

**Cuyahoga County Division of Children and Family Services  
(CCDCFS)  
Policy Statement**

**Policy Chapter:** Substitute Care  
**Policy Number:** 6.01.11  
**Policy Name:** Multi-Ethnic Placement Act (MEPA) Complaints of Alleged Discrimination in the Foster Care or Adoptive Process

**Original Effective Date:** 02/01/2005  
**Revision Date(s):** 04/01/2021, 02/01/2018, 12/01/2017, 09/01/2014, 02/01/2013, 9/14/2009  
**Current Revision Date:** 04/01/2024  
**Approved By:** Jacqueline M. Fletcher

**PURPOSE:** To outline the policy and procedures for filing and responding to complaints of alleged discriminatory acts, policies or practices in the foster care or adoption process that involve race, color or national origin.

**SCOPE:** This policy applies to all employees, clients and services of the Cuyahoga County Division of Children and Family Services.

**POLICY**

- A. Any person may file a complaint alleging a discriminatory act, policy or practice involving race, color or national origin (RCNO) in the foster care or adoption process of CCDCFS or any person or entity affiliated with CCDCFS.
- B. Any person, including but not limited to, an employee or former employee of a Public Children’s Services Agency, Private Child Placing Agency, or Private Non-custodial Agency or a member of a family which has sought to become a foster caregiver or adoptive parent, may also file a complaint alleging that he or she was intimidated, threatened, coerced, discriminated against or otherwise retaliated against in some way by CCDCFS because he or she has made a complaint, testified, assisted, or participated in any manner in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing in connection with an allegation that CCDCFS engaged in discriminatory acts, policies, or practices as it applies in the foster care or adoption process.

**PROCEDURES**

- A. The individual filing a complaint shall use the JFS 02333 "Discrimination Complaint Form." These forms are available, on request, through the community relations unit of CCDCFS and available on the Cuyahoga County website.

- B. The complaint shall be filed within two years from the date of the occurrence of the alleged discriminatory act; or two years from the date upon which the complainant learned or should have known of a discriminatory act, policy or practice. The complaint may be filed with:
1. CCDCFS Community Relations Unit, 3955 Euclid Avenue, Cleveland Ohio 44115 (216) 432-CARE (2273), 1-800-321-0322, or,
  2. The Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services, Bureau of Civil Rights, 30 East Broad Street, 30<sup>th</sup> Floor, Columbus Ohio 43215-3414; (614) 644-2703 or 1-866-227-6353, (TTY) (614) 995-9961 or 1-866-221-6700 or,
  3. Region V Office of Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 233 N. Michigan Avenue, Suite 240, Chicago, Illinois, 60601. (312) 886-2359, (fax) (312) 886-1807, (TDD) (312) 353-5693.
- C. Any complaint alleging discrimination involving race, color or national origin in the foster care or adoption process received by CCDCFS will be forwarded to the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) within three working days of date of receipt of the complaint.
- D. Nothing in this policy shall prohibit an individual from filing a complaint with the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights or other such entity.
- E. The Grievance Review Policy, 2.03.05, does not apply to allegations involving race, color or national origin.
- F. CCDCFS, if the subject of the complaint, shall not initiate, conduct, or run concurrent investigations surrounding the complaint or take any further action regarding the complainant or subject of the complaint until the issuance of the final investigation report by ODJFS, unless otherwise approved by ODJFS.
- G. CCDCFS, if the subject of the complaint, shall cooperate fully with ODJFS during the course of the investigation and shall submit any information requested by ODJFS not later than fourteen days from the date of the request, unless otherwise agreed upon.
- H. Each PCSA, PCPA or PNA shall provide a written notice of the procedures for any complaints of discrimination in the foster care or adoption process that involve RCNO within thirty days of the effective date to all foster caregivers certified or in the process of certification and to all individuals who have approved adoptive homestudies or who are participating in the adoptive homestudy process on the effective date of this rule.

**SEE ALSO:**

Ohio Administrative Code Section 5101:2-33-03  
Ohio Administrative Code Section 5101:2-48-24

**Cuyahoga County Division of Children and Family Services Policies and Procedure Manual**

Policy 6.01.10 Multi-Ethnic Placement Act (MEPA) Monitor

Policy 6.01.12 Multi-Ethnic Placement Act of 1994 (MEPA) Standards of Conduct

Adoption Procedures: A Summary of Agency Policy and Procedures