

## **Title VI Plan and Procedures**

### **Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964**

#### **Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission**



**Adopted date**

**September 23, 2021**



<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
I. Introduction.....	2
II. Overview of Services.....	3
III. Policy Statement and Authorities.....	4
IV. Nondiscrimination Assurances to DRPT.....	5
V. Plan Approval Document.....	6
VI. Organization and Title VI Program Responsibilities.....	7
VII. Procedures for Notifying the Public of Title VI Rights and How to File a Complaint.....	10
VIII. Language Assistance Plan for Persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP).....	21
IX. Requirements of Transit Providers .....	25

#### APPENDICES

- A Title VI Notice to the Public; List of Locations
- B Title VI Complaint Form
- C Investigations, Lawsuits and Complaints Document
- D Summary of Outreach Efforts

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in programs and activities receiving Federal financial assistance. Specifically, Title VI provides that "no person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, 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." (42 U.S.C. Section 2000d).

The Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 clarified the intent of Title VI to include all programs and activities of Federal-aid recipients, sub-recipients, and contractors whether those programs and activities are federally funded or not.

Recently, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has placed renewed emphasis on Title VI issues, including providing meaningful access to persons with Limited English Proficiency.

Recipients of public transportation funding from FTA and the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) are required to develop policies, programs, and practices that ensure that federal and state transit dollars are used in a manner that is nondiscriminatory as required under Title VI.

This document details how Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission (NSVRC) incorporates nondiscrimination policies and practices in providing services to the public. Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission's Title VI policies and procedures are documented in this plan and its appendices and attachments. This plan will be updated periodically (at least every three years) to incorporate changes and additional responsibilities that arise.

## **II. OVERVIEW OF SERVICES**

The Northern Shenandoah Valley region encompasses the five counties in the northwest corner of Virginia--Clarke, Frederick, Page, Shenandoah, Warren and all jurisdictions within--as well as the City of Winchester. The NSVRC exists to bring these local governments together to pursue common goals, work together on regional issues and find efficiencies through collaboration.

The Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission is one of 21 planning district commissions established by the Commonwealth of Virginia. Each commission serves a planning district, which is a political subdivision of the Commonwealth chartered under the Regional Cooperation Act. The Regional Commission is made up of elected officials and citizens appointed to the Commission by local governments. Visit the Virginia Association of Planning District Commissions to learn more.

The NSVRC manages the following transportation programs: Winchester-Frederick County Metropolitan Planning Organization, RideSmart Commuter Services, Rural Transportation Planning and Shenandoah County Transit Services. Managing these transportation programs allows the NSVRC to provide many opportunities for the citizens of the Northern Shenandoah Valley to provide input and participation through a variety of outlets. The programs have oversight through committees, boards and/or state and federal representatives. The NSVRC works closely with State and Federal agencies to ensure adherence to Title VI.

### III. POLICY STATEMENT AND AUTHORITIES

#### Title VI Policy Statement

The Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission is committed to ensuring that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, as provided by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 (PL 100.259), be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity, whether those programs and activities are federally funded or not.

The Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission Title VI Manager is responsible for initiating and monitoring Title VI activities, preparing required reports, and other responsibilities as required by Title 23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 200, and Title 49 CFR Part 21.

*Brandon P. Davis*

9/23/2021

**Brandon Davis, Executive Director**

**Date**

#### Authorities

Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act provides that 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 receiving federal financial assistance (refer to 49 CFR Part 21). The Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 broadened the scope of Title VI coverage by expanding the definition of the terms “programs or activities” to include all programs or activities of Federal Aid recipients, sub recipients, and contractors, whether such programs and activities are federally assisted or not.

Additional authorities and citations include: Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. Section 2000d); Federal Transit Laws, as amended (49 U.S.C. Chapter 53 et seq.); Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4601, et seq.); Department of Justice regulation, 28 CFR part 42, Subpart F, “Coordination of Enforcement of Nondiscrimination in Federally-Assisted Programs” (December 1, 1976, unless otherwise noted); U.S. DOT regulation, 49 CFR part 21, “Nondiscrimination in Federally-Assisted Programs of the Department of Transportation—Effectuation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964” (June 18, 1970, unless otherwise noted); Joint FTA/Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) regulation, 23 CFR part 771, “Environmental Impact and Related Procedures” (August 28, 1987); Joint FTA/FHWA regulation, 23 CFR part 450 and 49 CFR part 613, “Planning Assistance and Standards,” (October 28, 1993, unless otherwise noted); U.S. DOT Order 5610.2, “U.S. DOT Order on Environmental Justice to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations,” (April 15, 1997); U.S. DOT Policy Guidance Concerning Recipients’ Responsibilities to Limited English Proficient Persons, (December 14, 2005), and Section 12 of FTA’s Master Agreement, FTA MA 13 (October 1, 2006).

