

## TITLE VI PLAN

### I. PURPOSE OF PLAN

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, applies to U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Transit Administration (FTA) sub-recipients. The purpose of Title VI is to ensure that no person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, creed or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance from the FTA. Later statutes extended the scope of Title VI to include prohibitions against discrimination on the basis of age, sex, and disability. The program described herein describes Shawnee Mass Transit District's efforts to comply with the Title VI regulations issued by the U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Department of Transportation. The objectives of The Rides Mass Transit Title VI program are to:

- Ensure that the level and quality of transportation service is provided equitably and without regard to race, color, national origin, income, age, sex, or disability;
- Avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects, including social and economic effects of programs and activities on minority populations and low-income populations;
- Ensure the full and fair participation of all affected populations in transportation decision making;
- Prevent the denial, reduction, or delay in benefits related to programs and activities that benefit minority populations or low-income populations; and
- Ensure that persons with limited English proficiency have meaningful access to programs and activities that are administered by recipients and sub-recipients.

### II. THE SHAWNEE MASS TRANSIT DISTRICT PROGRAM

Shawnee Mass Transit District (SMTD) has established the following program to comply with the Department of Transportation (DOT) Title VI regulations.

#### **Annual Submissions to the Illinois Department of Transportation**

SMTD ensures compliance with the requirements of the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) Title VI Program. SMTD will submit an annual assurance to verify Title VI compliance as part of the standard assurances it submits to IDOT with grant applications. SMTD shall also collect Title VI Assurances from sub recipients prior to passing through FTA funds. Exhibit I on the following page is SMTD's Title VI assurance.

**EXHIBIT I: SMTD TITLE VI ASSURANCE**

**TITLE VI ASSURANCE TO  
FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION**

**Shawnee Mass Transit District hereby agrees that, as a condition to receiving any Federal financial assistance from the Department of Transportation it will comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and all requirements imposed by or pursuant to Title 49, Code of Federal Regulations, Department of Transportation, Subtitle A, Office of the Secretary, Part 21, Nondiscrimination in Federally-Assisted Programs of the Department of Transportation--Effectuation of the Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and other pertinent directives, to the end and that in accordance with the Act, Regulations, and other pertinent directives, no person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity for which SMTD received Federal financial assistance from the Department of Transportation, including the Federal Transit Administration and, Hereby gives assurance that it will promptly take any measures necessary to effectuate this agreement. This assurance is required by subsection 21.7(a) of the Regulations.**

**More specifically and without limiting the above assurances, SMTD gives the assurances as listed in the "Verification of Level and Quality of Service," with respect to the Federal Transit Administration Grant Program.**

**This assurance is given in consideration of and for the purpose of obtaining any and all Federal grants, loans, contracts, property, discounts or other Federal financial assistance extended after the date hereof to the Recipient by the Department of Transportation under the Federal Transit Administration.**

## Triennial Submissions to IDOT

SMTD will report the information contained in this section to IDOT on a triennial basis with the first submission parceled as part of the plan. The following report addresses each of the eight primary Title VI considerations and the associated forms, policies, and activities of its Title VI program.

**a) Title VI Complaint Procedures:** In order to comply with 40 CFR Section 21.9 (b) SMTD has developed procedures for investigating and tracking Title VI complaints. The procedures for filing a complaint will be made available to members of the general public. The following measures will be taken in dealing with Title VI complaints:

