



## **Agency Staff and Volunteer Civil Rights Training**

### Benefits of Civil Rights Training

- Ensures equal and consistent treatment of all people
- Provides knowledge of rights and responsibilities
- Provides a mechanism for accountability
- Eliminates illegal barriers that can prevent or deter people from seeking/receiving services
- Promotes dignity and respect while cultivating an atmosphere of equity and inclusion

### What are Civil Rights?

- Non-Political rights that apply to all people
- Discrimination based on any of these Civil Rights is prohibited by law
- Any additional requirements agencies or volunteers enforce is a violation

### Protected Classes

- Race
- Color
- National Origin
- Sex (including Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity)
- Disability
- Age

### Legal Assurances and Protective Laws

- Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 – requires groups who received support from the Federal Government (food, funds, etc.) to comply with all Civil Rights legislation

### Definitions and Types of Discrimination

- Discrimination – practice of treating people differently because of how we have grouped them in our minds according to our stereotypes and prejudices; can be intentional or unintentional.
- Disparate Treatment – when a person is intentionally treated unfairly because they are a member of a protected class.
  - Example: only serving people from your congregation at your distribution
- Disparate Impact – unfair treatment that is unintentional but has negative consequence for a member of a protected class.
  - Example: asking immigrants to wait to be served until the end of the day because no interpreter is available.
- Retaliation/Reprisal – an intentional act against an individual or their family because of prior activities or behaviors
  - Example: a client expressed dissatisfaction for the items they received and their family is refused future service.
- Stereotypes – preconceived beliefs or over-simplified generalizations about a particular group
- Prejudice – set of rigid and unfavorable attitudes toward a particular group that is formed without facts

### Faith-Based Institutions

- A group of individuals who are united based on religious or spiritual beliefs
- Food must be kept separate of faith-based activities
- Cannot require participation in rites, prayers, or receive literature in order to receive services
- Must hang written copy of *Notice of Beneficiary Rights* in a location visible to clients



Reasonable Accommodations

- Must provide the same level of service to all clients, even if it means service is provided in an alternative way
  - Example: Reading forms out loud; carrying food to vehicles; sign language interpreters

Customer Service and Experience

- Treat everyone with dignity and respect
- Be patient and polite
- Make sure all clients receive equal treatment
- Recognize clients have different needs
- People with disabilities must be accommodated
- Be open to new ways of serving clients
- Put yourself in the client's position

Client Data Collection

- Information collected must be kept secure and remain confidential
- Data collected may never be used for purposes other than reporting to Feeding America West Michigan
  - Examples of Misuse: verifying addresses; sending flyers; sharing with outside groups like DHHS

Civil Rights Conflicts

- Stay calm and listen
- Don't be afraid to apologize
- Take time to kindly explain policies
- Try to offer solutions

**If you are unsure how to handle a situation, get the Site Coordinator's help with questions or concerns.**

Filing a Civil Rights Complaint

- Everyone has the right to file a complaint
- **Never** discourage someone from filing a complaint
- Direct those wishing to make a complaint to the coordinator
- Complaints can be written or verbal
- All Civil Rights complaints should be documented, reported to Feeding America West Michigan and submitted to the USDA

*I understand the information described above. By signing this document I acknowledge my intention to follow these guidelines. I understand that failure to follow these guidelines could result in my removal as a volunteer from future food distributions.*

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_