

**HOW TO FILE A DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINT  
WITH THE OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS (OCR)  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20202-1328**

**REGION VIII:**

Arizona, Colorado, Montana, New Mexico, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah Wyoming:

Office for Civil Rights, Region VIII - Denver Office

U.S. Department of Education

Cesar E. Chavez Memorial Building

1244 Speer Boulevard, Suite 310

Denver, CO 80204-3582

Telephone: (303) 844-5695

Facsimile: (303) 844-4303

Email: [OCR.Denver@ed.gov](mailto:OCR.Denver@ed.gov)

The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) enforces four Federal statutes that prohibit discrimination in programs and activities that receive Federal financial assistance from the Department of Education (ED). Discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin is prohibited by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; sex discrimination is prohibited by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; discrimination on the basis of handicap is prohibited by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; and age discrimination is prohibited by the Age Discrimination Act of 1975.

The civil rights laws enforced by OCR extend to all state education agencies, elementary and secondary school systems, colleges and universities, vocational schools, proprietary schools, state vocational rehabilitation agencies, libraries, and museums that receive Federal financial assistance from ED. Programs and activities that receive ED funds must be operated in a non-discriminatory manner. Such programs or activities may include, but are not limited to: admissions, recruitment, financial aid, academic programs, student treatment and services, counseling and guidance, discipline, classroom assignment, grading, vocational education, recreation, physical education, athletics, housing, and employment.

**WHO CAN FILE:**

Anyone who believes that an educational institution that receives Federal financial assistance has discriminated against someone on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, handicap, or age may file a complaint. The person or organization filing the complaint need not be a victim of the alleged discrimination, but may complain on behalf of another person or group.

**TIMELINESS:**

A complaint must be filed within 180 calendar days of the date of the alleged discrimination, unless the time for filing is extended by OCR for good cause.

**INSTITUTIONAL GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES:**

Prior to filing a complaint with OCR against an institution, a potential complainant may want to find out about the institution's grievance process and use that process to have the complaint resolved. A complainant is not required by law to use the institutional grievance procedure before filing a complaint with OCR. If a complainant uses an institutional grievance process and also chooses to file the complaint

with OCR, the complaint must be filed with OCR within 60 days after the last act of the institutional grievance process.

**WHAT TO DO:**

Anyone wishing to file a formal complaint with OCR should submit in writing the following information in a letter or on the Discrimination Complaint Form available from OCR regional offices (see listing on panel iv).

- Your name and address (a telephone number where you may be reached during business hours is helpful, but not required);
- A general description of the person(s) or class of persons injured by the alleged discriminatory act(s) (names of the injured person(s) are not required);
- The name and location of the institution that committed the alleged discriminatory act(s);
- and A description of the alleged discriminatory act(s) in sufficient detail to enable OCR to understand what occurred, when it occurred, and the basis for the alleged discrimination (race, color, national origin, sex, handicap, or age).

A recipient may not retaliate against any person who has made a complaint, testified, assisted or participated in any manner in an investigation or proceeding under the four statutes listed above.