



Howard County Government

Calvin Ball, County Executive

**Notice of Nondiscrimination and Procedure for Complaints and Grievances related to  
EPA-Funded Programs and Services offered by Howard County, MD  
May 2026**

**Notice**

Howard County, Maryland (the “County”) is dedicated to ensuring equitable access to our programs and services, particularly those receiving funding from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), for all individuals. The County prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability status, or any other characteristic protected by applicable law, in providing access to our programs and activities, including discrimination in employment under any EPA-funded program or activity. The County also prohibits retaliation against any individual or group who have engaged in a protected activity as defined under applicable law by filing a complaint of discrimination or participating in any way in an investigation, proceeding or hearing under this part, opposing any practice made unlawful by the provisions of the 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Parts 5 and 7, or for the purpose of interfering with such rights. Because the County receives grant funding from EPA, specific reference is made to 40 C.F.R. Part 5 and Part 7. Parts 5 and 7 address nondiscrimination in programs or activities receiving Federal assistance from the EPA.

This policy is aligned with nondiscrimination requirements implemented by 40 C.F.R. Parts 5 and 7 (Nondiscrimination in Programs or Activities Receiving Federal Assistance from the EPA), including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; and Section 13 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act Amendments of 1972.

If you have any questions about this notice or any of the County’s nondiscrimination programs, policies or procedures, you may contact the Nondiscrimination Coordinator (contact information below).

**Demographic Information Collection**

The County maintains, collects, reviews, and regularly updates demographic data for the populations served by its programs and services. The County holds this practice to better understand the profile of the communities in which it works to ensure that decisions about where and how its programs are administered are not discriminatory. As needed, the data is shared with the County’s partners and funders as part of their monitoring and evaluation efforts.

The County primarily utilizes demographic data generated by the Decennial Census to collect and analyze accurate data on race, color, national origin, age, sex, age, and disability status, among other demographic characteristics, for communities where the County is actively working.

**Nondiscrimination Coordinator for EPA-Funded Programs and Services**

The Nondiscrimination Coordinator is responsible for the direction of compliance efforts and receipt of inquiries concerning nondiscrimination requirements implemented by 40 C.F.R. Parts 5 and 7. The contact information for the County’s Nondiscrimination Coordinator for EPA-funded Programs and

Services is:

Garren Diggs, Nondiscrimination Coordinator  
Office of Human Rights & Equity (OHRE), Howard County Government  
9820 Patuxent Wood Drive, Suite 237, Columbia, MD 21046  
Phone: (410) 313-6467  
Fax: (410) 313-6468  
Email: [GDiggs@HowardCountyMD.Gov](mailto:GDiggs@HowardCountyMD.Gov)  
Website: [www.HowardCountyMD.Gov/OHRE](http://www.HowardCountyMD.Gov/OHRE)

### **Language Translation Services and Accommodations for Accessibility, Interpretation, Disability-Related Needs**

If you require language translation services or disability-related services or accommodations for EPA-funded programs and services, please contact the department providing the program or service.

### **Individuals with Disabilities**

The County adheres to the ADA Title II Statement and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The County is committed to ensuring that each part of its EPA-funded programs and services, in their entirety, are readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities.

### **Grievance Procedure**

If you have a complaint or grievance alleging possible discrimination in the implementation of EPA-funded programs or services offered by the County, the following procedure will apply to your complaint or grievance.

The purpose of this Grievance Procedure is to provide a fair, prompt, and accessible process for addressing complaints of discrimination in programs, services, and activities funded in whole or in part by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

#### **1. Filing of a Complaint:**

- Any individual or their authorized representative who believes they have been subjected to discrimination in accessing EPA funded programs or services offered by the County may file a complaint within 180 calendar days of the date of alleged discriminatory act.
- Complaints may be submitted in writing via email, mail, or in person to the designated Nondiscrimination Coordinator at:
  - Garren Diggs, Nondiscrimination Coordinator
  - Office of Human Rights & Equity (OHRE), Howard County Government
  - 9820 Patuxent Wood Drive, Suite 237, Columbia, MD 21046
  - Phone: (410) 313-6467
  - Fax: (410) 313-6468
  - Email: [GDiggs@HowardCountyMD.Gov](mailto:GDiggs@HowardCountyMD.Gov)
  - Website: [www.HowardCountyMD.Gov/OHRE](http://www.HowardCountyMD.Gov/OHRE)
- If the complainant is unable to submit a written complaint, the Nondiscrimination Coordinator should be contacted. The County will make the necessary reasonable accommodations in its policies and procedures to allow a person with disabilities and/or with limited English proficiency full access to the complaint filing and investigative process.
- A formal complaint must be filed within 180 calendar days of the alleged discriminatory act. The complaint must meet the following requirements:
  - The allegations of discriminatory act(s) must involve a covered basis such as race, color,

national origin, sex, age, disability status, or any other characteristic protected by applicable law, in providing access to any EPA-funded program or activity.

