



## FOOD SAFETY AND INSPECTION SERVICE EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

### Initiating Contact with an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Counselor

Employment discrimination is unlawful. Individuals who believe they have been subjected to discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, marital or family status, political beliefs, protected genetic information, equal pay, or reprisal, **MUST** contact an EEO Counselor prior to filing a formal EEO complaint in order to attempt to resolve the matter informally.

Who Can Initiate Contact with an EEO Counselor? Any employee, former employee, or applicant for employment with the Food Safety and Inspection Service may initiate contact with an EEO Counselor to make a claim of employment discrimination.

Timeframe for Initiating an Informal EEO Complaint: It is the responsibility of the aggrieved person to seek EEO counseling in a timely manner. An aggrieved person **MUST initiate contact with an EEO Counselor within 45 calendar days** of the date of the alleged discriminatory matter, or in the case of a personnel action, within 45 calendar days of the effective date of the action. An aggrieved person has the option to pursue informal resolution through Alternative Dispute Resolution or Traditional Counseling. These options are discussed during the initial counseling session.

If you believe you have been subjected to employment discrimination on any basis(es) identified above, contact the FSIS Civil Rights Staff at:

- USDA, FSIS, Office of the Administrator
- Civil Rights Staff
- **5601 Sunnyside Avenue, 1-2260**  
**Mail Drop 5261**  
**Beltsville, MD 20705-5000**

**Phone:** (301) 504-7755 (Washington, DC/Metro Area)  
**Toll Free:** (800) 269-6912 (Outside of the Washington, DC/ Metro Area)  
**TTY:** (800) 877-8339 (Federal relay service/voice)  
**Fax:** (301) 504-2141