

METRIC

A-A-20035E

October 23, 2015

SUPERSEDING

A-A-20035D

June 13, 2008

COMMERCIAL ITEM DESCRIPTION

HOMINY GRITS, ENRICHED AND GRITS, WHOLE CORN

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has authorized the use of this Commercial Item Description (CID).

1. SCOPE. This CID covers enriched hominy grits and whole corn grits (grits), packed in commercially acceptable containers, suitable for use by Federal, State, local governments, and other interested parties; and as a component of operational rations. **Please note: This document does not guarantee purchase of this item by USDA.**¹

2. PURCHASER NOTES.

2.1 Purchasers *must specify* the following:

- Type(s), style(s), and flavor(s) of grits required (Sec. 3).
- When Child Nutrition (CN) grain/bread or ounce equivalent grains are requirements (Sec. 3).
- When analytical and physical requirements are different than specified (Sec. 7.1).
- When analytical and physical requirements need to be verified (Sec. 7.2).
- Manufacturer's/distributor's certification (Sec. 10.3) or USDA certification (Sec. 10.4).

2.2 Purchasers *may specify* the following:

- Agricultural practice(s) of grits required (Sec. 3).
- Food Defense (Sec. 10.1) and Manufacturer's quality assurance (Sec. 10.2). Purchaser may specify one of the following combinations: Sec. 10.1.1 with 10.2.1, or Sec. 10.1.2 with 10.2.2.
- Packaging requirements other than commercial (Sec. 11).

3. CLASSIFICATION. The grits must conform to the following list which must be specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order.

¹ For USDA purchase specifications please visit the following websites: [Commodity Purchase Specifications for Agricultural Marketing Service \(AMS\)](#) and [Commodity Purchase Specifications for Farm Service Agency \(FSA\)](#).

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Types, styles, flavors, agricultural practices, and when applicable, CN meal pattern contributions.²

Type I - White, enriched (21 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) § 137.260)

Type II - Yellow, enriched (21 CFR §137.260)

Type III - White, whole corn^{3, 4} (21 CFR § 137.250)

Type IV - Yellow, whole corn^{3, 4} (21 CFR § 137.275)

Style A - Regular

Style B - Quick cooking

Style C - Instant

Flavor 1 - Unflavored

Flavor 2 - Bacon, artificial

Flavor 3 - Cheese, artificial

Flavor 4 - Ham, artificial with imitation ham bits and gravy

Flavor 5 - Butter, artificial

Flavor 6 - Other (*as specified by the purchaser*)

Agricultural practice (i) - Conventional

Agricultural practice (ii) - Organic

When CN meal pattern contribution information is required:

National School Lunch and School Breakfast Program Meal Pattern

Grains (ounce equivalents) 1 - 1 serving = ½ cup cooked or 28 g dry (1 oz)^{5, 6, 7}

Grains (ounce equivalents) 2 - Other (*as specified by the purchaser*)^{5, 6, 7}

Child and Adult Care Food Program Meal Pattern for Children

Grains/bread 1 - 1 serving = ¼ cup to ½ cup based on age^{5, 6, 7}

Grains/bread 2 - Other (as specified by the purchaser)^{5, 6, 7}

² Not all options are available from every manufacturer. Check with the manufacturer/distributor for availability.

³ Foods that qualify as whole grain-rich for the school meal programs are foods that contain 100-percent whole grain or contain a blend of whole-grain meal and/or flour and enriched meal and/or flour of which at least 50-percent is whole grain. Whole grain-rich products must contain at least 50-percent whole-grains and the remaining grain, if any, must be enriched.

⁴ Whole corn grits available only as Style A - Regular.

⁵ Only the cooked volume of whole, enriched grain or the weight of dry whole, enriched grain is creditable. Sweeteners, dried fruit, nuts, cream, or other non-grain ingredients may not count toward the ½ cup volume of cooked cereal or 28 g of dry whole, enriched grain used to provide 1 oz equivalent grain.

