**Section 10.220 Nondiscrimination**

a) No individual participating in any program or activity shall be discriminated against because of age, race, color, religious belief, political affiliation, sex, marital status, national origin or handicap.

b) No direct payment for goods and services provided shall be made to any agency, institution, organization or individual vendor that initiates or continues prohibited discriminatory practices.

c) Information regarding the Department's nondiscrimination policy shall be made available to all applicants at the time of application, all recipients upon request, all vendors receiving direct payment from the Department and all other interested parties as necessary.

d) Any aggrieved person may file a written complaint of alleged discriminatory conditions or practices encountered in the Department's programs and activities.

e) No individual or household applying for or participating in the food stamp program administered by the Department shall be discriminated against because of age, race, color, sex, handicaps, religious creed, national origin, or political beliefs. The individual/household is not to be discriminated against in any aspect of program administration, including but not limited to the certification of household, the issuance of benefits, the conduct of fair or fraud hearings, or the conduct of any other program service.

1) Individuals who believe that they have been subject to discrimination, as described in subsection (e) of this Section, may file a written complaint. When an individual expresses an interest in filing a discrimination complaint, the Department is to:

A) explain the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) complaint procedures (the procedure is outlined in 7 CFR 272.6(c)); and

B) explain the Department's complaint procedure; and

C) advise the individual of the right to file a complaint in either or both the USDA and/or Department complaint systems.

2) Information regarding the Department's nondiscrimination policy is to be made available to all households at the time of application, to any household upon request, and to all other interested parties as necessary.

(Source: Amended at 28 Ill. Reg. 5650, effective March 22, 2004)