

# Complaint Research

## What is a complaint?

A concern or dissatisfaction regarding an F&N-administered program that alleges a violation of federal or state regulations, TDA policy, or F&N’s customer service expectations.

## Standard Complaint Types

- Financial
- Legal
- Meals
- Health & Sanitation
- Participation
- Program Management
- Non-purview

## What is a Civil Rights Complaint?

A verbal or written allegation of discrimination that indicates an FNS-conducted or assisted program is administered or operated in a manner that results in disparity of treatment or services being provided to persons or groups of persons because of their protected bases.

- There are six (6) bases protected against discrimination.
  - Race
  - Color
  - National
  - Origin
  - Sex
  - Age
  - Disability

The person may not use the terms “Civil Rights” or “Protected Bases” in their statement of allegation, so it is important to listen to what they are saying.

- **Denied** program benefits unfairly
- **Delayed** program benefits
- Treated **differently**
- Given **disparate** treatment

## Resources:

- [TDA CACFP Handbook](#)
- [TDA SFSP Supplemental Handbook](#)
- [USDA SFSP Handbook](#)



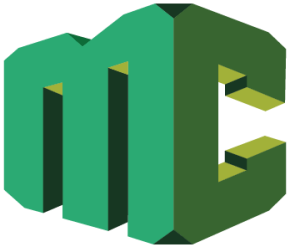
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## Research: Be objective

- Identify facts, continue to provide excellent service, gather info on the incident factors, determine the indirect cause, understand the factors of what, how, and why, and identify how to prevent future incidents.
- Be objective and accurate, focusing on facts and evidence without placing blame. Use neutral language with a consistent, transparent, and documented approach.
- The purpose of effective complaint documentation is to identify the items that answer these questions.

## Interview: Who, What, Where, When, Why, and How?

- Identify who should be interviewed and create questions for each person interviewed. Take notes carefully, keeping the research goal in mind: to identify the incident's cause. Let the interviewee talk. Use open-ended questions to clarify or gather specifics.

## Analysis / Determination: Define the event

- After the interview, a lot of factual data has been collected. The task is to turn that data into useful information. In developing the sequence of events, a structured analysis must be conducted to determine the unique events that occurred around the incident.
- Determining causes involves analyzing events prior to the incident that contributed to it, identifying weaknesses, and examining the system for flaws or inadequate programs, policies, plans, processes, procedures, and practices.

## Report: Paint a word picture

- Reports should be clear, comprehensive, and fact-based. The complaint research shouldn't stop at identifying the violations. The final report must highlight system weaknesses. Share findings with those who can act to correct issues. Include the supporting documentation from the research conducted.



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