouse, friend, client, etc. — include your name, address, telephone number, and statement of your relationship to that person.
- Name and address of the institution or agency you believe discriminated.
- When, how and why you believe discrimination occurred.
- Any other relevant information.

If you mail the complaint, be sure to send it to the attention of the regional manager at the appropriate OCR regional office. OCR has ten regional offices and each regional office covers specific states. Complaints may also be mailed to OCR Headquarters at the following address:

**Office for Civil Rights
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW.
H.H.H. Building, Room 509-F
Washington, D.C. 20201**

To learn more:

Visit us online at www.hhs.gov/ocr

Call us toll-free at 1-800-368-1019

Email us: ocrmail@hhs.gov

TDD: 1-800-537-7697

Language assistance services for OCR matters are available and provided free of charge. OCR services are accessible to persons with disabilities.

www.hhs.gov/ocr



FACT SHEET OCR

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services • Office for Civil Rights • Washington, D.C. 20201 • (202) 619-0403

YOUR RIGHTS UNDER SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT

What Is Section 504?

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a national law that protects qualified individuals from discrimination based on their disability. The nondiscrimination requirements of the law apply to employers and organizations that receive financial assistance from any Federal department or agency, including the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). These organizations and employers include many hospitals, nursing homes, mental health centers and human service programs.

Section 504 forbids organizations and employers from excluding or denying individuals with disabilities an equal opportunity to receive program benefits and services. It defines the rights of individuals with disabilities to participate in, and have access to, program benefits and services.

Who Is Protected from Discrimination?

Section 504 protects *qualified individuals with disabilities*. Under this law, *individuals with disabilities* are defined as persons with a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities. People who have a history of, or who are regarded as having a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, are also covered. Major life activities include caring for one's self, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, working, performing manual tasks, and learning. Some examples of impairments which may substantially limit major life activities, even with the help of medication or aids/devices, are: AIDS, alcoholism, blindness or visual impairment, cancer, deafness or hearing impairment, diabetes, drug addiction, heart disease, and mental illness.

In addition to meeting the above definition, for purposes of receiving services, education or training, *qualified individuals with disabilities* are persons who meet normal and essential eligibility requirements.

For purposes of employment, *qualified individuals with disabilities* are persons who, with reasonable accommodation, can perform the essential functions of the job for which they have applied or have been hired to perform. (Complaints alleging employment discrimination on the basis of disability against a single individual will be referred to the U. S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission for processing.)

Reasonable accommodation means an employer is required to take reasonable steps to accommodate your disability unless it would cause the employer undue hardship.

Prohibited Discriminatory Acts in Health Care and Human Services Settings

Section 504 prohibitions against discrimination apply to service availability, accessibility, delivery, employment, and the administrative activities and responsibilities of organizations receiving Federal financial assistance. A recipient of Federal financial assistance may not, on the basis of disability:

- ✗ Deny qualified individuals the opportunity to participate in or benefit from federally funded programs, services, or other benefits.

- ✗ Deny access to programs, services, benefits or opportunities to participate as a result of physical barriers.

- ✗ Deny employment opportunities, including hiring, promotion, training, and fringe benefits, for which they are otherwise entitled or qualified....

These and other prohibitions against discrimination based on disability can be found in the DHHS Section 504 regulation at 45 CFR Part 84.

For information on how to file a complaint of discrimination, or to obtain information of a civil rights nature, please contact us. OCR employees will make every effort to provide prompt service.

Hotlines: 1-800-368-1019 (Voice)

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