

MEMO

DATE: June 1, 2022

SUBJECT: Nondiscrimination Statement Update

TO: All Sponsors of Child Nutrition Programs

FROM: Vonda Ramp, M.S, R.D.
State Director, Child Nutrition Programs

MESSAGE:

On May 5, 2022, USDA issued memo CRD -1-2022, Application of Bostock v. Clayton County to Program Discrimination Complaint Processing-Policy Update. This memo provides guidance related to processing Program complaints that allege discrimination on the basis of sex, including gender identity and sexual orientation, updating the Nondiscrimination Statement (NDS) on Program related materials, and revisions to the “And Justice for All” poster.

It should be noted that the change to the language of the NDS does not change the protected classes. The change to the NDS clarifies that the protected class of sex includes gender identity and sexual orientation. The protected classes remain; race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), Division of Food and Nutrition (DFN), is in the process of updating websites, forms, documents, trainings, etc. that we manage to include the new NDS.

“And Justice for All” posters are being updated by USDA but not yet available. There is no timeline for when the posters will be available. Until updated, Child Nutrition Program sponsors are to continue to use the current poster. PDE, DFN will mail posters to sponsors when they become available.

The link to the updated NDS is below. The NDS is being translated to other languages and will be available on the USDA website as they become available.

[USDA Nondiscrimination Statement | Food and Nutrition Service](#) (language below in the event that the link is not accessible)

Child Nutrition Program sponsors must begin the process of updating their websites, forms, documents, trainings, etc. with the new NDS:

- Websites (including all Program documents posted electronically) must be updated by August 3, 2022.
- Printed documents, pamphlets, brochures, etc. with the old (2015) NDS statement must be updated when current supply on hand is exhausted or by September 30, 2023.
- All new printing must use the new (2022) NDS.

USDA Nondiscrimination Statement:

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form (PDF), from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. mail:
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. fax:
(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. email:
program.intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Attachments:

- USDA Memo CRD 01-2022
- USDA Memo Revised Nondiscrimination Statement and “And Justice for All” Posters, Timelines and Guidance for Implementation



Food and
Nutrition
Service

DATE: May 5, 2022

MEMO CODE: CRD 01-2022

Braddock
Metro Center

SUBJECT: Application of *Bostock v. Clayton County* to Program Discrimination
Complaint Processing – Policy Update

1320
Braddock
Place
Alexandria
VA 22314

TO: Regional Directors
All Food and Nutrition Service Programs
All Regions

State Directors
All Food and Nutrition Service Programs
All States

Issuing Agency/Office:	FNS/Civil Rights Division
Title of Document:	Application of <i>Bostock v. Clayton County</i> in Program Discrimination Complaint Processing – Policy Update
Document ID:	
Z-RIN:	
Date of Issuance:	May 5, 2022
Replaces:	
Summary:	This memorandum clarifies prohibitions against discrimination based on sex in all FNS programs found in Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, as amended, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly the Food Stamp Program (7 USC § 2011 et seq.); and related implementing regulations that prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender identity and sexual orientation. USDA/FNS issues this memorandum regarding processing discrimination complaints.

The United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Civil Rights Division issues this memorandum to provide direction to State agencies and program operators regarding processing program complaints that allege discrimination on the basis of gender identity and sexual orientation in programs or activities receiving Federal financial assistance from FNS.

Background

FNS enforces prohibitions on sex discrimination found in Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX); the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (Food and Nutrition Act), as amended, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly the Food Stamp Program 7 USC § 2011 et seq.; and related regulations. In June 2020, the U.S. Supreme Court held in *Bostock v. Clayton County*, 140 S. Ct. 1731, 590 U.S. ____ (2020), that employment discrimination based on gender identity or sexual orientation constitutes prohibited discrimination based on sex under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. In *Bostock*, the Court explained that when an employer

fires an employee for being gay or transgender, the employer fires that person “for traits or actions [the employer] would not have questioned in members of a different sex.” 140 S. Ct. at 1737. This means that “[s]ex plays a necessary and undisguisable role in the decision, exactly what Title VII forbids.” *Id.* In other words, being gay or transgender is “inextricably bound up with sex.” *Id.* at 1742.

