



City of Columbia

Title VI Complaint Procedures

Introduction

These procedures apply to complaints filed under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, relating to any program and/or activity administered by the City of Columbia or its sub-recipients, consultants, and/or contractors. Intimidation or retaliation of any kind is prohibited by law and City of Columbia policy.

These procedures do not deny the right of the complainant to file formal complaints with other State or Federal agencies, or to seek private counsel for complaints alleging discrimination. These procedures are part of an administrative process that does not provide for remedies that include punitive damages or compensatory remuneration for the complainant.

Every effort will be made to obtain early resolution of complaints at the lowest possible level. The option of informal mediation meeting(s) between the affected parties and the investigator may be utilized for resolution, at any stage of the process. The City of Columbia will make every effort to pursue a resolution of the complaint. Initial interviews with the complainant and the respondent will include requests for information regarding specific relief and settlement options.

Filing

Any person who believes that he or she or any specific class of persons has been subjected to discrimination or retaliation prohibited by Civil Rights authorities, based upon race, color, or national origin may file a written complaint to the Office of Business Opportunities. A formal complaint must be filed within 180 calendar days of the alleged occurrence or when the alleged discrimination became known to the complainant. The complaint must meet the following requirements:

- Complaints must be in writing and signed by the complainant(s).
- Complaints must include the date of the alleged act(s) of discrimination (date when the complainant(s) became aware of the alleged discrimination; or the date on which the conduct was discontinued or the latest instance of the conduct).
- Complaint must present a detailed description of the issues, including names, job titles, and addresses of those individuals perceived as parties in the action complained against.

Receipt and Acceptance

Upon receipt of the complaint, the Office of Business Opportunities will determine its jurisdiction, and need for additional information. The complaint will be reviewed for a determination of acceptability. The Office of Business Opportunities will notify the complainant, in writing, within ten (10) days of receipt of the complaint.

In order to be accepted, a complaint must meet the following criteria:

- a. The complaint must be filed within 180 calendar days of the alleged occurrence or when the alleged discrimination became known to the complainant.
- b. The allegation(s) must involve a covered basis such as race, color, or national origin.
- c. The allegation(s) must involve a program or activity that receives Federal financial assistance.

Dismissal

A complaint may be recommended for dismissal for the following reasons:

- a. The complainant requests withdrawal of the complaint.
- b. The complainant fails to respond to repeated requests for additional information needed to process the complaint.
- c. The complainant cannot be located after reasonable attempts to contact the complainant.

Investigation of Complaints

The Office of Business Opportunities will designate an investigative team responsible for evaluating the complaint, developing an investigative plan, conducting interviews, collecting and analyzing evidence, and preparing an investigative report.

The final investigative report will be submitted to the City Manager within 60 days of receipt of the complaint. The City will issue a final decision and provide written notification of the decision to the complainant.

Appeals

If the City of Columbia concludes that the respondent is in compliance with laws/regulations and the complainant disagrees, the complainant may, if dissatisfied, file an action with SCDOT.