- Complaints must be in writing and signed by the complainant(s).
- Complaints must include the name, address, and telephone number of each complainant.
- Complaints must include the date of the alleged discriminatory act(s) (date when the complainant(s) became aware of the alleged discriminatory act(s); or the date on which the alleged discriminatory act was discontinued or the latest instance of the alleged discriminatory act).
- Complaints must present a detailed description of the issues, including names, perceived as parties in the action complained against.

## 2. Preliminary Review:

- Within 30 calendar days of the filing of a complaint, staff will:
  - Determine whether the facts alleged are sufficient to establish that unlawful conduct has occurred; and
  - Notify the complainant in writing by certified mail that the complaint is accepted for further investigation or dismissed.

## 3. Investigation:

- The investigation will be conducted promptly, thoroughly, and impartially.
  - Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent possible throughout the investigation process.
- The preponderance of the evidence standard will be applied during the analysis of each complaint. The investigation may include:
  - Interviews with the complainant;
  - Interviews with witnesses;
  - Interviews with staff or contractors;
  - Review of documents and records;
  - Inspection of facilities; and
  - Consultation with technical experts or legal advisors.
- The Nondiscrimination Coordinator may request additional information or documentation from the complainant and any relevant parties.
- Within 180 calendar days of authorization of a complaint for investigation, the Nondiscrimination Coordinator shall issue written findings of the results of the investigation, which shall state whether an alleged discriminatory act occurred. Due to exigent circumstances, the period may be extended to an additional 180 calendar days at discretion of the Nondiscrimination Coordinator. The findings shall:
  - Summarize the factual background of the case;
  - Contain the basis of a finding of whether a discriminatory act has or has not occurred;
  - Outline the next appropriate steps; and
  - Be sent by certified mail to all parties.

## 4. Resolution Process:

- Within 30 calendar days of a finding that a discriminatory act has occurred, the Nondiscrimination Coordinator shall attempt to rectify the discriminatory act by conference and/or conciliation agreement.
- Any conciliation agreement for elimination of a discriminatory act shall be reduced to a legally enforceable written instrument signed by the complainant, respondent, and the Nondiscrimination Coordinator.
- If no conciliation agreement is reached, the Nondiscrimination Coordinator shall notify all

parties by certified mail of the failure to conciliate with a decision and order advising the parties of the right of appeal.

- *Resolution Findings*: With the finding that an alleged discriminatory act has not occurred, the Nondiscrimination Coordinator will issue a decision and order advising the parties of the right of appeal.

5. Appeals:

- If the complainant or respondent is dissatisfied with the Nondiscrimination Coordinator's decision, they may appeal the decision within 30 calendar days of receipt of the written decision stating the reasons they disagree to the OHRE Compliance Officer.
- Appeals must be submitted in writing to the following OHRE Compliance Officer, who will conduct a review of the submitted appeal and make a final decision in writing within 90 calendar days of the determination, in a letter sent by certified mail to the complainant, with a copy to the Nondiscrimination Coordinator.

Todd Givens, OHRE Compliance Officer

Office of Human Rights and Equity (OHRE), Howard County Government

9820 Patuxent Wood Drive, Suite 237, Columbia, MD 21046

Phone: (410) 313-6466

Fax: (410) 313-6468

Email: [TGivens@HowardCountyMD.Gov](mailto:TGivens@HowardCountyMD.Gov)

Website: [www.HowardCountyMD.Gov/OHRE](http://www.HowardCountyMD.Gov/OHRE)

- The decision of the OHRE Compliance Officer shall be final and binding on all parties.

6. Documentation:

- All discrimination complaints and related investigative records will be maintained confidentially and securely.
- Howard County will maintain records of all complaints, investigations, and decisions in accordance with applicable Howard County Government record and retention policies; however, records will be retained at a minimum of three (3) years and make such records available to EPA upon request. When any complaint or other action is brought before the three-year period ends, Howard County will continue to keep the records beyond the three-year period until the complaint or action is resolved.

7. Continuous Improvement

- The County is committed to continuous improvement in its nondiscrimination practices. Feedback from interested individuals will be collected by the OHRE Compliance Officer and used to inform updates and enhancements to the nondiscrimination complaint handling process.