⁶ Cereals must be whole-grain or whole grain and enriched cereal.

⁷ For products other than 100 percent grain, manufacturers should prepare and have available a formulation statement that is on company letterhead, certifies the information provided is true and correct, and is signed by a company official in order for Child Nutrition Programs to document the oz equivalent grains contribution toward reimbursable meals. The formulation statement would include (1) the dry weight of one batch of product, (2) the dry weight of whole, enriched grain in one batch of product, (3) the number of portions in one batch, (4) the dry weight of one portion of cereal as purchased, (5) the dry weight of the whole, enriched grain in one portion of the product, (6) preparation instructions, (7) the cooked volume of the cereal with added ingredients in one portion of the product, (8) the cooked volume of just the grain component, without added ingredients, in one portion of the product, and (9) the number of oz equivalent grains in one portion of the product as served.

4. MANUFACTURER'S/DISTRIBUTOR'S NOTES. Manufacturer's/distributor's products *must meet* the requirements of the:

- Processing guidelines (Sec. 5).
- Salient characteristics (Sec. 6).
- Analytical requirements: *as specified by the purchaser* (Sec. 7).
- Manufacturer's/distributor's product assurance (Sec. 8).
- Regulatory requirements (Sec. 9).
- Quality assurance provisions: *as specified by the purchaser* (Sec. 10).
- Packaging requirements other than commercial: *as specified by the purchaser* (Sec. 11).

5. PROCESSING GUIDELINES.

5.1 Processing. The grits must be prepared in accordance with Current Good Manufacturing Practices (21 CFR Part 110).

5.2 Food defense. The grits must be processed and transported in accordance to the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA's) *Guidance for Industry: Food Producers, Processors, and Transporters: Food Security Preventive Measures Guidance*.⁸ This guidance identifies the kinds of preventive measures food manufacturers, processors, or handlers may take to minimize the risk that food under their control will be subject to tampering or other malicious, criminal, or terrorist actions. The implementation of enhanced food defense preventive measures provides for the security of a plant's production processes and includes the storage and transportation of pre-production raw materials, other ingredients, and post-production finished product.

5.3 Organic grits. When organic grits are specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, the grits must be produced, handled, and labeled in accordance with the USDA organic regulations by an operation that is certified organic in accordance with the requirements of the National Organic Program (7 CFR Part 205). A Certificate of Organic Production or Handling must be provided to verify that the product was processed and handled in accordance with the USDA organic regulations.

5.4 Age requirement. Unless otherwise specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, Types I and II enriched hominy grits must be processed and packaged not more than 90 days prior to delivery to the purchaser. Types III and IV whole corn grits must be processed, packaged, and delivered to the purchaser with a minimum of $\frac{3}{4}$ of its shelf life remaining when stored at low ambient temperatures and dry conditions. Age requirements for DoD procurements must be specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order.

⁸ <http://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/GuidanceDocumentsRegulatoryInformation/FoodDefense/ucm083075.htm>.

6. SALIENT CHARACTERISTICS.

6.1 Ingredients. All ingredients must be declared by their common or usual name in descending order of predominance by weight (21 CFR § 101.4(a)) unless exempted by 21 CFR § 101.100.

6.1.1 Raw ingredients. The grits must be prepared from clean, sound corn and free from evidence of rodent or insect infestation. The corn must be tested for aflatoxin in accordance with procedures approved by the USDA Federal Grain Inspection Service (FGIS). If the aflatoxin test is positive, a quantitative test must be performed. If the result of the quantitative test exceeds 20 parts per billion (ppb), the corn must not be used in the production of the grits. When specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, a Certificate of Analysis (CoA) stating that the aflatoxin is not greater than 20 ppb must be provided.

6.1.1.1 Instant hominy grits. Style C, instant hominy grits for Type I, White, enriched and Type II, Yellow, enriched must be derived from specially processed degerminated corn grits.

6.1.1.2 Whole corn grits. White whole corn grits (Type III) and yellow whole corn grits (Type IV) must be processed to include the bran, germ, and endosperm.

