



Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity in NASA Assisted Programs and Activities: Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Related Nondiscrimination Laws

NASA's Roles and Responsibilities

NASA's Financial Assistance Programs

NASA provides financial assistance to a wide range of recipients including institutions of higher education, non-profit organizations, and private corporations. NASA awards over \$1 billion a year in financial assistance to these entities. This assistance comes mainly in the form of grants and cooperative agreements between NASA and its recipients.

Civil Rights Laws Enforced by NASA

Under Federal civil rights law, all recipients of NASA financial assistance are prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age. NASA enforces four civil rights laws prohibiting discrimination among programs and activities receiving NASA financial assistance. These include:

- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin);
- Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (prohibiting sex discrimination in NASA assisted education programs and activities);
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (prohibiting disability discrimination); and
- Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (prohibiting age discrimination).

These civil rights laws represent a national commitment to end discrimination in programs and activities receiving Federal financial assistance. The laws also assist NASA in promoting one of its core values - fostering "a culture of trust, respect, teamwork, communication, creativity, equal opportunity, and empowerment." (NASA Strategic Plan 2000).

The Office of Equal Opportunity Programs

Within NASA, the Office of Equal Opportunity Programs (OEOP) is charged with enforcing the four laws to protect the rights of beneficiaries in programs or activities receiving NASA financial assistance.

Part of OEOP's charge is to receive, investigate, and adjudicate complaints alleging violations of the civil rights laws by recipients of NASA assistance.

Roles and Responsibilities of NASA Recipients

Examples of Prohibited Discrimination

The following actions may violate civil rights laws if they are based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability or age:

- Denying an individual any service, financial aid, or other benefit provided under the program;
- Providing any service, financial aid, or other benefit to an individual which is different, or is provided in a different manner, from that provided to others under the program;
- Subjecting an individual to segregation or separate treatment in any matter related to his receipt of any service, financial aid, or other benefit under the program;
- Restricting an individual in any way in the enjoyment of any advantage or privilege enjoyed by others receiving any service, financial aid, or other benefit under the program;
- Treating an individual differently from others in determining whether he satisfies any admission, enrollment, quota, eligibility, membership or other requirement or condition which individuals must meet in order to be provided any service, financial aid, or other benefit provided under the program;
- Denying an individual an opportunity to participate in the program through the provision of services or otherwise afford him an opportunity to do so which is different from that afforded others under the program
- Using criteria or methods of administration which have the effect of subjecting individuals to discrimination because of their race, color, or national origin, or have the effect of defeating or substantially impairing accomplishment of the objectives of the program respective to individuals of a particular race, color, or national origin.

Specific Requirements for Recipients

The regulations implementing Title VI, Title IX, Section 504 and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, contain specific requirements for recipients on issuing notices of nondiscrimination and publicly disseminating nondiscrimination requirements. In accordance with the regulations, notification may include posting information notices, publishing in local newspapers or distributing memoranda or other written communications to employees and beneficiaries of the programs and activities operated by the recipient.

A "combined" notice of nondiscrimination containing two basic elements will suffice to meet the requirements of the regulations. These two elements are: (1) a statement of nondiscrimination that specifies the basis for nondiscrimination; and (2) identification by name or title, address, and telephone number of the employee or employees responsible for coordinating compliance efforts.

Filing a Complaint of Discrimination

Who May File A Complaint

Anyone who believes that a recipient of NASA financial assistance has discriminated against someone on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age may file a complaint of discrimination under one or more of the civil rights laws. A complaint must be filed within 90 days of the alleged discrimination, unless the time for filing is extended by OEOP for good cause.

What to Include in Your Complaint

Anyone wishing to file a formal complaint with OEOP should submit in writing the following information in a letter:

- Your name and address (a telephone number where you can 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 acts; and
- A description of the alleged discriminatory act(s) in sufficient detail to enable OEOP to understand what occurred, when it occurred, and the basis for the alleged discrimination (race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age).

It should be noted that 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 laws listed above.

Where to Send Your Complaint

You may send a discrimination complaint letter to any of the following NASA installations:

National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Headquarters
Office of Equal Opportunity Programs
300 E St., S.W.
Code E
Washington, DC 20546

Complaints Hotline: 866-654-1440
Telephone: 202-358-2167
TDD: 202-358-3748
Fax: 202-358-3336

E-mail: AssistedProgramComplaint@NASA.gov or
LEP@NASA.gov