



UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA
EXTENSION



Civil Rights Plan

Updated April 2025

INTRODUCTION

University of Georgia (UGA) Extension recognizes the importance of and is committed to the value of diversity and inclusion in the development and implementation of Extension programs among its staff, volunteers, and the citizens served. It is the policy of UGA Extension to provide equal employment opportunities and to offer all its programs and educational benefits to eligible participants without regard to age, color, disability, genetic information, national origin, race, religion, sex, or veteran status, or any other legally protected status. Education assistance will not be provided to any organization or group that excludes individuals because of their membership in a protected class. Written assurance from all non-governmental organizations and groups with whom UGA works, that they follow nondiscriminatory practices, is kept on file. UGA Extension is committed to the intent of Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the American's with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and the Civil Rights Act of 1991.

UGA Extension administration will:

- Promote the development of an employment environment that is supportive of equity and diversity principles.
- Ensure that organizational practices respect the social and cultural diversity contained within the organization; including faculty, staff, volunteers, advisory leadership councils, and the communities we serve.
- Ensure that all Extension employees receive training and strive to achieve the requirements in civil rights rules and regulations.
- Provide equal opportunity by actively identifying and remedying barriers to participation in programs and progression in employment.
- Expect a working and learning environment free from unlawful discrimination, including harassment.
- Comply with state and federal legislation and university policies on non-discrimination and equal opportunity.
- Provide unfettered access to complaint resolution avenues, free from retaliation, for all employees and program participants.
- Ensure that all Extension employees understand equal opportunity guidelines and are in compliance with USDA-NIFA and university guidelines.

All faculty and staff are expected to be knowledgeable and skilled in implementing equal opportunity requirements in Extension programs. This plan was developed in order to provide important resources relevant to civil rights compliance for UGA Extension. It is intended as an operational guide to provide information on existing civil rights laws and University policies. Most importantly, this plan will help Extension faculty, staff and volunteers understand their roles and responsibilities in accomplishing civil rights obligations and goals.

LEGISLATION, EXECUTIVE ORDERS, & REGULATIONS

TITLE VI OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964

Specifies that no person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

TITLE VII OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964

Makes it illegal to discriminate against someone on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, or sex. The law also makes it illegal to retaliate against a person because the person complained about discrimination, filed a charge of discrimination, or participated in an employment discrimination investigation or lawsuit.

TITLE IX OF THE EDUCATION AMENDMENTS OF 1972

Prohibits discrimination against individuals in federally-funded programs or activities, and in every aspect of employment because of their gender.

REHABILITATION ACT OF 1974, SECTION 504

States that no otherwise qualified individual with a disability, solely by reason of his or her disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT OF 1990 (ADA)

Title I of the Act states that no entity shall discriminate against a qualified individual with a disability, by reason of such disability, in job application procedures, hiring, advancement, discharge, compensation, training and other terms, conditions and privileges of employment.

Title II of the Act states that no qualified individual with a disability shall, by reason of such disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs or activities of a public entity, or be subjected to discrimination by any such entity.

AGE DISCRIMINATION ACT OF 1975

Prohibits discrimination on the basis of age in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance.

CIVIL RIGHTS RESTORATION ACTS OF 1987 AND 1991

1987 Act specified that recipients of federal funds must comply with civil rights laws in all areas, not just in the particular program or activity that received federal funding.

1991 Act provided the right to trial by jury on discrimination claims and introduced the possibility of emotional distress damages and limited the amount that a jury could award.

EXECUTIVE ORDER 11246

Prohibits employment discrimination based upon race, color, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation or national origin by contractors and subcontractors that receive federal contracts, grants, loans, insurance, or guarantee.

EXECUTIVE ORDER 13166 LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY (LEP)

Requires federal agencies or those receiving federal financial assistance to examine the services they provide and identify any need for services to those with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) to ensure that LEP applicants and beneficiaries have meaningful access to the services.

PROHIBITION AGAINST NATIONAL ORIGIN DISCRIMINATION AFFECTING PERSONS WITH LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY IN PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED BY USDA

Establishes the policies and procedures for ensuring that persons with limited English proficiency (LEP) have meaningful access to programs and activities conducted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture its agencies and instrumentalities.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PUBLIC NOTIFICATION POLICY

Enhances customer awareness of the USDA nondiscrimination policy and other pertinent information ensuring broad dissemination of the policy to the public.

