

OKANOGAN COUNTY TRANSIT AUTHORITY TITLE VI POLICY
TITLE VI PLAN FOR THE FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION
TITLE VI COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

What is Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964?

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination on the base of race, color, or national origin in programs and activities receiving Federal financial assistance. This policy was developed to guide the Okanogan County Transit Authority in its administration and management of Title VI related activities.

Okanogan County Transit Authority is committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from participation in, or denied benefits of its transit services on the basis of race, color or national origin, and is protected by Title VI Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Circular 4702.1.A. If you believe you have been subjected to discrimination under Title VI, you may file a complaint.

How to File a Title VI Complaint?

You may file a signed, written complaint no later than one hundred and eighty (180) days from the date of the alleged discrimination. The complaint should include the following information:

- You name, mailing address, and how to contact you (i.e., telephone number or email address)
- How, when, where, and why you believe you were discriminated against. Include the location, names and contact information of any witnesses
- Other information that you deem significant

The complaint may be filed in writing with the Okanogan County Transit Authority Title VI Coordinator at the following address:

Okanogan County Transit Authority Title VI Coordinator
Okanogan County Transit Authority
ATTN: Kelly Scalf
PO Box 507
Okanogan WA 98840
By Phone: 509-557-6177
By Email: kscalf@okanogantransit.com

Note: The Okanogan County Transit Authority encourage all complaints to certify all mail that is sent through the US Postal Service and/or ensure that all written correspondence can be tracked easily. For complaints originally submitted by facsimile, an original, signed copy of the complaint must be mailed to Kelly Scalf, as soon as possible after the event occurs or no later than 180 days of the act of discrimination.

What happens when I submit my complaint to the Okanogan County Transit Authority?

All complaints alleging discrimination based on race, color, or national origin in a serve or benefit provided by the Okanogan County Transit Authority will be directly addressed by the Okanogan County Transit Authority. The Okanogan County Transit Authority shall also provide appropriate assistance to complainants, including those persons with disabilities, or who are limited in their ability to communicate in English. Additionally, the Okanogan County Transit Authority shall make every effort to address complaints in an expeditious and thorough manner.

In instances where additional information is needed for investigation of the complaint, the Okanogan County Transit Authority will contact the complainant in writing. Please note that in responding to any request for additional information, a complainant’s failure to provide the requested information will result in administrative closure of the complaint.

Once sufficient information for investigation the complaint is received by the Okanogan County Transit Authority, a written response will be drafted subject to review by the transit’s attorney. If appropriate, the Okanogan County Transit Authority’s attorney may administratively close the complaint. In this case, the Okanogan County Transit Authority will notify the complainant of the action as soon as possible.

How will I be notified of the outcome of my complaint?

The Okanogan County Transit Authority will send a final written response to the complainant and advise the complainant of his or her right to 1) appeal within 7 calendar days of receipt of the final written decision from the Okanogan County Transit Authority, and/or 2) file a complaint externally with the U.S. Department of Transportation and/or the Federal Transit Administration. Every effort will be made to respond to Title VI complaints within 60 working days of receipt of such complaint, if not sooner.

In addition to the complaint process described above, a complainant may file a Title VI complaint with the following offices:

Office of Civil Rights
Federal Transit Administration
915 Second Avenue, Suite 3142
Seattle WA 98174
Phone: 206-220-7954
Fax: 206-220-7959

Director
FTA Office of Civil Rights
East Building, 5th Floor
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE

RECORD OF TITLE VI INVESTIGATIONS, COMPLAINTS OR LAWSUITS

To date, there have been no Title VI investigations, complaints or lawsuits.

LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY (LEP PLAN)

The Okanogan County Transit Authority is committed to breaking down language barriers by implementing consistent standards of language assistance across its service area.

Census. The United States is home to millions of national origin minority individuals who are LEP. That is, their primary language is not English and they cannot speak, read, write, or understand the English language at a level that permits them to interact effectively with recipients of Federal financial assistance. Because of the language differences and the inability to effectively speak or understand English, persons with LEP may be subjected to exclusion from programs or activities, experience delays, or denials of services. These individuals may be entitled to language assistance with respect to a particular type of service. The federal government and those receiving assistance from the federal government must take reasonable steps to ensure that LEP persons have meaningful access to the programs, services, and information those entities provide. This will require agencies to establish creative solutions to address the needs of this ever-growing population of individuals, for whom English is not their primary language. According to the 2010 Census Data for Okanogan County, Spanish is spoken by 5.07% of residents that speak only Spanish.

