

Bulletin

March 30, 2006

Minnesota Department of Human Services □ 444 Lafayette Rd. □ St. Paul, MN 55155

OF INTEREST TO

- County Commissioners
- County Directors
- CEOs of State Operated Services
- Tribal Human Services Directors
- County staff in charge of civil rights activities and staff with client contact
- Tribal human services staff in charge of civil rights activities and staff with client contact
- SOS staff in charge of civil rights activities and staff with client contact

ACTION

Please supplement previous bulletin with these additional instructions and complete by due date.

DUE DATE

Friday, May 26, 2006

DHS Issues Corrections to Bulletin #06-89-01 on Comprehensive Civil Rights Plans for County Human Service Agencies**TOPIC**

Additional instructions for county human service agencies to complete comprehensive civil rights plans

PURPOSE

Inform county agencies of additional instructions for civil rights plans and provide them with explanations

CONTACT

Joann daSilva, Civil Rights Coordinator
Minnesota Department of Human Services
Office for Equal Opportunity
Elmer L. Andersen Human Services Building
540 Cedar Street, P.O. Box 64997
St. Paul, MN 55164-0997
(651) 431-3034 (Voice)
(651) 431-3041 (TDD)
(651) 431-7444 (Fax)
joann.dasilva@state.mn.us (email)

SIGNED

DENNIS W. ERICKSON
Assistant Commissioner
Finance and Management Operations

INTRODUCTION

On March 2, 2006, the Department of Human Services (DHS) issued Bulletin #06-89-01 to county human service agencies to provide instructions for updating their civil rights plans from 1995 into comprehensive civil rights plans. Many counties have already begun this process.

This bulletin supplements Bulletin #06-89-01 by providing additional instructions on specific requirements not addressed in the earlier bulletin. County agencies should read this bulletin in conjunction with Bulletin #06-89-01 to complete your comprehensive civil rights plans by the May 26, 2006 deadline.

#1 ADD ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES TO WRITTEN COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

County civil rights plans must include a written complaint resolution procedure. Existing county complaint procedures may or may not already include the names and addresses of state and federal enforcement agencies where complainants may file civil rights complaints if they choose not to file with DHS or their county human service agency. All complaint procedures must include the names and addresses of the enforcement agencies listed below. The enforcement agencies may be introduced into the text of your complaint procedure by using the heading *Enforcement Agencies*.

The enforcement agencies are: Minnesota Department of Human Rights; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office for Civil Rights; and U.S. Department of Agriculture for the Food Stamp Program.

Minnesota Department of Human Rights
190 E. Fifth Street
St. Paul, MN 55101
(800) 657-3704 (Voice)
(651) 296-1283 (TTY/TDD)

Office for Civil Rights
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Region V
233 N. Michigan Avenue, Suite 240
Chicago, IL 60601
(312) 886-2359 (Voice)
(312) 353-5693 (TTY/TDD)

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)
Director, Office of Civil Rights
Room 326-W, Whitten Building
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410
(202) 720-5964 (Voice and TTY/TDD)

#2 CLARIFY DIFFERING INFORMATION ON PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS

In Bulletin #06-89-01, some of the instructions under Step 3 (page 3 of the bulletin) address the protected characteristics that must be included in each county's equal opportunity policy (second paragraph under Step 3). These protected characteristics are: race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, political beliefs and disability. This instruction is accurate, so you may follow it as it appears in Bulletin #06-89-01.

Attachment D in Bulletin #06-89-01, however, includes some differing information. Attachment D is entitled *Checklist for a Model Civil Rights Plan*. The fifth bullet lists all the protected characteristics that may conceivably be included in county equal opportunity policies based on state and federal laws. Three of these protected characteristics are not included in Step 3 of Bulletin #06-89-01, they are sexual orientation, creed and public assistance status. Along with the other protections mentioned above, these additional three make up the protected statuses under the public services provisions of the Minnesota Human Rights Act.

You **may** include these three additional protections in your agency's equal opportunity policy because to do so would be consistent with state law. However, you are **not required** to include them because they would not be enforceable protections under the federal civil rights laws enforced by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office for Civil Rights and the U.S. Department of Agriculture civil rights division. If you do include them, and an applicant/client files a complaint with your agency under one of these bases, the complainant **may** have to be referred to the Minnesota Department of Human Rights for action on his/her complaint.

COMPLETION DATE

The completion date for your comprehensive civil rights plan is the same as in Bulletin #06-89-01: **Friday, May 26, 2006.**

CONTACT PERSON

If you have any questions about this bulletin, use the contact information from the front page to reach the DHS Civil Rights Coordinator, Joann daSilva.

SPECIAL NEEDS

This information is available in other forms to people with disabilities by contacting us at (651) 431-3040 (Voice), (651) 431-3041 (TDD) or through Minnesota Relay Service at (800) 627-3529 or (877) 627-3848 (Speech-to-Speech Relay Service).