



# Georgia Department of Agriculture

Capitol Square • Atlanta, Georgia 30334-4201

**Gary W. Black**  
Commissioner

## Procedure for Non-Employee Discrimination Complaints

The Georgia Department of Agriculture (GDA) does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, age, or sex in the administration of its programs or activities, as required by applicable laws and regulations. The Department is responsible for coordination of compliance efforts and receipt of inquiries concerning the non-discrimination requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990; and other applicable federal non-discrimination laws, including, but not limited to, Section 13 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act Amendments of 1972 and 40 C.F.R. Part 7.

This document outlines complaint procedures relating to the GDA's provision of programs and services. GDA's Title VI Coordinator shall be responsible for the coordination and oversight of said procedures. The Title VI Coordinator will receive and review complaints, communicate with complainants, investigate complaints or arrange for the investigation of complaints, issue letters and notices, and perform other actions necessary to fulfill GDA's obligations under nondiscrimination statutes.

Any person who believes he/she has been discriminated against with respect to a GDA program or activity may file a complaint using the below procedures. An appropriate, prompt, and impartial investigation of allegations filed will be conducted, and a preponderance of the evidence standard will be applied during the analysis of the complaint. Retaliation for filing a discrimination complaint is strictly prohibited, and claims of retaliation will be promptly addressed.

The GDA's procedures for non-employee discrimination complaints are as follows:

1. Any person who believes that he/she has been subjected to discrimination may file a written complaint with the GDA's Title VI Coordinator. Federal and State law requires complaints be filed within one-hundred eighty (180) calendar days of the last alleged incident.
2. The complainant may submit a complaint online at [agr.georgia.gov](http://agr.georgia.gov), download the complaint form at [agr.georgia.gov](http://agr.georgia.gov), or request the complaint form from the Title VI Coordinator. In lieu of the complaint form, the complainant may submit to the Title VI Coordinator a written statement that contains all of the information identified in Sections 3a through 3f below.

3. The complaint must include the following information:
  - a. Name, address, and telephone number of the complainant.
  - b. The basis of the complaint (i.e., race, color, national origin, sex, elderly, or disabled).
  - c. The date or dates on which the alleged discriminatory event or events occurred.
  - d. The nature of the incident that led the complainant to feel discrimination was a factor.
  - e. Names, addresses, and telephone numbers of persons who may have knowledge of the event.
  - f. Other agencies or courts where a complaint may have been filed and a contact name.
  - g. Complainant's signature and date.
  
4. The complaint must be delivered to the Title VI Coordinator:

Petra Evans  
Title VI Coordinator  
19 Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, S.W., Room 227  
Atlanta, Georgia 30334  
Phone Number: 404-586-1152  
Fax Number: (404) 232-1547  
E-mail Address: [titlevi@agr.georgia.gov](mailto:titlevi@agr.georgia.gov)

5. If the complainant is unable to submit a written complaint, the GDA Title VI Coordinator should be contacted. If requested by complainant, GDA will provide an interpreter. Complainants also have the right to complain directly to the appropriate federal agency; however, the complainant must do so within one-hundred eighty (180) calendar days of the last alleged incident.
  
6. Once a complaint is filed, an acknowledgement letter will be issued to the complainant within five (5) business days.
  
7. The GDA's Title VI Coordinator will review the complaint and determine whether it has jurisdiction to investigate the issues presented. If the GDA does have jurisdiction, the complainant will be issued an acceptance letter within five (5) business days of said determination. If the GDA does not have jurisdiction, the complainant will be issued a no jurisdiction letter within five (5) business days of said determination.
  
8. The GDA has up to one-hundred eighty (180) days to investigate the complaint. If more information is needed to resolve the case, the Title VI Coordinator may contact the complainant. The complainant has thirty (30) days to send requested information to the investigator assigned to the case.
  
9. If the Title VI Coordinator is not contacted by the complainant or does not receive the additional information within thirty (30) days, the GDA may administratively close the case. A case can also be administratively closed if the complainant no longer wishes to pursue his/her case.

10. After the Title VI Coordinator reviews the complaint, one of two letters will be issued to the complainant: a.) a closure letter, or b.) a letter of finding (LOF).
11. A closure letter summarizes the allegations, states that there was not a Title VI violation, and states that the case will be closed. A LOF summarizes the allegations and the interviews regarding the alleged incident, and explains whether any disciplinary action, additional training of staff involved, or other action(s) will occur.
12. If the complainant wishes to appeal the decision, he/she has ten (10) days after the date of the closure letter or the LOF to do so.

These procedures do not limit or deny the complainant's right to file a formal complaint with an outside enforcement agency.