6.1.2 Additional ingredients. When used, the additional ingredients must meet the standards specified in the Food Chemicals Codex (FCC) or, in the absence of FCC specification at a minimum, meet the specifications for quality set by the US Pharmacopeia (USP)-National Formulary quality. The additional ingredients must be approved for those particular uses by FDA's regulations on food additives or be Generally Recognized as Safe (GRAS) for those intended uses.

6.2 Finished product. The Style A, regular grits, must be prepared by cooking for 25 to 30 minutes. The Style B, quick cooking grits, must be prepared by cooking for no more than 5 minutes. The Style C, instant hominy grits, must be ready for table use by following the manufacturer's directions. Cooking time for Types III and IV whole corn grits are generally 25 to 45 minutes depending on the manufacturer.

6.2.1 Appearance and color. The grits must possess a characteristic appearance and color of the type, style, and flavor specified.

6.2.2 Odor and flavor. When prepared as directed on the package, the unflavored grits must possess a characteristic corn odor and flavor. The flavored grits must possess a characteristic odor and flavor for the flavor specified. There must be no foreign odors and flavors such as, but not limited to, rancid, bitter, raw, sour, or other undesirable odors and flavors.

6.2.3 Texture. When prepared as directed on the package, the grits must possess a characteristic texture for the type, style, and flavor specified.

6.2.4 Enrichment. Types I and II finished hominy grits must be enriched to comply with U.S. Standards of Identity for Enriched Corn Meal, 21 CFR § 137.260.

6.3 Foreign material. There must be no foreign material such as, but not limited to, dirt, insect parts, hair, wood, glass, or metal. The grits must comply with FDA Compliance Policy Guide Sec. 578.200 Corn Meal - Adulteration by Insect and Rodent Filth.⁹

7. ANALYTICAL AND PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS.

7.1 Analytical and physical requirements.¹⁰ Unless otherwise specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, the grits must comply with the following tolerances:

TABLE I. Physical granulation requirements for enriched hominy grits^{11, 12}

Styles	No. 10 Sieve	No. 20 Sieve	No. 25 Sieve	No. 60 Sieve
A and B	NLT 95% ¹³	-----	NMT 20% ¹⁴	-----
C	NLT 90%	NMT 40%	-----	NMT 11%

TABLE II. Physical granulation requirements for whole corn grits^{11, 12}

Types	No. 8 Sieve	No. 30 Sieve
III and IV	NLT 95%	NMT 5%

⁹ <http://www.fda.gov/ICECI/ComplianceManuals/CompliancePolicyGuidanceManual/ucm074606.htm>.

¹⁰ Applicable to the finished product.

¹¹ All values are on the basis of weight.

¹² Grits that will pass through a U.S. Standard woven-wire cloth sieve.

¹³ NLT = Not less than cited percent will pass through cited U.S. No. Sieve.

¹⁴ NMT = Not more than cited percent will pass through cited U.S. No. Sieve.

TABLE III. Analytical requirements (maximum)

Types	Styles	Aflatoxin	Moisture	Crude fiber¹⁵	Ash¹⁵	Fat¹⁵
I and II	A	20 ppb ¹⁶	13.5%	1.2%	0.6%	2.25%
I and II	B	20 ppb	13.5%	1.2%	0.6%	2.25%
I and II	C	20 ppb	11.5%	---	---	---
III and IV	---	20 ppb	11.5%	1.8%	1.8%	2.25%

7.2 Analytical verification. Purchaser must specify manufacturer's/distributor's certification (Sec. 10.3) or USDA certification (Sec. 10.4).

7.3 USDA verification procedures. When USDA certification (Sec. 10.4) is specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, analytical testing will be performed as follows.

7.3.1 Product verification sampling. When USDA verification of analytical requirements is specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, analytical testing must be performed on subsamples or retail packages randomly selected from the lot. The number of subsamples must be based on USDA inspection service sampling procedures and plans (7 CFR § 52.38). The contents of each will be used to create a composite sample that will be used in the analytical testing.

