

Calhoun County
Title VI/Nondiscrimination Policy and Plan

Policy Statement:

The Calhoun County Board of County Commissioners (Calhoun County) recognizes the diversity of residents and businesses in the County 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 decision-making process for transportation and other facilities/services. Thus, 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. A disabled person is any person who (a) has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities, (b) has a record of such an impairment, or (c) is regarded as having such an impairment

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:

Chelsea Snowden, Contracts and Grants Coordinator

Title VI/Nondiscrimination Coordinator

20859 Central Avenue East

Blountstown, FL 32424

Email: csnowden@fairpoint.net

Phone: 850-674-8075

Fax: 850-674-5553

Hearing Impaired: 711 (para Espanola-English 844-463-9710)

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. The nature of the complaint will determine the type of action and investigation required. 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 party. For issues regarding transportation, that party would be the District Office of the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT).

The County's Title VI Coordinator has 'easy access' to the County Commission Chairman (Chief Executive Officer - CEO) and is not required to obtain management or other approval to discuss discrimination issues with the CEO. However, should the complainant be unable or unwilling to complain to the County regarding a County facility or County service funded by another agency, the written complaint may be submitted directly to the funding agency.

For complaints regarding transportation, Florida Department of Transportation (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

For complaints regarding other issues, individuals may view the following website for the U.S. Department of Justice, where there are links for various types of complaint forms and contacts.
<http://www.justice.gov/crt/complaint/>

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 and other programs, services and activities.

The County will make every reasonable effort to ensure that its facilities, programs, services, and activities are accessible to those with disabilities. The County will make every reasonable 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 3 County business days prior to the need for accommodation.

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

Chelsea Snowden, Contracts and Grants Coordinator

Title VI Coordinator

20859 Central Avenue East

Blountstown, FL 32424

Email: csnowden@fairpoint.net

Phone: 850-674-8075

Fax: 850-674-5553

Hearing Impaired: 711 (para Espanola-English 844-463-9710)

Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Assistance:

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:

1. The number or proportion of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely to be encountered by the City/County's programs, services or activities.
2. The frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with these programs, services or activities.
3. The nature and importance of the program, service, or activity to people's lives and;
4. The resources available to the County and the likely costs of the LEP services.

1. Number or Proportion of LEP Persons

According to the US Census Bureau, the 2010 Calhoun County population was 14,625. Six percent of the County's total population (878 individuals, including children) spoke a language other than English at home, although that does not necessarily indicate a lack of English proficiency. The Quick Facts 2013 estimate of the County's Hispanic/Latino population is 5.7%, which relates closely to the total 6% speaking another language at home. Adults and teenagers, who are born in the United States may be presumed to be English proficient, especially in Calhoun County which does not have insular communities of non-English speakers. The foreign-born population was only 2.7%, or 395 individuals, including children. It should not be assumed that all foreign-born residents have LEP. Also, it would be reasonable to subtract some number of the LEP population as children who would not seek County services independently of their parents or guardians. Access to the public libraries would be the only service provided directly to children by the County (as opposed to services provided by state agencies, school board, etc.). This further reduces the LEP population to whom County services are actually available.

The County has conducted community outreach at public events, and informal indicators support an estimate that 1% of the local adult and teenage population is LEP. The Calhoun County Clerk of Court, Calhoun County Sheriff, and Calhoun County School Board all confirm that the number and percentage of LEP population is minimal.

Given this information, the County reasons that approximately 200 Calhoun County adults and teens may be LEP speakers of Spanish, and there is no measurable LEP population speaking any native language other than Spanish.

2. Frequency of Contact with LEP

County Commission staff report very little contact with or requests for services by LEP residents. The Senior Citizens Center, which provides the public van transportation service, serves less than 10 LEP residents per year. The Clerk of Court for Calhoun County estimates that the Court has a need for translation services for Spanish speakers no more than 5 times a year, and often those services are for people passing through Calhoun County but not living in the County. The Sheriff and School Board were contacted to determine the proportion of LEP served by those entities. The Sheriff's office reported no incidents during the past year where there was not an English speaker involved.

