

**COLUMBIA COUNTY, FLORIDA, BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
LOCAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
TITLE VI/NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY STATEMENT
INCLUDING 504 AND ADA REQUIREMENTS**

PURPOSE

In order to plan for efficient, effective, safe, equitable and reliable transportation systems, the County must have the input of its public. The County spends extensive staff and financial resources in furtherance of this goal and strongly encourages the participation of the entire community. Any person may attend any Board of County Commissioner (BOCC) Meeting including Committee Meetings and speak during the Public Comment portion of the agenda concerning a matter of the BOCC business or concern of the person. Persons should check the BOCC's website at www.columbiacountyfla.com for a list of scheduled meetings and agendas. Persons may also call the County Manager's Office to receive a calendar of upcoming meetings. Meeting location is accessible to the disabled. The BOCC and/or staff members also attend other Community meetings as necessary or when invited.

The Columbia County Board of County Commissioners (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.

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.

REFERENCE

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)

POLICY

(1) Title VI/Nondiscrimination Coordinator Designated:

- (a) The coordinator tasked with ensuring the County's compliance with this policy shall be the Human Resource Director. The Director's contact information is listed below:

Name: Lisa Roberts, Human Resources Director
Title VI/Nondiscrimination Coordinator
Address: P.O. Box 1529 Lake City, FL 32056-1529
Email: lisa_roberts@columbiacountyfla.com
Phone: 386-758-1006

(2) Complaint Procedures:

- (a) 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. Likewise, any person who feels that he or she has been retaliated against for having made such a complaint or for having testified on behalf of another who has made such a complaint may file a complaint with the County Title VI/Nondiscrimination Coordinator.
- (b) 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 complete description of the alleged discrimination. If the complaint cannot be submitted in writing, the complainant should contact the Title VI/Nondiscrimination Coordinator for assistance.
- (c) The Title VI/Nondiscrimination Coordinator will respond to the complaint within thirty (30) calendar days and will take reasonable steps to resolve the matter.
- (i) Should the County receive a complaint related to the administration of a federally or state funded project, the County will forward the complaint, along with a record of its disposition to the appropriate state agency for assistance/documentation purposes. For example, complaints of discrimination related to Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) funded projects can be forwarded to the following address:

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

- (ii) Should the complainant be unable or unwilling to complain to the County, the written complaint may be submitted directly to the assisting state agency.
 - (d) The County's Title VI/Nondiscrimination Coordinator has "easy access" to the County Manager and is not required to obtain management or other approval to discuss discrimination issues with the County Manager.
- (3) **ADA/504 Statement:**
- (a) The County will make every effort to ensure that its facilities, programs, services, and activities are accessible to those with disabilities. The County encourages participation on its advisory committees, public involvement activities and all other programs, services and activities by the disabled community and disability service groups.
 - (b) 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 all 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 ten (10) calendar days prior to the need for accommodation. Questions, concerns, comments or requests for accommodation should be made to the County's Title VI/Nondiscrimination Coordinator.
- (4) **Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Guidance:**
- (a) 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:

- (i) The number or proportion of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely to be encountered by the County's programs, services or activities.
 - (ii) The frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with these programs, services or activities.
 - (iii) The nature and importance of the program, service, or activity to people's lives and;
 - (iv) The resources available to the County and the likely costs of the LEP services.
 - (b) 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. Persons requiring special language services should contact the County's Title VI/Nondiscrimination Coordinator.
- (5) Public Involvement:**
- (a) Persons wishing to request special presentations by the County; volunteer in any of its activities or offer suggestions for improvement of County public involvement may contact the Title VI/Nondiscrimination Coordinator identified above.
- (6) Data Collection for Specific Programs:**
- (a) Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) regulations require federal-aid recipients to collect racial, ethnic and other similar demographic data on beneficiaries of or those affected by transportation programs, services and activities. The County accomplishes this through the use of census data, and other methods. From time to time, the County may find it necessary to request voluntary identification of certain racial, ethnic or other data from those who participate in its public involvement events. This information assists the County with improving its targeted outreach and measures of effectiveness.
- (7) Assurances for Specific Programs:**
- (a) Every three years 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".

RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT

**Office of the County Manager
Columbia County Board of County Commissioners
Ben Scott, County Manager
(386) 719-1452, Telephone
(386) 758-2182, Facsimile
ben_scott@columbiacountyfla.com**

Duly adopted by the Columbia County Board of County Commissioners on June 23, 2016.

Columbia County, Florida
Board of County Commissioners

By: 

Bucky Nash, Chairman

**Effective date: 6/23/16
Revision Date(s): 6/23/16**

Title VI / Nondiscrimination Program Complaint of Discrimination

Complainant(s) Name:		Complainant(s) Address:		
Complainant(s) Phone Number:				
Complainant's Representative's Name, Address, Phone Number and Relationship (e.g. friend, attorney, parent, etc):				
Name and Address of Agency, Institution, or Department Whom You Allege Discriminated Against You:				
Names of the Individual(s) Whom You Allege Discriminated Against You (If Known):				
Discrimination Because Of:	<input type="radio"/> Race	<input type="radio"/> Color	<input type="radio"/> National Origin	Date of Alleged Discrimination:
	<input type="radio"/> Sex	<input type="radio"/> Age	<input type="radio"/> Handicap/Disability	
	<input type="radio"/> Income Status	<input type="radio"/> Retaliation	<input type="radio"/> Other	
Please list the name(s) and phone number(s) of any person, if known, that the Columbia County Board of County Commissioners could contact for additional information to support or clarify your allegation(s).				
Please explain as clearly as possible how, why, when and where you believe you were discriminated against. Include as much background information as possible about the alleged acts of discrimination. Additional pages may be attached if needed.				
Complainant(s) or Complainant(s) Representatives Signature:			Date of Signature:	

Mail or Fax Completed Form to:

Lisa Roberts
 Title VI/Nondiscrimination Coordinator
 P.O. Box 1529
 Lake City, FL 32056-1529
 386-758-1006
 386-758-2182-Fax