1. A formal complaint must be filed within 180 days of the alleged occurrence. Complaints shall be in writing and signed by the individual or his/her representative and will include the Complainant's name, address, and telephone number; name of alleged discriminating official, basis of complaint (race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age), and the date of alleged act(s). A statement detailing the facts and circumstances of the alleged discrimination must accompany all complaints. Exhibit II provides SMTD's Title VI complaint form.
2. In the case where a Complainant is unable or incapable of providing a written statement, a verbal complaint of discrimination may be made to SMTD's Title VI Coordinator. Under these circumstances, the complainant will be interviewed, and the Coordinator will assist the Complainant in converting the verbal allegation into writing.
3. SMTD will investigate complaints filed against contractors, consultants, or other sub-recipients. Complaints filed directly against SMTD shall be forwarded to the IDOT Title VI Coordinator for investigation.
4. When a complete complaint is received, the Title VI Coordinator will provide written acknowledgement to the Complainant within five (5) days by registered mail. At the same time, the complaint will be forwarded to the State of Illinois for investigation.
5. If a complaint is deemed incomplete, additional information will be requested from the Complainant within 15 business days from receipt of the original complaint. The Complainant will be provided 60 business days to submit the required information. Failure to do so may be considered good cause for a determination of no investigative merit.
6. Within 15 business days from receipt of a complete complaint, SMTD will determine its jurisdiction in pursuing the matter and whether the complaint has sufficient merit to warrant investigation. Within five (5) days of this decision, the Complainant and Respondent will receive notification of the disposition by registered mail.
  - A. If the decision is not to investigate the complaint, the notification shall specifically state the reason for the decision.
  - B. If the decision is to be investigated, the notification shall inform the parties that their full cooperation will be required in gathering additional information and assisting the investigator.
7. When SMTD does not have sufficient jurisdiction, the complaint will be referred to IDOT for further investigation.
8. If the complaint has investigative merit, an investigator will be assigned. A complete investigation will be conducted, and an investigative report will be submitted within 45 days from the receipt of the complaint. The report will include a narrative description of the incident, summaries of all persons interviewed, and a finding with recommendations.

9. A letter of finding will be issued to the Complainant and Respondent. Where appropriate, these letters will include conciliatory measures. A copy of the investigative report shall be forwarded to IDOT within 60 days from recipient of the complaint. If the investigation is delayed for any reason, the investigator will notify the appropriate authorities, and an extension will be requested.
10. If the Complainant is dissatisfied with SMTD's resolution of the complaint, he/she has the right to file the complaint with the IDOT Title VI Coordinator directly.

EXHIBIT II: SMTD TITLE VI COMPLAINT FORM

**SHAWNEE MASS TRANSIT DISTRICT TITLE VI COMPLAINT FORM**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Numbers: (home) \_\_\_\_\_ (work) \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Accessible Format Requirements:

Large Print \_\_\_\_ Audio Tape \_\_\_\_ TDD \_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

*The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Office of Civil Rights is responsible for civil rights compliance and monitoring, which includes ensuring that providers of public transportation properly abide by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Executive Order 12898, "Federal Actions To Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-income Populations," and the Department of Transportation's Guidance to Recipients on Special Language Services to Limited English Proficient (LEP) Beneficiaries.*

*In SMTD's complaint investigation process, we analyze the complainant's allegations for possible Title VI and related deficiencies by the transit provider. If deficiencies are identified, they are presented to the transit provider and assistance is offered to correct the inadequacies within a predetermined timeframe. The State of Illinois may also refer the matter to the U.S. Department of Justice for enforcement.*

**Section II**

Are you filing this complaint on your own behalf? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_ (If you answered 'yes' to this question, go to section III)

If the answer was 'no' please supply the name of the person for whom you are complaining:

\_\_\_\_\_

Please explain why you have filed for a third party:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Please confirm that you have obtained the permission of the aggrieved party if you are filing on behalf of a third party. Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

**Section III**

Have you previously filed a Title VI complaint with SMTD or the FTA? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

If yes, what was your FTA Complaint Number? \_\_\_\_\_

*Note: This information is needed for administration purposes; we will assign the same complaint number to the new complaint.*

Have you ever filed with any of the following agencies?

Transit Provider \_\_\_\_ IDOT \_\_\_\_ Department of Justice \_\_\_\_

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission \_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_

Have you filed a lawsuit regarding this complaint? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

If yes, please provide a copy of the complaint form.

*Note: The above information is helpful for administrative tracking purposes. However, if litigation is pending regarding the same issues, we will defer to the decision of the court.*

**Section IV**

On separate sheets, please describe your complaint. You should include specific details such as names, dates, times, route number, witnesses, and any other information that would assist us in our investigation of your allegations. Please also provide any other documentation that is relevant to this complaint.