NONDISCRIMINATION IN PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES RECEIVING FEDERAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FROM USDA

Ensures compliance with and enforcement of the prohibition against discrimination in programs and activities funded in whole or in part by the USDA.

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA POLICIES & REGULATIONS

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND NON- DISCRIMINATION POLICY

UGA is committed to maintaining a fair and respectful environment for living, work and study. To that end, and in accordance with applicable laws and policies, UGA prohibits any member of the faculty, staff, administration, student body, or visitors to campus, whether they be guests, patrons, independent contractors, or clients, from harassing and/or discriminating against any other member of the UGA community because of that person's age, color, disability, genetic information, national origin, race, religion, sex, or veteran status, and is an Equal Opportunity Institution. Incidents of harassment and discrimination will be met with appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal or debarment from UGA.

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS IN EMPLOYMENT

Pursuant to applicable federal and state laws, including Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, Executive Order 11246, as amended, Revised Order 4, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, the Equal Pay Act of 1963, the Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974, Title II of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008, and The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as such laws may be revised or amended, with their respective applicable implementing regulations, including Title 34, Subtitle B, Part 106 of the Code of Federal Regulations (collectively, "applicable laws") and to applicable policies ("policies") of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia and the President of The University of Georgia ("UGA"), UGA continues its affirmative implementation of equal opportunity to employees, students, covered contractors and vendors, and applicants for employment, admission, or contractor or vendor status. UGA will act in matters of employment, admissions, programs, services, and activities free of prohibited bias with regard to age, color, disability, genetic information, national origin, race, religion, sex, nor veteran status, and is an Equal Opportunity Institution.

Accordingly, UGA will not discriminate in employment, admissions, programs, services, or activities with regard to any position for which the applicant, employee, or student is qualified and will make reasonable accommodation for disabilities. UGA provides this certification of equal employment opportunity as a federal fund recipient, contractor, and vendor or supplier to federal contractors and requires like certification from non-exempt vendors, suppliers, and sub contractors.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY ACCESSIBILITY

UGA commits to ensuring equal access to information and communication technology ("ICT") by all, including those with disabilities in all its educational and administrative services, programs and

activities in compliance with federal law. Equal access is met when individuals with disabilities are able to independently acquire the same information, engage in the same interactions, and enjoy the same services in an equally effective and integrated manner as individuals without disabilities, with substantially equivalent ease of use, unless doing so creates an undue burden on the University. ICT refers to information technology and other equipment, systems, technologies, or processes, for which the principal function is the creation, manipulation, storage, display, receipt, or transmission of electronic data and information, as well as any associated content. This policy statement is in accordance with the *Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990* (Pub. L. 101-336) (“ADA”), ADA Amendments Act of 2008 (Pub. L. 110-325) (“ADAAA”), and Section 508 of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended*.

EXTENSION LEADERSHIP SYSTEM

The Extension Leadership System (ELS) in Georgia is a statewide network of county-based volunteers working to support, and advocate for, Extension programming at all levels. All County Extension Agents assemble and work with a Program Development Team (PDT) designed to support the work they do in their respective Extension program area (4-H Youth Development, Family and Consumer Sciences, and/or Agriculture and Natural Resources). In addition to the PDT's, an overall county council serves to coordinate efforts for advocacy and support of the total county Cooperative Extension program. To ensure compliance with civil rights requirements, Extension Leadership System and Program Development Teams, as well as other community groups are used to provide input on community issues and needs. These identified issues and needs form the basis for Extension programming. Identifying individuals, which includes those that have been historically underrepresented, and involving them in the needs assessment process is important to ensuring equitable program design and delivery of Extension services. Strategies to secure citizen input include: surveys, focus groups, Delphi technique, and nominal group technique. Program planning also relies a great deal on other Extension sponsored groups such as program committees, specialized committees and issue committees, associations, etc. to provide program planning advice. It is important that Extension recruits and engages a representative set of members from the community to serve as members of these committees. Membership composition of each advisory leadership council and committees is reviewed annually to ensure all are representative of the community at large.

It is the responsibility of the County Extension Coordinator to ensure diverse nominations are solicited for all program development teams, community groups and committees.

