



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

How do I file a complaint with the Office for Civil Rights at the U.S. Department of Education?

1. Anyone Can File a Complaint.

- ✿ If you believe that a
 - ✚ public school (including an alternative, charter, or magnet school)
 - ✚ a public or private college or university or vocational school, or
 - ✚ any other educational institution that receives federal fundshas discriminated against someone (including by not responding to harassment) on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age, you may file a complaint.
- ✿ The person or organization filing the complaint **does not need to be a victim** of the alleged discrimination but may complain on behalf of another person or group.

But if none of the individuals affected by the alleged discrimination wish to cooperate with OCR's investigation, sometimes OCR may not be able to pursue and resolve a complaint on the merits.

2. File Within 180 Days of the Discrimination.

- ✿ You must normally file within 180 calendar days of the date of the alleged discrimination.

3. Know All Your Options for Relief.

- ✿ If you are thinking of filing a complaint against an institution, you may want to find out about the institution's grievance process and use that process to resolve the issue.
- ✿ You **do not have to use** institutional grievance processes before filing a complaint with OCR. You can also file with both the school and OCR, but you must normally file the complaint with OCR within **60 days** after completion of the institutional grievance process.

4. File a Complaint by: Mail, Fax, E-mail, or Online.

Mail or Fax: Mail or fax a letter or use OCR's Discrimination Complaint Form available from one of [OCR's enforcement offices](#). In your correspondence, please include:

- Your name, address and, if possible (although not required), a telephone number where you may be reached during business hours;
 - Information about the person(s) or class of persons injured by the alleged discrimination (names of the injured person(s) are not required at this initial stage);
 - The name and location of the institution that committed the alleged discrimination;
 - A description of the alleged discrimination in enough detail to enable OCR to understand what happened, when it happened, and the basis for the alleged discrimination (i.e., race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age).
- ✿ E-mail: Or file a complaint using the following e-mail address: **ocr@ed.gov**. Use the same procedures as above.
 - ✿ Online: Or file a complaint using OCR's electronic complaint form at the following website: <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/complaintintro.html>.

REMEMBER: If you file a complaint against an institution, it **may not retaliate** against you or any person who has participated in any manner in an investigation or proceeding with OCR. If you believe that you have been retaliated against, you may file a complaint with OCR.

How do I file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights?

