



KNOW YOUR CIVIL RIGHTS

Background: Any agency that receives Federal assistance must obey and enforce civil rights laws. These laws have been enacted to ensure that people who apply for and/or receive benefits from the government are treated with dignity and respect and that there are no differences in how they are treated based on certain characteristics that legislators have found worthy of special protections.

Protected Classes: State and Local Agencies, vendors and other subcontractors involved in the administration and operation of the Senior and WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Programs in Illinois shall not discriminate against any applicant or participant for reasons of race, color, national origin, age, sex and disability. Congress has, however, limited participation in the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) to people age 60 and over and WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) to low income pregnant, postpartum and breastfeeding mothers and children over 4 months and no older than 5 years. This is not discrimination based on sex or age because Congress has intended these programs for people in these groups.

Illinois eligibility requirements are for the senior program to be 60 years older and meet the income guidelines or to be an active WIC participants or proxy who are pregnant, postpartum, breastfeeding or children over 4 months and no older than 5 year.

Your Rights: As an applicant for or beneficiary (recipient) of benefits from either the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program or WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program you have the following rights:

- Equal treatment when applying for and when using benefits;
- Being advised of your rights and responsibilities;
- Receiving information in another language or being provided with an interpreter by the State or Local Agency if you are limited English proficient and cannot communicate well enough in English to obtain meaningful access to benefits;
- Receiving reasonable accommodations to complete the application process and to help you participate in the program and if you are disabled;
- Asking questions and getting answers about eligibility determinations, your rights and responsibilities, and how to file complaints;
- Not having illegal barriers imposed that prevent or deter you from receiving benefits;
- Being treated with dignity and respect when applying for and when using your benefits; and
- Having your properly presented FMNP checks accepted in a nondiscriminatory manner by participating farmers or their employees in exchange for locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables.

Nondiscrimination Statement and Complaint Filing: In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter 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; (2) Fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) Email: program.intake@usda.gov

