



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Office of the
Assistant Secretary
for Civil Rights

1400 Independence
Avenue SW

Washington, DC
20250

RELIGIOUS EXEMPTIONS UNDER TITLE IX OF THE EDUCATION AMENDMENTS OF 1972

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (“Title IX”) is a federal law that prohibits sex discrimination by educational institutions receiving financial assistance from the federal government, including USDA. Although this prohibition applies to a wide array of public and private schools at the K-12 and the college/university level, the law includes some exceptions, including one permitting an institution to be exempt on religious grounds if there is a conflict between Title IX and a school’s governing religious tenets.

Below are two basic questions and answers about Title IX Religious Exemptions. If your institution decides to seek USDA assurance of an exemption, please be sure to do so consistent with regulations (link below), and contact us at CR-INFO@usda.gov if you have questions:

1. Are religious educational institutions required to submit a written request to USDA in order to claim a Title IX Religious Exemption?

No. USDA regulations do not require a religious educational institution to submit a written request for a Title IX exemption in order to claim that exemption.

If, however, a religious educational institution wishes to seek USDA recognition of their religious exemption, it may do so through a written request under USDA regulations ([7 CFR 15a.205](#)). The written request seeks USDA assurance of exemption from applicable sections of USDA’s Title IX regulations. Those that have neither sought nor received prior written assurance from USDA may still invoke their exemption after USDA receives a Title IX discrimination complaint or initiates Title IX compliance efforts. Any action taken by USDA in a specific case will take account of all relevant facts and legal requirements, including, where applicable, Title IX’s Religious Exemption, the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, 42 USC 2000bb et seq., and any other applicable exemptions.

2. If an educational institution wishes to seek USDA assurance of religious exemption from Title IX provisions, where should that written request be sent?

All written requests for assurance of a religious exemption should be sent by mail to: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Center for Civil Rights Operations, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Stop 9407, Washington, DC 20250; or by email to: CR-INFO@usda.gov.

August 12, 2022