



## OFFICE OF EXTERNAL CIVIL RIGHTS COMPLIANCE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

January 24, 2025

**In Reply Refer To:**

EPA Complaint No. 07X-24-R9

Jackie Contreras, Director  
Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services  
12860 Crossroads Parkway South  
City of Industry, CA 91746-3411  
jackiecontreras@dpss.lacounty.gov

**RE: Acknowledgement and Rejection of Administrative Complaint**

Dear Director Contreras:

This letter serves to notify you that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Office of Environmental Justice and External Civil Rights, Office of External Civil Rights Compliance (OECRC), received an administrative complaint involving Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services (LADPSS) on August 16, 2024. The Complaint alleges LADPSS discriminated against a client/individual based on national origin by failing to provide assistance for the Complainant's client to participate in and receive the GROW/START benefits and services to which the individual was entitled. The Complaint further alleges that LADPSS retaliated against the individual when they complained about DPSS's discriminatory practices. For the reasons described below, OECRC is rejecting the complaint and administratively closing this matter as of the date of this letter.

Pursuant to EPA's nondiscrimination regulation, OECRC conducts a preliminary review of administrative complaints to determine acceptance, rejection, or referral to the appropriate Federal agency. *See* 40 C.F.R. § 7.120(d)(1). To be accepted for investigation, a complaint must meet the jurisdictional requirements described in EPA's nondiscrimination regulation. First, the complaint must be in writing. *See* 40 C.F.R. § 7.120(b)(1). Second, it must describe an alleged discriminatory act that, if true, may violate EPA's nondiscrimination regulation (i.e., an alleged discriminatory act based on race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability). *Id.* Third, it must be filed within 180 days of the alleged discriminatory act. *See* 40 C.F.R. § 7.120(b)(2). Finally, the complaint must be filed against an applicant for, or recipient of, EPA financial assistance

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that allegedly committed the discriminatory act. *See* 40 C.F.R. § 7.15.

In general, OECRC will accept, reject, or refer a complaint after considering jurisdictional factors discussed above. After careful consideration, OECRC is rejecting the complaint for investigation because it does not satisfy the jurisdictional requirements. DPSS is not a recipient of EPA financial assistance. Therefore, OECRC is rejecting the complaint for investigation and closing this matter as of the date of this letter.

EPA's regulation prohibits applicants, recipients, and other persons from intimidating, threatening, coercing, or engaging in other discriminatory conduct against anyone because they have either acted or participated in an action to secure rights protected by the civil rights requirements that we enforce. *See* 40 C.F.R. § 7.100. Any individual alleging such harassment or intimidation may file a complaint with OECRC.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me by telephone at (202) 564-8796 or by email at [hoang.anhthu@epa.gov](mailto:hoang.anhthu@epa.gov).

Sincerely,



Anhthu Hoang  
Acting Director  
Office of External Civil Rights Compliance  
Office of Environmental Justice and External Civil Rights

cc: Ariadne Goerke  
Deputy Associate General Counsel  
U.S. EPA Civil Rights & Finance Law Office

Cheree Peterson  
Deputy Civil Rights Official  
Deputy Regional Administrator  
U.S. EPA Region 9

Suzanne Andrews  
Regional Counsel  
U.S. EPA Region 9