**Section V**

May we release a copy of your complaint to the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT)? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

May we release your identity to the IDOT? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

*Note: We cannot accept your complaint without a signature*

**b) Title VI Investigations, Complaint, and Lawsuit Record Keeping Procedures:** In order to comply with 49 CFR Section 21.9 (b), SMTD has prepared and maintains a list of active investigations, lawsuits, or complaints naming SMTD that allege discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin. The list includes:

- The date the investigation, lawsuit, or complaint was filed;
- A summary of the allegation;
- The status of the investigation; and
- Actions taken in response to the investigation, lawsuit, or complaint.

SMTD has adopted Title VI record keeping procedures for complaints, lawsuits, and investigations. Exhibit III depicts this format. There are currently no active investigations, lawsuits, or complaints that allege discrimination by SMTD on the basis of race, color, or national origin.

**EXHIBIT III: TITLE VI COMPLAINT RECORD KEEPING**

File Date	Summary of Allegation	Actions Taken in Response	Status of Investigation

**c) Meaningful Access to LEP Persons**

Title VI and its implementing regulations require that FTA sub-recipients take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to the benefits, services, information, and other important portions of their program and activities that have Limited English Proficient (LEP) individuals. Circular 4702.1A states that LEP persons are “persons for whom English is not their primary language and who have a limited ability to speak, understand, read, or write English” and include “people who reported to the U.S. Census that they do not speak English well or do not speak English at all.”

SMTD has assessed the four main factors involved in developing a Language Implementation Plan as described in the Federal Transit Administration guidance entitled “Implementing the Department of Transportation’s Policy Guidance Concerning Recipients’ Responsibilities to Limited English Proficient (LEP) Persons: A Handbook for Public Transportation Providers.” These steps are as follows:

1. **Identifying the number or proportion of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely to be encountered by a program activity, or service of the recipient or grantee.** Based

on the 2010 U.S. Census, SMTD undertook an analysis of the languages spoken in its 5 County District and recorded the number of residents with Limited English Proficiency. A summary of this data is provided below in Exhibit IV. The primary language spoken at home within the SMTD service area is English (79.7 %) followed by Spanish (20.3 %). Based on the LEP definition, a total of 12,157 of the 59,886 individuals in the SMTD service area (20.3 percent (%) of the total population) were identified as having Limited English Proficiency. These individuals are primarily of Mexican descent and speak little or no English.

2. **Determining the frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with the program.** SMTD has not received a ride request from any individual who had difficulty communicating in English. Most of the Spanish speaking population are migrant workers who are only residing in the District seasonally. SMTD, however, is aware of individuals and agencies within the community that are able to provide translation services on an as needed basis and is committed to using these resources on a case by case basis as the need arises. Translators are available through Shawnee Community College as well as local high schools. These students and faculty members have translated SMTD brochures and shuttle schedules into Spanish to accommodate LEP residents in all counties.
3. **Defining the nature and importance of the program, activity, or service provided by the recipient to people’s lives.** The system brochures clearly state that SMTD service is open to all without discrimination based on race, creed, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, or disability. SMTD recognizes and is committed to the importance of access to transportation for all community residents.
4. **Describing the resources available to the recipient and costs.** Brochures and other rider literature provide this information. Since the USDOT LEP Guidance identifies 1000 individuals or 5% of the population eligible to be served falling within a specific LEP language group as a threshold above which vital documents should be provided in translation. Since Union County in the SMTD service area meets this threshold, a LEP Implementation Plan has been established. It has been determined that those individuals demonstrating limited English proficiency are of Mexican descent and speak primarily Spanish. SMTD’s general information brochure is available in both English and Spanish as well as the schedules for shuttles in the Union County area.. In addition, qualified SMTD staff and community volunteers will be used when oral translation is needed. Any further requirement will be discussed individually on an as requested basis. (See Attached LEP Implementation Plan).

