

Supplemental Training Conflict Resolution and Customer Service

New Hampshire Women (WIC) Infant Children Program,
Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) and
Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP)

March 2022

Conflict Can Occur

- In workplace disputes among employees
- Disagreements between your office and the participant
- Dispute about work assignments and responsibility
- Dealing with difficult behavior in customer service

Conflict Resolution

Aim to:

1. Avoid the desire to punish or blame.
2. Improve the situation.
3. Communicate your feelings directly without too much emotion.
4. Improve the relationship and increase communication.
5. Avoid repeating the situation.

Ask For Help

- If you are unable to calm the situation, remove yourself and seek help from a supervisor.
- Try to have the conversation in a private area, not the waiting room, so there is no audience.
- If you are upset, have someone else step in to avoid emotions escalating

Customer Service

- Be patient.
- Be polite.
- Listen.
- Avoid sarcasm.
- Be empathetic. Understand that people may not know the rules or understand how programs work.
- Smile when appropriate – make people feel welcome and valued.
- Explain policy and let them know you have to follow the rules of the federal program.
- Don't be afraid to apologize.
- Don't feel you need to have the last word.

Customer Service

- Do not treat people differently based on race, color, national origin, age, sex, or disability – that is disparate treatment.
- Do not impose policies that impact disproportionately on certain groups – that can be disparate impact.
- Do not retaliate against anyone who complains or their family or friends or against employees who cooperate with a civil rights investigation.

Customer Service

Do not do special favors for people that you are not prepared to do for everyone. (exception – accommodate people with disabilities or people who have limited English proficiency, this is not a favor)

5 Principles

- Be Calm
- Be Patient
- Listen
- Have Respect
- Follow Policy

Culture & Environment

- Be aware of your environment.
- How are you treating each other in the office?
- What is the attitude among co-workers?
- Create a happy place for participants and staff.
- Provide respect and receive respect.
- Don't vent in a common area.
- Don't vent to participants.

Conflict Resolution

- Sometimes an issue that starts out as a simple disagreement escalates into a civil rights complaint.
- Conflict resolution skills can help staff provide good customer service and avoid potential civil rights complaints.

Complaint Procedures

- Despite your best efforts at customer service and at following the rules, some people may feel that they have been subjected to discrimination.
- Everyone has the right to file a discrimination complaint.
- Everyone at the site needs to know what to do if someone wants to file a complaint.

Complaint Procedures

- Be aware of the bases for which complaints may be filed: race, color, national origin, age, sex, disability or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.
- Never discourage groups or individuals from filing complaints or from voicing allegations of discrimination.
- Know how & where to file a complaint.
- NH PPM CH.11 Participant Complaint policy outlines complaint procedures.

Civil Right Complaints

1. **Mail:**
US Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistance Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250-9410
2. **Fax:** (202) 690-7442
3. **Email:** program.intake@usda.gov
4. **Online:** <https://www.usda.gov/oascr/how-to-file-a-program-discrimination-complaint>

Non-Civil Right Complaints

- **To file a non-CR complaint at the State agency level, persons may contact the New Hampshire WIC office.**
- Director-
 - Lissa Sirois
 - Nutrition Services Section
 - telephone 603-271-0571
 - fax 603-271-4779

Resources

- Learning Dynamics
Customer Service Notes for WIC
Self- Assessment Activity