

Section 508

Section 508 is part of the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998, signed into law on August 7, 1998, as part of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998. The Act requires that when Federal agencies develop, procure, maintain, or use electronic and information technology, that they shall ensure that the electronic and information technology allows Federal employees with disabilities to have access to and use of information and data that is comparable to the access to and use of information and data by Federal employees who are not individuals with disabilities, unless an undue burden would be imposed on the agency.

USDA fully embraces the scope and intent of Section 508 and is actively committed to ensuring that our customers and employees with disabilities have equity in the use of electronic and information technology.

APHIS recognizes USDA's fifth strategic goal – to operate an efficient, effective, and discrimination-free organization.

Section 508 authorizes individuals to file administrative complaints and civil actions against an agency, limited to the alleged failure to procure accessible technology.

Therefore, the existing EEO complaint process established by USDA, its agencies and mission areas, is applicable to the administrative processing of Section 508 complaints.

The USDA sites are

USDA Complaint Processing Procedures:

<http://www.usda.gov/directives/files/dm/DM4330-001.htm>

The USDA Equal Employment Rights policy is posted at:

<http://www.usda.gov/cr/SecretarysPolicy.htm>

The USDA EEO complaint procedure is posted at:

<http://www.usda.gov/cr/Employment>How to File a Complaint.htm

The following statement summarizes the USDA policy and the basic procedures, and is representative of the policy statement in wide use by USDA agencies and mission areas (Source Agricultural Marketing Service's (AMS) EEO policy page, at

<http://www.ams.usda.gov/eeostatement.htm>):

<p>The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD).</p>
--

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202)720-5964 (voice or TDD). USDA is an equal Opportunity provider and employer.