**EXHIBIT IV: LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY POPULATION CONCENTRATIONS**

<b>County</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>LEP</b>
Alexander	8,036	4.3%
Johnson	12,654	2.3%
Massac	15,442	3.1%
Pulaski	6,046	4.7%
Union	17,708	5.9%

**d) Beneficiary Notification Protection under Title VI**



In order to comply with 49 CFR Section 21.9 (d), sub-recipients shall provide information to the public regarding their Title VI obligations and apprise members of the public of the protections against discrimination afforded to them by Title VI. SMTD disseminates this information to the public through measures that include posting on the transit system website, and flyers placed at county offices. The notice will be translated into languages other than English consistent with LEP Guidelines. Exhibit IV is SMTD's Title VI Protection Notice to the Public.

**EXHIBIT V: SMTD TITLE VI PROTECTION NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC**

Shawnee Mass Transit District hereby gives public notice of its policy to uphold and assure full compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, and all related statutes. Title VI and related statutes prohibiting discrimination in Federally-assisted programs require that no person in the United States of America shall on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, sex, age, or disability be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

Any person who believes they have been aggrieved by an unlawful discretionary practice regarding SMTD's programs has the right to file a formal complaint. Any such complaint must be in writing and submitted to the SMTD Title VI Coordinator within sixty, (60) days following the date of the alleged occurrence. For more information regarding civil rights complaints, please contact:

Mike Pietrowski  
Shawnee Mass Transit District  
100 Smart Drive  
Vienna, IL 62995

#### **e) Additional information requests**

SMTD fully understands that IDOT may request additional information to investigate complaints of discrimination or to resolve concerns about possible noncompliance with Title VI. SMTD will cooperate with IDOT, and all requested information would be provided in a timely manner.

#### **f) Submission of Title VI Program**

To ensure compliance with 49 CFR Section 21.9 (b), this report will serve as documentation of SMTD's Title VI compliance. SMTD will prepare and submit updates to this Title VI program to IDOT on a triennial basis.

#### **g) Conducting Analysis of Construction Projects**

SMTD will integrate an environmental justice analysis into the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document of construction projects. In the event that a construction project requires NEPA documentation, SMTD will complete IDOT's standard environmental assessment (EA) and will submit the EA as part of each triennial Title VI submission.

#### **h) Promoting Inclusive Public Participation**

In compliance with the DOT Order on Environmental Justice, SMTD conducts public outreach and involvement activities with minority and low-income populations. SMTD undertakes public outreach activities including:

- Providing notice and affording members of the public, including minority and low-income populations, the opportunity to comment on proposed service and fare changes.
- Providing members of the public the opportunity to participate in the decision making process for projects subject to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).
- Providing members of the public, including minority and low-income populations, the opportunity to participate in or to comment on the agency's strategic plan or capital improvement program.
- Offering the public, including low-income and minority populations, routine opportunities to provide feedback or comment on the level and quality of service.

### **III. SERVICE EQUITY ANALYSIS**

#### **Minority, Low Income and Limited English Proficiency Population Concentrations**

SMTD provides deviated route and demand response transportation services. Rider access and travel times vary with each request. Management ensures that a balance of resources is available to meet specific demands in each of SMTD's counties. Vehicles and personnel are shared between counties when necessary to cover increased demand. Demand factors related

to concentrations of persons with disabilities and households without access to a vehicle are also considered and are a priority as per the SMTD Mission Statement.

### Service Monitoring

The SMTD Operations Manager will monitor service level and service quality to ensure that no person or group of persons shall be discriminated against with regard to the route, scheduling, or quality of transportation service furnished by the SMTD system on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex or disability. Nor shall frequency of service, quality of vehicles assigned, quality of facilities or location of routes be determined on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, or disability.

### SMTD Environmental Justice and Title VI Summary

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin. IDOT and SMTD advance Title VI and environmental justice by involving the public in transportation decisions. Effective public involvement programs enable transportation professionals to develop systems, services, and solutions that meet the needs of the public, including minority and low-income communities.

There are three fundamental environmental justice principals. The three principals are:

1. To avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects, including social and economic effects, on minority populations and low-income populations.
2. To ensure the full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process.
3. To prevent the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority and low-income populations.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Chairman of the Board

2-20-2020  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Executive Director

2-20-2020  
Date