

**Gadsden County
Board of County Commissioners**

**Title VI/Nondiscrimination Policy and Plan
For Sub-Recipients in the Local Agency Program (LAP)**

Policy Statement:

The county values diversity and welcomes input from all interested parties, regardless of cultural identity, background, or income level. Moreover, the county believes that the best programs and services result from careful consideration of the needs of all of its communities and when those communities are involved in the transportation decision making process. Thus, the county does not tolerate discrimination in any of its programs, services, or activities. Pursuant to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and other federal and state authorities, the county will not exclude from participation in, deny the benefits of, or subject to discrimination anyone on the grounds of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, income or family status.

Complaint Procedures:

The county has established a discrimination complaint procedure and will take prompt and reasonable action to investigate and eliminate discrimination when found. Any person who believes that he or she has been subjected to discrimination based upon race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age disability, family or income status in any of the county's programs, services or activities may file a complaint with the county Title VI/Nondiscrimination Coordinator:

Georgette Daniels
Nondiscrimination Coordinator
5-B E. Jefferson Street
P O Box 920
Quincy, FL 32351
gdaniels@gadsdencountyfl.gov
Phone: 850-875-8694
Cell: 850-743-7191

If possible, the complaint should be submitted in writing and contain the identity of the complainant; the basis for the allegations (i.e., race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability or family status); and a description of the alleged discrimination with the date of occurrence. If the complaint cannot be submitted in writing, the complainant should contact the Title VI/Nondiscrimination Coordinator for assistance.

The Title VI/Nondiscrimination Coordinator will respond to the complaint within thirty (30) calendar days and will take reasonable steps to resolve the matter. Should the county be unable to satisfactorily resolve a complaint, the county will forward the complaint, along with a record of its disposition to the appropriate District of the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT).

The county's Title VI Coordinator has 'easy access' to the County Administrator and is not required to obtain management or other approval to discuss discrimination issues with the County Administrator.

However, should the complainant be unable or unwilling to complain to the county, the written complaint may be submitted directly to Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). FDOT will serve as a clearing house, forwarding the complaint to the appropriate state or federal agency:

Florida Department of Transportation
Equal Opportunity Office
ATTN: Title VI Complaint Processing
605 Suwannee Street MS 65
Tallahassee, FL 32399

ADA/504 Statement:

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504), the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and related federal and state laws and regulations forbid discrimination against those who have disabilities. Furthermore, these laws require federal aid recipients and other government entities to take affirmative steps to reasonably accommodate the disabled and ensure that their needs are equitably represented in transportation programs, services and activities.

The county will make every effort to ensure that its facilities, programs, services and activities are accessible to those with disabilities. The county will make every effort to ensure that its advisory committees, public involvement activities and all other programs, services and activities include representation by the disabled community and disability service groups.

The county encourages the public to report any facility, program, service or activity that appears inaccessible to those who are disabled. Furthermore, the county will provide reasonable accommodation to disabled individuals who wish to participate in public involvement events or who require special assistance to access facilities, programs, services or activities. Because providing reasonable accommodation may require outside assistance, organization or resources, the county asks that requests be made at least 10 calendar days prior to the need for accommodation.

Questions, concerns, comments, or requests for accommodation should be made to the county's ADA Officer:

Allan Meeks
Title VI ADA Officer
9-B E Jefferson Street
P O Box 1799
Quincy, FL 32351
ameeks@gadsdencountyfl.gov
Phone: 850-875-8658
Cell: 850-694-2227

Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Guidance:

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Executive Order 13166, and various directives from the US Department of Justice (DOJ) and US Department of Transportation (DOT) require federal aid recipients to take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to programs, services and activities by those who

do not speak English proficiently. To determine the extent to which LEP services are required and in which languages, the law requires the analysis of four factors:

- The number of proportions of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely to be encountered by the County's programs, services or activities.
 - The frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with these programs, services or activities.
 - The nature and importance of the program, service, or activity to people's lives and;
 - The resources available to the county and the likely costs of the LEP services.
1. Using census data, the county has determined that LEP individuals speaking English less than well represent approximately 10.3% of the community. The county realizes that such statistical data can be outdated or inaccurate. Therefore, county contacted local law enforcement, social services agencies and the school board to determine the proportion of LEP serviced by those entities. 95% Spanish was reported to be the prevalent LEP language and an estimated 10% of calls for service for these agencies were in the Spanish language.
 2. The county has received requests for translation or interpretation of its programs, services or activities into Spanish or any other language. Informal data collection at these community events indicates that an estimated 10% are LEP.
 3. The county believes that transportation is of critical importance to its public, as access to health care, emergency services, employment, and other essentials would be difficult or impossible with reliable transportation systems.
 4. The county is fortunate to house within its jurisdiction a number of institutions of higher education which has extensive language services. Further, the county maintains cordial relationships with a number of faith based and community organizations who offer competent language services at no cost to the county.

The analyses of these factors suggest that LEP services are not required at this time. Therefore the county has committed to the following:

- Maintain a list of employees who competently speak Spanish and other languages and who are willing to provide translation and/or interpretation services.
- Distribute this list to staff that regularly has contact with the public.
- Provide notification in Spanish of the availability of LEP assistance in public meeting notices and on public involvement event signage.
- Develop agreements with (LEP churches, catholic charities, etc.) to provide oral and written LEP services with reasonable notification.
- Translate the following essential documents into Spanish.

The county understands that its community profile is changing and the four factor analysis may reveal the need for more or varied LEP services in the future. As such, it will annually examine its LEP plan to ensure that it remains reflective of the community's needs.

Persons requiring special language services should contact the county's Title VI/Nondiscrimination Officer:

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Nondiscrimination Coordinator
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Quincy, FL 32351
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Assurances:

Every three years, or commensurate with a change in county executive leadership year, the county must certify to FHWA and FDOT that its programs, services and activities are being conducted in a nondiscriminatory manner. These certifications are termed 'assurances' and serve two important purposes. First, they document the county's commitment to nondiscrimination and equitable service to its community. Second, they serve as a legally enforceable agreement by which the county may be held liable for breach. The public may view the annual assurance on the county's website or by visiting the county's offices.



Chairperson Ronterious Green

11-21-2023

Date

 Attest: 

Nicholas Thomas, Clerk