ANALYSIS OF FACTORS

In preparing the Plan, the Okanogan County Transit Authority undertook the U.S. Department of Transportation four factor LEP analysis as follows:

Factor No. 1: The nature and importance of service provided by the Okanogan County Transit Authority. The Okanogan County Transit Authority provides important transit services to the public through its fixed route, paratransit, and vanpool programs and currently contracts limited service with Okanogan County Transportation and Nutrition.

Factor No. 2: The number or proportion of LEP persons in the service area. The vast majority of the population with which we do business (individuals wishing to ride transit) are proficient in English, so the LEP services are not normally required. According to the 2010 Census Data for Okanogan County, Spanish is spoken by 5.07% of residents that speak only Spanish.

Factor No. 3: The frequency with which LEP individuals come into contact with the service. All contacts with the Okanogan County Transit Authority can be made through its administrative office located in Okanogan. We serve LEP persons daily via our buses, contracted services, paratransit demand response services, and vanpool program. In a joint effort to serve LEP persons, Okanogan County Transit Authority and Okanogan County Transportation and Nutrition specifically recruit staff proficient in Spanish.

Factor No. 4: The resources available to the recipient of the federal funds to assure meaningful access to the service by LEP persons. The Okanogan County Transit Authority currently employs Spanish speaking staff to support service to LEP citizens of Okanogan County. In addition, the Okanogan County Transit Authority currently contracts service with the Okanogan County Transportation and Nutrition, which currently employs staff that speak Spanish. The

Okanogan County Transit Authority will utilize the local DSHS office when an interpreter is needed for other languages. The Okanogan County Transit Authority provides a number of publications in both English and Spanish.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The Okanogan County Transit Authority has fully implemented the plan, and it will be reviewed annually, and LEP data will be tracked to determine what steps are appropriate in following years. We identify LEP persons in the service area by ridership, telephone contact counts, neighborhood demographics, general awareness surveys and on-board surveys. The Okanogan County Transit Authority's Title VI Policy and a Complaint Form is available on our website.

Schedules are printed in both English and Spanish. ADA Paratransit Applications are available in both English and Spanish. Service changes are posted in buses and at the main office in English and Spanish.

Title VI information is posted in English and Spanish schedules.

In order to comply with 49 CFR 21.9(d), the Okanogan County Transit Authority and its sub-recipients must provide information to beneficiaries regarding their Title VI obligations and inform beneficiaries of the protections against discrimination afforded them by Title VI.

THE OKANOGAN COUNTY TRANSIT AUTHORITY has established a statement of rights and a policy statement.

NOTIFYING BENEFICIARIES OF THEIR RIGHTS UNDER TITLE VI. Our website will include our Title VI policy and Complaint form, and will be publicly displayed in the Okanogan County Transit Authority facility. The Okanogan County Transit Authority schedules reference Title VI rights and the process for complaints. The website will also state: The Okanogan County Transit Authority does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, or national origin. New employees shall be informed of the provisions of Title VI and this policy, and the Okanogan County Transit Authority's expectations to perform their duties accordingly.

The Okanogan County Transit Authority no discrimina en base de raza, color o origen nacional.

A copy of the Okanogan County Transit Authority's Title VI Policy and Complaint Form will be available at our administration office located at 303 Second Avenue, S, Okanogan WA.

INCLUSIVE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Community outreach is a requirement of Title VI. Okanogan County Transit Authority recipients and sub-recipients shall seek out and consider the viewpoints of minority and low-income populations in the course of conducting public outreach. Okanogan County Transit Authority recipients has wide latitude to determine what specific measures are most appropriate and should make this determination based on the composition of the affected population, the public involvement process, and the resources of the Okanogan County Transit Authority. The Okanogan County Transit Authority will engage the public in its planning and decision-making processes, as well as its marketing and outreach activities and will include the Washington State

Migrant Council, Opportunities Industrialization Council, and the Okanogan County Developmental Disabilities Program for input.

CUSTOMER COMPLAINT PROCESS

Citizens may contact the Okanogan County Transit Authority to lodge a non-Title VI complaint or comment. All complaints/comments are put into a database, researched, followed-up on, and a response is made to the citizen. This process can be initiated by calling the Okanogan County Transit Authority at 509-557-6177, or by visiting the administrative office located at 303 Second Avenue, S, Okanogan.