7.3.2 Analytical testing. When specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, the analyses must be made in accordance with the following methods from the AOAC International Official Methods of Analysis (OMA) or an equivalent method with the American Association of Cereal Chemists (AACC) International:

<u>Test</u>	<u>Method</u>
Sample Preparation	AOAC 945.38
Moisture	AOAC 925.09, AACC 44-15A
Aflatoxin	AOAC 974.16 - B (Method II)
Crude fiber	AOAC 962.09, AACC 32-10
Ash	AOAC 923.03, AACC 08-01
Fat	AOAC 922.06, AOAC 920.39C, AACC 30-25

7.3.3 Test results. The test results for aflatoxin must be reported to the nearest ppb. The test results for moisture, crude fiber, and ash must be reported to the nearest 0.1 percent. The test

¹⁵The crude fiber, ash, and fat content must be determined on a moisture-free basis.

¹⁶ppb = parts per billion

results for fat must be reported to the nearest 0.01 percent. Any result not conforming to the analytical requirements may be cause for rejection of the lot.

8. MANUFACTURER'S/DISTRIBUTOR'S PRODUCT ASSURANCE. The manufacturer/distributor must certify that the grits provided will meet the salient characteristics of this CID, conform to their own specifications, standards, and quality assurance practices, and be the same grits offered for sale in the commercial market. The purchaser reserves the right to require proof of conformance.

9. REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS. The delivered grits must comply with all applicable Federal, State, and local mandatory requirements and regulations relating to the preparation, packaging, labeling, storage, distribution, and sale of grits within the commercial marketplace. Delivered grits must comply with all applicable provisions of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, the Fair Packaging and Labeling Act, and regulations promulgated thereunder. When agricultural practice (ii), Organic, is specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, the grits must comply with all applicable provisions of the National Organic Program. When a known allergen is included in the grits, the grits must comply with the allergen and flavoring labeling requirements of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act. When the grits are used for the National School Lunch program, the grits must comply with all applicable provisions of the Child Nutrition (CN) Program.

10. QUALITY ASSURANCE PROVISIONS. Purchaser must specify 10.3 or 10.4. Purchaser may specify one of the following combinations: 10.1.1 with 10.2.1, or 10.1.2 with 10.2.2.

10.1 Food defense. When required in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, a Food Defense System Survey (FDSS) must be conducted by USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), Specialty Crops Program (SCP), Specialty Crops Inspection (SCI) Division. Food defense requirements include a documented and operational food defense plan that provides for the security of a plant's production processes and includes the storage and transportation of pre-production raw materials and other ingredients and postproduction finished product. The plan must address the following areas: (1) food security plan management; (2) outside and inside security of the production and storage facilities; (3) slaughter, when applicable, and processing, including all raw material sources; (4) shipping and receiving; (5) storage; (6) water and ice supply; (7) mail handling; (8) personnel security; and (9) transportation, shipping, and receiving.

10.1.1 FDSS. When required in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, a FDSS must be conducted by USDA, AMS, SCP, SCI Division. The FDSS verifies that operators of food establishments have implemented measures to minimize the risk of tampering or other criminal actions against the food under their control. An AMS, FDSS verifies the participating company's adherence to the FDA's *Guidance for Industry - Food Producers, Processors, and Transporters: Food Security Preventive Measures Guidance*.

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10.1.2 Food defense section of the Plant Systems Audit (PSA). When required in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, a food defense audit will be conducted as part of the PSA. The audit will be conducted by USDA, AMS, SCP, SCI Division auditors. This verifies that operators of food establishments have implemented measures to minimize the risk of tampering or other criminal actions against the food under their control. The food defense section of the PSA verifies the participating company's adherence to the FDA's "*Guidance for Industry - Food Producers, Processors, and Transporters: Food Security Preventive Measures Guidance*."