On January 20, 2021, President Biden issued Executive Order (EO) 13988, “Preventing and Combating Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity or Sexual Orientation.” 86 Fed. Reg. 7023. The EO set out the Administration’s policy that all persons are entitled to dignity, respect, and equal treatment under the law, no matter their gender identity or sexual orientation. EO 13988 references the Supreme Court’s holding in *Bostock* and states that *Bostock*’s reasoning applies with equal force to other laws that prohibit sex discrimination “so long as the laws do not contain sufficient indications to the contrary.” EO 13988 directs Federal agencies to review laws and regulations that prohibit sex discrimination to determine whether they prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender identity and sexual orientation.

Processing Discrimination Complaints

USDA/FNS is committed to ensuring consistent and robust enforcement of Title IX and the Food and Nutrition Act, in furtherance of the commitment that every person should be treated with respect and dignity. In light of *Bostock*, FNS has evaluated the statutes it enforces and determined that discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation can constitute prohibited sex discrimination under Title IX and the Food and Nutrition Act. This interpretation is based on the Agency’s legal analysis of the statutory text of Title IX, the Title IX *Bostock* interpretations of the Departments of Justice and Education, the statutory text of the Food and Nutrition Act, and the reasoning set forth in *Bostock* and related caselaw.

As to Title IX, FNS concurs with and adopts the Department of Justice’s and Department of Education’s analyses concluding that Title IX’s prohibition on sex discrimination includes a prohibition on discrimination on the basis of gender identity and sexual orientation. *See* Pamela S. Karlan, Memorandum to Federal Agency Civil Rights Directors and General Counsels, *Application of Bostock v. Clayton County to Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972* (March 26, 2021); Enforcement of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 with Respect to Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Light of *Bostock v. Clayton County*, 86 Fed. Reg. 32,637 (June 22, 2021).

Regarding the Food and Nutrition Act, the text of the Act’s nondiscrimination provision is sufficiently similar to the language in Title VII that the *Bostock* court relied on in reaching its holding. First, the Act provides that “there shall be no discrimination by reason of . . . sex.” 7 U.S.C. § 2020(c)(1). Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination “because of” an individual’s sex. 42 U.S.C. § 2000e-2(a). The phrases “because of” and “by reason of” are used synonymously. *See, e.g., Bostock*, 140 S. Ct. at 1739 (“And, as this Court has previously explained, the ordinary meaning of ‘because of’ is ‘by reason of’ or ‘on account of.’”) (cleaned up); *cf. Merriam-Webster*, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/by%20reason%20of> (last visited Feb. 24, 2022) (defining “by reason of” to mean “because of” or “due to”). Furthermore, in his *Bostock* dissent, Justice Alito listed the Food and Nutrition Act nondiscrimination provision, 7 U.S.C. § 2020(c)(1), among a list of “[o]ver 100 federal statutes [that] prohibit discrimination because of sex” which he anticipated being impacted by the majority decision in *Bostock*. 140 S. Ct. at 1778, 1791 (Alito J. dissenting).

Second, the Food and Nutrition Act, like Title VII, focuses on protecting individuals from discrimination. Title VII expressly protects “any individual” from discrimination. The Food and Nutrition Act also focuses on individual households (“applicant households”), as opposed to program applicants as a whole (“In the certification of applicant households for the supplemental nutrition assistance program, there

shall be no discrimination by reason of . . . sex.”) 7 U.S.C. § 2020(c)(1). As the *Bostock* Court observed, this focus on individuals is significant because it is not a “defense for the employer to note that, while he treated that individual woman worse than he would have treated a man, he gives preferential treatment to female employees overall.” *Id.* at 1741. Similarly, it would not be a defense for a provider to argue that they should not be liable for discriminating against an individual applicant household based on sex because there is data showing that applicants as a whole receive assistance free of sex discrimination.

Thus, FNS concludes the focus on individual households and the prohibition of discrimination “by reason of” sex under the Food and Nutrition Act is sufficiently similar to Title VII such that the *Bostock* analysis applies to the Food and Nutrition Act. This means that the certification of applicant households for SNAP shall be conducted without discrimination on the basis of gender identity and sexual orientation.

State agencies and program operators should expeditiously review their program discrimination complaint procedures and make any changes necessary to ensure complaints alleging discrimination on the basis of gender identity and sexual orientation are processed and evaluated as complaints of discrimination on the basis of sex. State agencies and program operators are advised that the interpretation outlined in this memo does not determine the outcome in any particular case, which will depend on the specific facts and circumstances of that case. Any action taken by USDA in a specific case will take account of all relevant facts and legal requirements, including, where applicable, Title IX’s religious exemption, the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, 42 U.S.C. 2000bb et seq., and any other applicable exemptions.