POTENTIAL AUDIENCE

Compliance with civil rights laws necessitate that potential audiences are determined at the time of program development to ensure information and educational programming are of interest to and appropriate for protected and underrepresented audiences as well as majority audiences. The potential audience for an Extension program is persons or groups in a defined geographic area who might be interested in or benefit from an Extension educational program. Potential audience numbers are estimates that can come from a combination of demographic data sources and Extension educators' own knowledge and research about the defined geographic area. Data on the racial, ethnic, and gender of the potential audience is reported in the Civil Rights Reports section of the Georgia Counts Reporting System (GaCounts) and is used to determine compliance with civil rights requirements.

AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES – COMMERCIAL AUDIENCE

This audience is comprised of operators, farmers, and producers who are involved in commercial farming operations to generate income. To determine the potential audience numbers, the resource that should be utilized is the most recent Census of Agriculture. The National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) conducts the Census of Agriculture, which is a collection of information concerning all areas of farming operations, including operator characteristics www.agcensus.usda.gov. Other data such as statistics from commodity groups can be utilized to determine the potential audience, but such resources must be valid and documented.

AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES - OTHER

This audience consists of all those that would benefit from agriculture and natural resources educational information, other than commercial activities. Potential audience members include homeowners, small garden owners, etc. in the community. To determine the potential audience for this group, the most recent U.S. Census should be utilized www.census.gov/quickfacts.

FAMILY & CONSUMER SCIENCES

Individuals who will benefit from nutrition, health and wellness, finances, child care, parenting, and other areas that will enhance the quality of life and well-being are the potential audience for family and consumer science. To determine the number for this audience, the most recent U.S. Census should be utilized www.census.gov/quickfacts.

4 - H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

The targeted audience in this area is youth ages 5-19. To determine the potential audience, U.S. Census or local school enrollment records or other community level data can be utilized. This information can be obtained at the local level or on the GA Department of Education website https://app3.doe.k12.ga.us/ows-bin/owa/fte_pack_ethnicsex.entry_form

REFLECTIVE PARTICIPATION

The overall civil rights goal for Extension programs is to meet parity. An Extension program is in parity when the program participation reflects the demographics of the potential service population. Requirements for reflective participation is also required for all advisory councils and committees. For example, if there are 20% minorities in a county, and an Extension program has an overall participation rate of 20% minorities, then the Extension program is in parity. A program will be considered to have a balanced participation rate if the number of clientele is within 80% of parity. For example, if a county-wide 4-H club has 10% Hispanic participants and the county has a 20% Hispanic population, your 4-H club is at 50% of parity [(10/20) X 100]. Because the level of parity is less than 80%, all reasonable efforts will need to be made increase participation by underrepresented groups.

$$\text{Parity} = \frac{\text{Percent of Participants}}{\text{Percent of Population}} \times 100$$

If parity \geq 80 then compliant; If parity $<$ 80 then not compliant

OUTREACH EFFORTS

All reasonable efforts consist of a series of approaches that are required of Extension staff to solicit participation of underrepresented groups in Extension programs and the Extension Leadership System. These are documented efforts to target and solicit the participation of individuals from particular underrepresented groups. A sincere effort must be made to encourage participation by minorities or the underrepresented; it is not enough to simply announce the program is open to all. Steps to achieve balanced membership include:

1. Use of all available mass media, including radio, newspaper, and television, to inform potential program recipients of opportunities to participate.
2. Personal letters and flyers addressed to defined potential recipients inviting them to participate, including dates and places of meetings or other planned activities.
3. Personal visits by the county extension staff member(s) to a representative number of defined potential recipients in the geographically defined area to encourage participation.

All reasonable efforts must be documented by Extension personnel. Each County Extension Office should maintain an all reasonable efforts file that contains examples of:

- Flyers, press releases, personal letters, invitation letters and other outreach correspondence and program brochures sent to targeted individuals and organizations with notations of where and when the information was sent;
- Notes about all special targeted efforts to reach people from underrepresented group; and
- Notes from meetings and phone conversations that demonstrate your outreach to people from underrepresented groups.

Examples of memos and documentation that would satisfy civil rights documentation requirements:

- "Telephone contacts were made with these potential Hispanic participants..."
- "Went to African American church, AME Episcopal Church, and shared information about our parenting program, passed out brochures ..."
- "Public announcement about 4-H clubs made on 106.7 minority radio station..."
- "Personally invited 10 Asian seniors to Master Gardener Open House and discussed the programs with them."

