

## Non-Discrimination Statement and Religious Organizations

The USDA revised the Non-Discrimination Statement (NDS) for Child Nutrition Programs (CN) on May 5, 2022 (CRD 01-2022). Wording was added to the prohibition of discrimination based on sex to include gender identity and sexual orientation.

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination by education institutions receiving financial assistance from the federal government. The USDA Civil Rights Division allows some exceptions if there is a conflict between Title IX and a faith-based organization's governing religious tenets. A copy of the USDA religious exemption policy is on the last page of this policy.

Faith-based CNP sponsors in Alabama will not be cited during administrative reviews if the NDS required prior to May 5, 2022, is posted on the website in full and the sponsor indicates in writing that it is claiming a religious exemption. That version is:

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, 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 which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.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](mailto:Program.Intake@usda.gov)

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Policy Approved: January 31, 2024



**United States  
Department of  
Agriculture**

**Office of the  
Assistant Secretary  
for Civil Rights**

1400 Independence  
Avenue SW

Washington, DC  
20250

## **RELIGIOUS EXEMPTIONS UNDER TITLE IX OF THE EDUCATION AMENDMENTS OF 1972**

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (“Title IX”) is a federal law that prohibits sex discrimination by educational institutions receiving financial assistance from the federal government, including USDA. Although this prohibition applies to a wide array of public and private schools at the K-12 and the college/university level, the law includes some exceptions, including one permitting an institution to be exempt on religious grounds if there is a conflict between Title IX and a school’s governing religious tenets.

Below are two basic questions and answers about Title IX Religious Exemptions. If your institution decides to seek USDA assurance of an exemption, please be sure to do so consistent with regulations (link below), and contact us at [CR-INFO@usda.gov](mailto:CR-INFO@usda.gov) if you have questions:

**1. Are religious educational institutions required to submit a written request to USDA in order to claim a Title IX Religious Exemption?**

No. USDA regulations do not require a religious educational institution to submit a written request for a Title IX exemption in order to claim that exemption.

If, however, a religious educational institution wishes to seek USDA recognition of their religious exemption, it may do so through a written request under USDA regulations ([7 CFR 15a.205](#)). The written request seeks USDA assurance of exemption from applicable sections of USDA’s Title IX regulations. Those that have neither sought nor received prior written assurance from USDA may still invoke their exemption after USDA receives a Title IX discrimination complaint or initiates Title IX compliance efforts. 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 USC 2000bb et seq., and any other applicable exemptions.

**2. If an educational institution wishes to seek USDA assurance of religious exemption from Title IX provisions, where should that written request be sent?**

All written requests for assurance of a religious exemption should be sent by mail to: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Center for Civil Rights Operations, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Stop 9407, Washington, DC 20250; or by email to: [CR-INFO@usda.gov](mailto:CR-INFO@usda.gov).

August 12, 2022