

MEMORANDUM

TO: Environmental Justice Advisory Council

FROM: Heather Bouchey, Interim Secretary of Education HB

SUBJECT: 2024 Environmental Justice and Civil Rights Complaint Report

DATE: March 22, 2024

The Vermont Agency of Education (AOE), is pleased to provide the Environmental Justice Advisory Council with the following report summarizing complaints alleging Title VI violations or Environmental Justice issues and any agency action taken to resolve the complaints, as required pursuant to 3 V.S.A. § 6004(d).

Title VI Complaints

The AOE currently has several mechanisms to gather concerns and complaints (see Appendix A for a summary table). In addition to the complaint systems listed in Appendix A below, the AOE can receive concerns and complaints via the main Agency email and phone line, which are routed to the appropriate internal Divisions for follow-up and resolution.

The AOE has not logged any Civil Rights complaints from the data collection mechanisms identified in Appendix A.

Environmental Justice Complaints

The AOE does not currently have a formal environmental justice grievance or complaint intake and review process, consequently, no Environmental Justice concerns or complaints have been received, and no action has been taken.

The AOE will create a formal environmental justice complaint intake and review process as well as a complaint tracking system in calendar year 2024.



Appendix A: Concern & Complaint System at the Agency of Education

Division	Program	Link
Federal & Education Support Programs	EL Programs are responsible for educating the field about the Title VI requirements and assisting the field in attaining compliance. All parents should understand their rights and if a parent believes there is a violation, they are directed to report to the USED Office of Civil Rights (OCR). The FESP team is responsible for responding to questions and providing information upon request to OCR during investigations.	USED Office for Civil Rights How to file a Discrimination Complaint Title 34 Subtitle B Office for Civil Rights Nondiscrimination Civil Rights Requirements of the Federal Child Nutrition Programs Office for Civil Rights Disability Discrimination (ed.gov)
Child Nutrition	The CN team must inform potential claimants of their rights to make a complaint and how to make a complaint, and/or assist them in filing the complaint with the USDA OCR. In addition, the team must maintain a confidential complaint log and assist USDA with any requests related to USDA's investigation of the complaint. We also monitor to ensure that all CN programs in the field post the "And Justice for All" poster which contains information about how to file a complaint, and that all programs maintain a Civil Rights complaint procedure and all program staff receive required annual Civil Rights training, which covers Title VI.	Civil Rights Requirements of the Federal Child Nutrition Programs
Education Quality	The Education Quality Assurance team is responsible for responding to questions and providing information upon request to OCR during investigations	USED Office for Civil Rights Education and Title VI

Division	Program	Link
Student Pathways/Adult Education & Literacy	Career Technical Education Team must proactively monitor Perkins recipients for compliance with Title VI. Potential complainants are referred to OCR. Responsible for ensuring that grantees have met General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) requirements.	USED Office for Civil Rights Education and Title VI Race, Color, or National Origin Discrimination Overview (ed.gov)
Student Support Services	Responsible for ensuring that grantees have met General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) requirements.	Race, Color, or National Origin Discrimination Overview (ed.gov)
Finance	This Division does not collect, review, or provide oversight of Civil Rights complaints related to Environmental Justice or Title VI violations.	N/A
Communications	This Division does not collect, review, or provide oversight of Civil Rights complaints related to Environmental Justice or Title VI violations.	N/A
Operations	This Division does not collect, review, or provide oversight of Civil Rights complaints related to Environmental Justice or Title VI violations.	N/A
Data Management & Analysis	This Division does not collect, review, or provide oversight of Civil Rights complaints related to Environmental Justice or Title VI violations.	N/A
Legal	Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination in any/all federally funded programs. The alleged discrimination would be investigated by USED's OCR. Legal would be the contact if AOE were investigated by OCR. Legal does not track potential Title VI complaints distinct from other civil-rights related complaints. OCR does not require tracking of complaints.	N/A

Division	Program	Link
Regulatory Compliance	Postsecondary / State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA)	Complaint Resolution for Postsecondary Education (vermont.gov)

Contact Information

For questions, please contact Bob Donahue, Agency of Education at Bob.Donohue@vermont.gov.