RECOGNIZING POTENTIAL BARRIERS

Increasing participation by underrepresented clientele requires designing and delivering programs to overcome any barriers that might exist and interfere with participation of the underrepresented. Such barriers can include language barriers, cultural barriers, economic barriers, and/or access barriers. Each county shall document the annual efforts made to eliminate potential barriers.

LANGUAGE BARRIERS

Executive Order 13166, "Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP)", requires that Extension take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access for LEP persons to our programs. Agents must assess the county in regard to LEP populations and their needs. If a county has a potential audience that includes a significant population of non-English speaking participants, the use of an alternative language when offering programs may be required. This can include translation of materials into other languages. An interactive mapping tool to determine the concentration of and languages spoken by LEP individuals in a community can be found at <https://www.lep.gov/maps/>.

CULTURAL BARRIERS

Cultural barriers are those conditions that can limit or even exclude participation of racial, minority, religious and ethnic groups. Some of these barriers may exclude clientele from initially attending a program or activity; or may discourage individuals from attending other programs or activities. Examples of such cultural barriers can include: scheduling events that conflict with major religious/ethnic holidays or events; having programs or events in potentially uncomfortable locations such as churches or locations where minority groups were previously rejected or had unpleasant experiences; or using program announcements/promotional materials that only display white clientele or participants of a particular gender or ethnicity.

ECONOMIC BARRIERS

Economic barriers are those conditions of an economic nature that can limit or exclude participation of disadvantaged, racial, minority, and ethnic groups. Examples include: programs or activities that require extensive purchases of equipment or supplies; programs that involve fees, meals, and travel; and programs that are conducted at certain times of the day or certain days of the week.

ACCESS BARRIERS

Access barriers are the factors in a person's environment that, through their absence or presence, limit functioning and create disability. These include aspects such as: a physical environment that is not accessible, lack of relevant assistive technology (assistive, adaptive, and rehabilitative devices), negative attitudes of people towards disability, and services, systems and policies that are either nonexistent or that hinder the involvement of all people with a health condition in all areas of life. Each county shall complete an accessibility self-assessment of Extension facilities.

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS

Federal law provides that programs and facilities must be accessible (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act). The federal regulations state that programs: "shall provide auxiliary aids to persons with impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills, where necessary to afford such persons an equal opportunity to benefit from the services." As such, reasonable accommodations must be made for those individuals with disabilities to participate in Extension programs. There is no clear definition of reasonable accommodation, but it does include things like holding programs in accessible facilities, providing sign language interpreters for the hearing impaired, and providing materials in large print or audio. In order for arrangements to be made to provide reasonable accommodation, Extension is entitled to establish a time limit for special requests. You may require that requests for accommodation are made up to 3 weeks prior to the program date. This is achieved by advertising the program with the accommodation statement and timeframe for making accommodation requests. The office delivering the program is expected to bear the cost of any special needs that are requested. It is recommended that the following statement be included on all program materials and announcements: ***University of Georgia is an Equal Opportunity Institution. If you need reasonable accommodation or language access services, contact the ____ County Extension Office at (phone number and email address), at least three weeks prior to the program date.***

Extension workplaces and facilities are required to be accessible to those individuals with disabilities. Facilities assessment must be used to determine the accessibility of existing facilities. A sample facility checklist can be found at <https://www.ada.gov/racheck.pdf>. If a facility is not accessible due to physical barriers, then programs and services must be provided through an alternative method or at an alternative location.

All publicly available electronic resources including, but not limited to, websites, social media sites, e-learning, documents, and videos developed and/or maintained by Extension must be accessible in order to provide equal access and equal opportunity to people with diverse abilities. Examples of electronic accessibility include images on websites should include equivalent alternative text in the markup/code, text transcripts provided with all podcasts to make the audio information accessible to people who are deaf or hard of hearing, and all videos must include closed captioning.

BIAS FREE COMMUNICATION

Bias typically involves a leaning or predisposition on an issue that may inhibit being neutral when communicating with others. When bias exists in attitudes, it is often reflected in the language and the way in which individuals interact with each other. Language can have a significant impact on the quality of our interactions. Many times, we do not intend to exclude or offend others by the words we choose. We may simply lack information about, and sensitivity to, certain words or phrases. Being aware and mindful of our language, both written and oral, can help create a supportive and inclusive climate. The key to effective bias-free communication is treating all people with respect and consideration regardless of characteristics such as age, gender, gender identity, race, color, religion, national origin, height, weight, familial status, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, or political preference.

SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE

The United States Constitution Bill of Rights First Amendment requires the separation of church and state. Therefore, government is restricted to secular purposes and must remain neutral and not advance nor impede religion. According to USDA and NIFA policies and guidelines, all Extension programs and activities must operate in a manner that is consistent with the First Amendment. Extension faculty and staff may do educational programs for religious groups, but may not carryout programs or projects which advance or impede religion; conduct or incorporate into events any religious service or practice (for example prayers); or adopt creeds that include sectarian references or language, (e.g. ideals of Christian life). Volunteers with Extension programs, such as 4-H, Master Gardeners, and EFNEP function under the direct supervision of Extension faculty/staff and sponsorship of the University and are therefore similarly obligated to uphold constitutional principles. Extension events may be held in religious/sectarian facilities provided that attendance is open to persons of all beliefs.

LOCAL PARTNERS

UGA Extension does not discriminate in the treatment of individuals, in admission or access to its programs and activities, in the provision of services, or in employment. As institutions receiving federal financial assistance through the U.S. Department of Agriculture, UGA Extension cannot participate with or partner with organizations that discriminate on the basis of any of the legally prohibited categories of discrimination, based on civil rights laws. Signed organization non-discrimination forms, club non-discrimination forms, and/or MOU between County Government and UGA Extension should be maintained for each local partner.

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

Public notification is the core of our civil rights efforts. Extension must take the necessary steps to inform the public that it does not discriminate, adheres to all civil rights laws, and its services are available to everyone. In addition, public notification is used to advertise, particularly to minorities, the underrepresented and underserved, as well as to the disabled, all of Extension's programs and their benefits. Public notification efforts include: having a nondiscrimination statement on all documents, brochures, flyers, announcements, etc., and prominently displaying the Green USDA "And Justice for All" poster in public areas and all meeting rooms where programs or activities are being conducted by Extension. The following statement has been approved and must be included on Extension letterhead, publications, job announcements, program announcements, and other printed material.

The University of Georgia College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences (working cooperatively with Fort Valley State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the counties of Georgia) offers its educational programs, assistance, and materials to all people without regard to age, color, disability, genetic information, national origin, race, religion, sex, or veteran status and is an Equal Opportunity Institution.

The more comprehensive non-discrimination statement is preferred; however, the abbreviated statement below may be used when space is limited. The abbreviated statement cannot be used when announcing a specific meeting or activity.

An Equal Opportunity Institution

PROGRAM PARTICIPANT DATA

Collection of demographic data on direct contacts is a tool used to evaluate the level of participation by various clientele groups in Extension educational programs and activities. Collected data must include the race, ethnicity and sex for all program participants. Contact data must be entered into the Georgia Counts Reporting System (GaCounts) for all face-to-face contacts made by Extension faculty and staff. Contact data is broken into two categories:

Face-to-Face (direct) contact refers to the coming together of two or more individuals face-to-face to participate in an educational experience or to conduct Extension related business. Contacts occur in conferences, consultations, workshops, seminars, meetings, live video presentations/meetings, field days, and demonstration activities, etc. in which the mission and business of Extension is carried out. Race, ethnicity, and gender data must be collected and reported for all face to face contacts.

Non-Face-to-Face (indirect) contact include contacts made via telephone, e-mail, newsletters, fact sheets, and pamphlets. Indirect contacts includes mass media contacts such as newspaper articles, television or radio shows, or social media activity. Collection of race, ethnicity, and gender data is not required for non-face-to-face contacts, only the number of contacts is reported.

Pursuant to federal guidelines for the collection of demographic information for direct contacts, Extension faculty and staff should utilize the following two methods:

Participant Self-Reporting Method: This method is the self-identification by the clientele. This is the most preferred method for collecting demographic information as it is the most accurate since the clientele are disclosing their racial-ethnic and gender information. This self-reporting format is accomplished by utilizing attendance/sign-in- sheet records or by

using self-report paper and pencil surveys. Participants should be informed that demographic data is requested solely for the purpose of determining compliance with federal civil rights laws, and their response will not affect eligibility to participate in Extension programs. If a participant does not provide the requested demographic information, the Extension staff member may observe and record the participants race, ethnicity, and gender information.