10.2 Manufacturer's quality assurance. When required in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, the product manufacturer must be required to provide evidence, by certificate, that the manufacturing plant has undertaken one of the following quality assurance measures within 12 months prior to providing a bid, or no later than 10 business days from the date of awarding of the contract. Failure to provide this documentation within the proper time frame may result in the contract being terminated for cause.

10.2.1 Plant survey. A plant survey conducted by USDA, AMS, or other survey performed by a third party auditing service is required within 12 months prior to the date of the awarding of the contract. An AMS plant survey audit verifies that at the time of the survey, the manufacturer produces products in a clean sanitary environment in accordance with *Current Good Manufacturing Practice in Manufacturing, Packing, or Holding Human Food* (21 CFR Part 110).

10.2.2 PSA. A PSA conducted by USDA, AMS, or other audit performed by a third party auditing service is required within 12 months prior to the date of the awarding of the contract. An AMS PSA verifies the manufacturer's capability to produce products in a clean sanitary environment in accordance with *Current Good Manufacturing Practice in Manufacturing, Packing, or Holding Human Food* (21 CFR Part 110), and verifies that the manufacturer has in place an internal quality assurance program.

10.3 Manufacturer's/distributor's certification. When required in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, the manufacturer/distributor will certify that the finished grits distributed meet or exceed the requirements of this CID. The manufacturer/distributor must certify via a Certificate of Conformance or other adequate documentation (*as specified by the purchaser*) that the grits meets the analytical and physical requirements specified in Sec. 7 of this CID.

10.4 USDA certification. When required in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order that product quality and acceptability or both be determined, the USDA/FGIS or USDA/AMS (depending on how it is packaged), must be the certifying programs. USDA/FGIS or USDA/AMS inspectors must certify the quality and acceptability of the grits in accordance with USDA/FGIS or USDA/AMS procedures, which include selecting random samples of the grits, evaluating the samples for conformance with the salient characteristics and analytical

requirements of this CID and other contractual requirements, and documenting the findings on official USDA/FGIS or USDA/AMS score sheets and/or certificates. In addition, when required in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, USDA/FGIS or USDA/AMS inspectors will examine the grits for conformance to the U.S. Standards for Condition of Food Containers (7 CFR Part 42) in effect on the date of the solicitation.

11. PACKAGING. Preservation, packaging, packing, labeling, and case marking must be commercial unless otherwise specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order.

12. USDA INSPECTION NOTES. When Section 10.4 is specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, USDA certification must include evaluation of the quality and condition of samples of grits, and compliance with requirements in the following areas:

- Processing guidelines (Sec. 5).
- Salient characteristics (Sec. 6).
- Analytical requirements *when specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order* (Sec. 7). When USDA analytical testing is specified, USDA/FGIS or USDA/AMS inspection personnel must select samples and submit them to the USDA/AMS, Science and Technology Programs (S&TP) laboratory for analysis.
- Packaging requirements (Sec. 11 or *as specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order*).

13. REFERENCE NOTES.

13.1 USDA services.

13.1.1 Federal Grain Inspection Service. For USDA, FGIS certification, contact the **Policy and Procedures Branch, Field Management Division, Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA), STOP 3632, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-3632, telephone (202) 720-0277, fax (202) 720-1015, or via E-mail: Andrew.S.Greenfield@usda.gov.**

13.1.2 USDA certification and Plant Survey. For a USDA certification and plant survey contact the **Associate Director, Inspection Operations, SCI Division, SCP, AMS, USDA, Room 1536 South Building, STOP 0240, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-0240, telephone (202) 720-2482, fax (202) 720-0393, or via E-mail: Nathaniel.Taylor@ams.usda.gov.**

13.1.3 USDA FDSS and PSA. For a USDA FDSS and PSA contact the **Chief, Auditing Services Branch, Inspection Operations, SCI Division, SCP, AMS, USDA, Room 1536**

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South Building, STOP 0240, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-0240, telephone (202) 720-5021, fax (202) 260-8927, or via E-mail: fvaudits@ams.usda.gov.