3. Nature and Importance to People's Lives

Services/facilities provided to the public by the Board of County Commissioners include roads and pedestrian walkways, solid waste and recycling collection, housing assistance, parks and recreation, emergency management, public libraries, and mosquito control. Other local services are provided by various local and state entities (senior citizen services including passenger van transit service, state health department, county school board, county sheriff, etc.) and not under the control of the Board of County Commissioners. Although not all residents receive, utilize or need all services/facilities, each of these is important to many or most people. For example, access to health care, emergency services, employment, and other essentials would be difficult or impossible without reliable transportation systems. The passenger van transportation service provided through the Senior Citizens Center is an essential part of the transportation system, and uses various bilingual County and state employees to translate.

4. Available Resources and Costs

The Board of County Commissioners has not received any formal requests for translation or interpretation of its programs, services or activities into Spanish or any other language. On the rare occasion that information is needed, the LEP individual typically has a relative or friend translating. The Court Administrator has a translator available but services are seldom used. The County has very limited resources language translation services. However, there is at least 1 employee in the public library system who translates Spanish-English when needed. A local resident is sometimes hired to translate in Spanish. The Clerk of Court also has informal contacts

who are available to translate orally or in writing.

Hiring anyone full time as a translator is not financially feasible. Translating documents into Spanish or any other language is also not feasible and is not required under “Safe Harbor” guidelines of the U. S. Department of Transportation and U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Those guidelines state that written translation of documents is not required unless at least 1,000 persons or 5% of the population of the potential service/facility users (whichever is less) are LEP, and the 5% has a minimum number of 50 individuals.

The analyses of these factors suggest that formal LEP services are not required at this time. However, the County has committed to the following:

1. Maintain a list of employees who competently speak Spanish and other languages and are willing to provide translation and/or interpretation services. Distribute the employee translator list to staff that regularly have contact with the public.
2. Utilize online translation programs when necessary and appropriate.
3. Translate essential documents into Spanish, including directions for contacting and receiving emergency services when requested.

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 tri-annually examine its LEP plan to ensure that it remains reflective of the community’s needs.

Persons requiring special language services should contact
The Calhoun County Clerk of Court Office
20859 Central Ave East Room 130
Blountstown, FL 32424
Phone: (850) 674-4545
Fax: (850) 674-5553,
E-Mail chand@calhounclerk.com
Hearing Impaired: 711 (para Espanola-English 844-463-9710)

Public Involvement and Outreach:

In order to plan for efficient, effective, safe, equitable and reliable transportation systems, the County must have the input of its public. The County encourages the participation of the entire community. The County holds a number of meetings, workshops and other events designed to gather public input on transportation, public facilities, housing and community services project planning and construction. Further, the County elected officials and staff attend and participates in other community events to promote its services to the public. Finally, the County is constantly seeking ways of measuring the effectiveness of its public involvement.

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:

Joe Wood, Director of Operations
20859 Central Avenue East
Blountstown, FL 32424
Phone (850) 674-8075
Fax (850) 674-4667
Email: joewood@fairpoint.net
Hearing Impaired: 711 (para Espanola-English 844-463-9710)

This Policy and Plan shall be posted on the County's website.

Data Collection:

Federal Highway Administration and other federal agency regulations require federal-aid recipients to collect racial, ethnic and other similar demographic data on beneficiaries of or those affected by transportation and other programs, services and activities. The County accomplishes this through the use of U.S. Census Bureau data and reports, driver and ridership surveys, its community development department/consultant, grant application beneficiary surveys, records of social and other direct services provided to and/or applied for by individuals, 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. Self-identification of personal data to the County will always be voluntary, and anonymous except for certain public record requirements. Moreover, the County will not release or otherwise use this data in any manner inconsistent with the federal and/or state regulations.

Assurances:

Every three years, or commensurate with a change in County executive leadership year, the County must certify to FHWA and FDOT and other agencies 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.