Observer-Collected Method: The second method for collection of direct contacts is called the Observer-Collected Method. Using this method, an Extension staff member collects the demographic data using direct observation of the clientele. If circumstances do not allow for the preferred method of self-reporting by participants, the staff member can choose the race, ethnicity, and gender for each participant.

Federal reporting requires use of the following race categories:

- American Indian or Alaska Native. A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America), and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment.
- Asian. A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam.
- Black or African American. A person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa.
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander. A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.
- White. A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa.
- Two or More Races. A person identifying as having multiple racial origins.
- Other/Unidentified. Individuals who choose not to identify, or who identify as a race other than the federally designated categories

Ethnicity is to be reported separate from race. Hispanic or Latino is defined as a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.

The data standard for Sex is male and female. Program participants also have the option to self-report sex as “other/unidentified”.

COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

UGA Extension is committed to compliance with applicable federal, state, and local rules and regulations pertaining to equal access to our programs and employment opportunities to all. This is consistent with UGA’s prohibition of discrimination against employees, students, or applicants on the basis of age, color, disability, genetic information, national origin, race, religion, sex, or veteran status. Discrimination or harassment is addressed by UGA’s Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination Policy.

CLIENT COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

Any individual, group of program participants, or potential program participants may file a civil rights complaint. Complainants have three options for filing complaints: informal complaint procedure, formal complaint procedure, and notification sent directly to USDA. The public is told

of this right through the use of the USDA "And Justice for All" poster. This poster must be visibly displayed in all Extension offices. The USDA poster advises participants that they can file complaints directly with the Office of Civil Rights at USDA which investigates and resolves complaints of discrimination in programs operated or assisted by USDA, including Cooperative Extension programs.

Extension encourages, but does not require, clients to try to resolve complaints with the Extension employee providing the program or service at the local level. When a client voices a concern about possible discrimination in a program, the employee receiving the complaint should listen carefully and not argue with the client or respond defensively. As mandatory reporters, UGA employees will bring all complaints to the Equal Opportunity Office for action. The client should also be made aware that they also have the right to file a formal complaint with the Associate Dean of UGA Extension or send notification of the complaint directly to the USDA. If you have knowledge of or believe you have experienced discrimination, harassment or retaliation that is prohibited under the University's Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment (NDAH) Policy, please submit the complaint to the Equal Opportunity Office at (706) 542-7912 or ugaeoo@uga.edu or by completing the [NDAH Complaint Form](#).

UGA EMPLOYEE COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

UGA employees may file formal complaints for violations of the UGA Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment (NDAH) Policy for acts of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation.

Discrimination is decision making based on age, color, disability, genetic information, national origin, race, religion, sex, or veteran status.

Harassment is any unwelcome verbal or physical conduct based upon age, color, disability, genetic information, national origin, race, religion, sex, or veteran status that either creates a quid pro quo situation or a hostile environment.

Retaliation is any adverse action (including intimidation, threats or coercion) against an individual because that individual engaged in a protected activity.

Any individual with a complaint of discrimination, harassment or retaliation should follow the UGA Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Complaint Procedure. If you have knowledge of or believe you have experienced discrimination, harassment or retaliation that is prohibited under the University's Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment (NDAH) Policy, please submit the complaint to the Equal Opportunity Office at (706) 542-7912 or ugaeoo@uga.edu or by completing the [NDAH Complaint Form](#). The EOO will promptly respond to all reports and complaints of discrimination, harassment or retaliation and appropriate action will be taken as expeditiously as possible. While confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, care will be taken to protect the complainant's identity, when requested. Complaints can also be made anonymously, but this may limit the extent to which the complaint can be investigated

Substantiated instances of discrimination, harassment and retaliation, as defined above, are violations of university policy and will not be tolerated by UGA. Appropriate corrective measures will be instituted for violations. Such corrective measures will be designed to stop the discrimination, harassment and/or retaliation and to prevent future violations. Corrective measures may involve disciplinary action or termination. Disciplinary action for a violation of this policy will be the responsibility of the Director of UGA Extension, in accordance with applicable disciplinary procedures for employees.