13.2 Analytical testing and technical information contact. For USDA technical information on analytical testing, contact a member of the Laboratory Approval and Testing Division, S&TP, AMS, USDA, STOP 0272, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-0272, telephone (202) 690-0621 or via E-mail: KerryR.Smith@ams.usda.gov.

13.3 Sources of documents.

13.3.1 Sources of information for nongovernmental documents are as follows:

Copies of the AOAC International OMA may be obtained from: **AOAC International, 2275 Research Boulevard, Suite 300, Rockville, MD 20850-3250, telephone (301) 924-7077. Internet address: <http://www.aoac.org> for nonmembers and <http://www.eoma.aoac.org> for members and AOAC OMA subscribers.**

Copies of the Approved Methods of the AACC International may be obtained from: **AACC International, 3340 Pilot Knob Road, St. Paul, MN 55121-2097; telephone (651) 454-7250, fax (651) 454-0766, or via E-mail: aacc@scisoc.org or on the Internet at: <http://www.aaccnet.org>.**

Copies of the Food Chemicals Codex and U.S. Pharmacopeia may be purchased from: **United States Pharmacopeia Convention, 12601 Twinbrook Parkway, Rockville, MD 20877, telephone (800) 227-8772 or (301) 881-0666, Fax (301) 816-8148 or on the Internet at: <http://www.usp.org>.**

13.3.2 Sources of information for governmental documents are as follows:

Applicable provisions of the U.S. Standards for Condition of Food Containers are contained in 7 CFR Part 42, the Fair Packaging and Labeling Act are contained in 16 CFR Parts 500 to 503, and the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act are contained in 21 CFR Parts 1 to 199. These documents may be purchased from: **Superintendent of Documents, New Orders, P.O. Box 979050, St. Louis, MO 63197-9000. Credit card (Visa, MasterCard, Discover/NOVUS, and American Express) purchases may be made by calling the Superintendent of Documents on (866) 512-1800, (202) 512-1800. These documents may also be obtained free of charge on the Internet at: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/browse/collectionCfr.action?collectionCode=CFR>.**

Copies of Guidance for Industry: Food Producers, Processors, and Transporters: Food Security Preventive Measures Guidance is available from: **FDA, Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (CFSAN) on the Internet at:**

<http://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/GuidanceDocumentsRegulatoryInformation/FoodDefense/ucm083075.htm>.

Copies of this CID and the U.S. Standards for Condition of Food Containers (7 CFR Part 42) are available from: **Director, SCI Division, SCP, AMS, USDA, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, STOP 0240, Washington, DC 20250, via E-mail: CIDS@ams.usda.gov or on the Internet at: <http://www.ams.usda.gov/grades-standards/cids> and <http://www.ams.usda.gov/publications/content/condition-food-container-manual>.**

Copies of this CID are also available online at: **ASSIST Online (<https://assist.dla.mil>) or ASSIST Quick Search (<http://quicksearch.dla.mil>) or from the Standardization Documents Order Desk, Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) Document Services, Building 4D, 700 Robbins Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19111-5094.**

Beneficial comments, recommendations, additions, deletions, clarifications, etc., and any data which may improve this document should be sent to: **DLA Troop Support, ATTN: DLA-FTSA, 700 Robbins Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19111-5092 or via E-mail: dscpsubsweb@dlamail.mil.**

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MILITARY INTERESTS:

CIVIL AGENCY COORDINATING ACTIVITIES:

Custodians

Army - GL
Navy - SA
Air Force - 35
DLA - SS

DOJ - BOP
HHS - NIH
USDA - SCP
VA - OSS

Review Activities

Army - MD, QM
Navy - MC

PREPARING ACTIVITY:

DLA - SS
(Project No. 8920-2014-002)

NOTE: The activities listed above were interested in this document as of the date of this document. Since organizations and responsibilities can change, you should verify the currency of the information above using the ASSIST Online database at <https://assist.dla.mil>.

Non-Discrimination Policy: In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov. USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.