State agencies are reminded to distribute this memorandum to local agencies, Program Operators and Sponsors, and all other subrecipients of Federal financial assistance. Local agencies, Program Operators and Sponsors, and all other subrecipients should direct questions concerning this memorandum to their State agency. State agencies with questions should contact the appropriate FNS Regional Civil Rights Officer. The FNS Civil Rights Division is available to provide technical assistance as you ensure compliance with Title IX’s and the Food and Nutrition Act’s protections against sex discrimination.

Roberto Contreras
Director
Civil Rights Division
Food and Nutrition Service

Attachments

- 1/ Bostock Cover Letter
- 2/ Questions and Answers Related to CRD 01-2022 Application of *Bostock v. Clayton County* to Program Discrimination Complaint Processing – Policy Update

cc: Deputy Administrators
Regional Administrators
Regional Civil Rights Officers



Food and
Nutrition
Service

1320 Braddock Place
Alexandria, VA
22314-1649

To: Regional Directors
All Child Nutrition (CN) and Supplemental Nutrition and Safety Programs¹ (SNAS)
State Directors
CN and SNAS
All State Agencies

Subject: Revised Nondiscrimination Statement and “And Justice for All” Posters; Timelines and Guidance for Implementation

On May 5, 2022, the Food and Nutrition Service’s (FNS), Civil Rights Division, issued a memorandum on *Bostock v. Clayton County* and its application to USDA FNS Programs. The memorandum informed FNS program recipients that the prohibition of discrimination based on sex in Title IX and the Food and Nutrition Act includes gender identity and sexual orientation. The changes impact the USDA Nondiscrimination Statement (NDS) and the *And Justice for All* (AJFA) posters. Additional guidance is outlined below.

The revised USDA NDS includes updated language for all other FNS programs. New *And Justice for All* posters are in the design/printing phase and guidance on poster ordering is forthcoming. A timeline for distribution cannot be determined until printing commences.

Nondiscrimination Statement

All documents, pamphlets, websites, etc. should be updated with the 2022 NDS as follows:

1. Websites must be updated within 90 days of the date of this memorandum.
2. Documents, pamphlets, brochures, etc., using 2015 NDS language must be updated when current supply on hand is exhausted or by September 30, 2023.
3. All new printing must use the 2022 NDS.

And Justice for All Posters

Until the new posters are received, additional guidance is outlined below.

¹ All other FNS nutrition assistance programs (Child and Adult Care Food Program, Commodity Supplemental Food Program, Food Distribution Programs, National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Summer Food Service Program, Seniors Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, Special Milk Program, Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), and WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program). The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations guidance is distributed in a separate memorandum.

1. State and local agencies may request the 2019 AJFA posters from their Regional Civil Rights Officer until their supply is exhausted. State agencies may distribute AJFA posters currently on hand to local agencies and subrecipients until new posters are received.
2. AJFA posters currently posted must not be removed until replaced with the new poster.
3. The 2019 AJFA poster(s) language should be updated on websites, training presentations and any pending printing of brochures, pamphlets and materials and replaced with the appropriate 2022 version.
4. State agencies must provide their poster order request using the attached Excel Spreadsheet to their Regional Civil Rights Officer by June 27, 2022. The request must include the number ordered, the poster number (AD-475A or AD-475B), contact person and telephone number, and where the posters will be delivered (street addresses only; no PO Box).

Posters will be ordered and shipped as quickly as possible. In the interim, please contact your Regional Civil Rights Officer (see regional contact list at: <https://www.fns.usdagov/fns-regional-offices>) if you have questions.

Please contact Crystal Tolar, Chief, Compliance Branch, at: Crystal.Tolar@usda.gov or your Regional Civil Rights Officer, if you have additional questions that are not addressed above or in the FAQs.

Roberto Contreras
Director
Civil Rights Division
Food and Nutrition Service

Attachments

- 1/ NDS All Other Nutrition Assistance Programs
- 2/ AJFA Poster Order Spreadsheet

cc: Associate Administrators
Deputy Administrators
Regional Administrators
Regional Civil Rights Officers