Employees are encouraged, and should feel free, to seek assistance, information, and guidance within UGA from any of these resources:

- Immediate Supervisor
- Extension Administration
- Equal Opportunity Office
- Human Resources - Employee Relations

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

All Extension employees shall have equal access to professional development and programmatic training without regard to race, color, sex (including sexual harassment and pregnancy), sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity or national origin, religion, age, genetic information, disability, veteran status, or any other legally protected status.

UGA provides tuition assistance to employees through the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) for eligible full-time faculty and staff for up to three courses per year, provided that such enrollment does not interfere with the employee's normal employment obligations.

TRAINING

It is expected that employees routinely participate in civil rights training. New employees are required to complete an Extension new employee civil rights training module within the first three months of employment as part of the new hire on-boarding process. Documentation of the completion of such training is maintained by the Office of Learning and Organizational Development through the Extension Testing System.

In addition, all employees are required to complete an approved training program designed to educate employees about their rights and responsibilities as to policies regarding equal opportunity and non-discrimination within the first six months of employment and documented for completion. Employees must provide their names and university identification numbers for record-keeping purposes when participating in approved training programs.

Employees will annually complete an online civil rights refresher. Other opportunities for civil rights training will be provided annually as part of district meetings, county staff meetings, in-service training events, annual conference, newsletters, memos, etc. County civil rights files should contain records of all civil rights training completed and meetings held related to civil rights.

Volunteers, advisory council members, and club/group leaders shall also be provided civil rights training so they understand civil rights laws, Extension's responsibilities in programming, what their roles are and what they can do to help Extension in their civil rights goals. The County Extension Director is responsible for ensuring volunteers, advisory council members, and club/group leaders receive civil rights training. The County Extension Coordinator shall maintain documentation of all training conducted in the county civil rights file.

COMPLIANCE MONITORING

UGA Extension has an internal civil rights compliance review process that assures routine review. There are three different levels of civil rights reviews. These include annual GaCounts data entry and county compliance reporting, periodic on-site reviews, and federal reviews.

The annual compliance review requires demographic data for participants, groups, and advisory leadership to be entered into GaCounts and All Reasonable Effort reports be completed for advisory groups and clubs not in parity. The County Extension Coordinator must submit an Annual Civil Rights Compliance Checklist to the District Extension Director. With the submission of this checklist, the County Extension Coordinator attests that faculty and staff within the county are abiding by civil rights requirements.

An on-site review is conducted at each county office by the civil rights review team once every four years on a rotating basis and is a more in-depth discussion about civil rights compliance. The civil rights review team must submit a completed On-Site Compliance Review Report to the County Extension Coordinator and the Director of County Operations within 45 days of each on-site review.

Federal reviews are conducted in approximately 10 states annually. The Civil Rights Compliance Reviews produce information needed for NIFA to submit civil rights reports to NIFA administration and USDA on a regular basis. NIFA also manages complaints filed by citizens who believe they have been discriminated against based on Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 in the application of state programs funded by NIFA.

MAILING LISTS POLICY

UGA, as a constituent institution of the University System of Georgia is open and responsive to information requests from the public and the news media. UGA Extension is committed to a policy of openness, honesty and cooperation with members of the public and the news media.

Mailing lists are maintained for the purposes of emailed and mailed communications. Appropriate management of these lists is important because Extension has a responsibility to those people about whom information has been collected, to protect the information and appropriately steward its use. Management of mailing lists is also necessary to ensure they are used only for purposes appropriate to a publicly-funded organization. As a USDA cooperating organization, Extension also has the responsibility to ensure lists are created and updated with the intent of providing equal access to information by the appropriate inclusion of racial/ethnic minorities, members of both sexes and the disabled.

All mailing lists developed by Extension faculty and staff, in the course of their employment responsibilities, are reserved solely for use in furthering the professional and educational goals of Extension and its programs. Lists may not be used for personal purposes or to express personal opinions unrelated to the Extension-related work. Communications that may be interpreted as inappropriate to a public organization or workplace, including expressions of religious belief, political commitment and Extension business are prohibited. Use of Extension lists by Extension faculty and staff to conduct commercial transactions are prohibited. Some federal programs (ASCS, WIC) carry with them assurances of confidentiality from a federal law or administrative rule.

To seek public records from UGA Extension, submit a written request to the Director of Extension County Operations, 111 Conner Hall, University of Georgia, Athens, GA 30602 or email to coopext@uga.edu.