Breadcrumb

1. Home
2. Print
3. Pdf
4. Node
5. Entity Print

EEO Complaint Process: Frequently Asked Questions

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What is my time frame for filing an EEO complaint?

You must initiate contact with an EEO Counselor within 45 calendar days of the alleged discriminatory action. In the case of a personnel action, the EEO complaint must be filed within 45 calendar days of the effective date of the personnel action. Failure to comply with the 45-calendar daytime limit for contacting the EEO Counselor is possible grounds for dismissal of your complaint. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have speech disabilities, may contact us through the Federal Relay Service on (800) 877-8339 or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish).

How do I file an EEO complaint?

Employees, former employees and applicants for employment should contact their agency’s Office of Civil Rights office to file an EEO complaint.

How do I contact an APHIS EEO counselor?

APHIS EEO Counselors can be contacted by e-mail at CounselingResolution.OCR@usda.gov. They can also be reached on **301-851-4201** or **1-800-342-7231**. Additional contact information for EEO Counselor can be found in the contact us page.

What happens once I file an EEO complaint?

After you have filed an EEO complaint and elected either traditional EEO counseling (link to description of counseling) or alternative dispute resolution (ADR) (link to description of ADR), the EEO Specialist assigned to process your complaint will work with you and management to attempt resolving your allegation(s) per 29 Code of Federal Regulation §1614 and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), Management Directive 110. The EEO Specialist will explain in further detail the difference between EEO counseling and ADR during your initial meeting with them.

Can I have representation during the EEO complaint process?

Yes, you are allowed representation. You must designate your representation in writing to the EEO Specialist assigned to process your complaint.

How long will it take to process my complaint?

The time frame for EEO counseling is thirty (30) calendar days and can be extended (by mutual agreement of the employee and agency) up to an additional sixty (60) calendar days to a maximum of ninety (90) calendar days from the date counseling started. When an aggrieved person elects to participate in ADR, the processing period is automatically up to ninety (90) calendar days. If the matter is not resolved by the conclusion of either the counseling or ADR process, the EEO counselor/mediator will advise you of the procedures for filing a formal complaint.

For more information please contact the Counseling and Resolution Branch (CRB) at 301-851-4201 or via e-mail at CounselingResolution.OCR@usda.gov or visit the Counseling and Resolution Program Overview (39.84 KB) page.

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