#### **IV. NONDISCRIMINATION ASSURANCES TO DRPT**

In accordance with 49 CFR Section 21.7(a), every application for financial assistance from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) must be accompanied by an assurance that the applicant will carry out the program in compliance with DOT's Title VI regulations. This requirement is fulfilled when the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) submits its annual certifications and assurances to FTA. DRPT shall collect Title VI assurances from sub-recipients prior to passing through FTA funds.

As part of the Certifications and Assurances submitted to DRPT with the Annual Grant Application and all Federal Transit Administration grants submitted to the DRPT, Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission submits a Nondiscrimination Assurance which addresses compliance with Title VI as well as nondiscrimination in hiring (EEO) and contracting (DBE), and nondiscrimination on the basis of disability (ADA).

In signing and submitting this assurance, Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission confirms to DRPT the agency's commitment to nondiscrimination and compliance with federal and state requirements.

## V. PLAN APPROVAL DOCUMENT

I hereby acknowledge the receipt of the Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission's Title VI Implementation Plan. I have reviewed and approve the Plan. I am committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from participation in, or denied the benefits of Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission's transportation services on the basis of race, color, or national origin, as protected by Title VI according to Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Circular 4702.1B Title VI requirements and guidelines for FTA sub-recipients.

Brandon P. Davis

9/23/2021

Brandon Davis, Executive Director

Date

Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission

**NOTE: \*\*Provide here\*\* a copy of meeting minutes, resolution, or other appropriate documentation showing that the board of directors or appropriate governing entity of official(s) responsible for policy decisions has reviewed and approved the Title VI Program.**

## **VI. ORGANIZATION AND TITLE VI PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission's Executive Director is responsible for ensuring implementation of the agency's Title VI program. Title VI program elements are interrelated and responsibilities may overlap. (Note, more than one official may be designated to serve as the Title VI official). The specific areas of responsibility have been delineated below for purposes of clarity.

### **Overall Organization for Title VI**

The Title VI Manager and staff are responsible for coordinating the overall administration of the Title VI program, plan, and assurances, including complaint handling, data collection and reporting, annual review and updates, and internal education.

### **Detailed Responsibilities of the Title VI Manager**

The Title VI Manager is charged with the responsibility for implementing, monitoring, and ensuring compliance with Title VI regulations. Title VI responsibilities are as follows:

1. Process the disposition of Title VI complaints received.
2. Collect statistical data (race, color or national origin) of participants in and beneficiaries of agency programs, (e.g., affected citizens, and impacted communities).
3. Conduct annual Title VI reviews of agency to determine the effectiveness of program activities at all levels.
4. Conduct Title VI reviews of construction contractors, consultant contractors, suppliers, and other recipients of federal-aid fund contracts administered through the agency.
5. Conduct training programs on Title VI and other related statutes for agency employees.
6. Prepare a yearly report of Title VI accomplishments and goals, as required.
7. Develop Title VI information for dissemination to the general public and, where appropriate, in languages other than English.
8. Identify and eliminate discrimination.
9. Establish procedures for promptly resolving deficiency status and writing the remedial action necessary, all within a period not to exceed 90 days.



## **General Title VI responsibilities of the agency**

The Title VI Manager is responsible for substantiating that these elements of the plan are appropriately implemented and maintained, and for coordinating with those responsible for public outreach and involvement and service planning and delivery.

### **1. Data collection**

To ensure that Title VI reporting requirements are met, the Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission will maintain:

- A database or log of Title VI complaints received. The investigation of and response to each complaint is tracked within the database or log.
- A log of the public outreach and involvement activities undertaken to ensure that minority and low-income people had a meaningful access to these activities.

### **2. Annual Report and Updates**

As a sub-recipient of FTA funds, the Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission is required to submit a Quarterly Report Form to DRPT that documents any Title VI complaints received during the preceding quarter and for each year. The Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission will also maintain and provide to DRPT on an annual basis, the log of public outreach and involvement activities undertaken to ensure that minority and low-income people had a meaningful access to these activities.

Further, we will submit to DRPT updates to any of the following items since the previous submission, or a statement to the effect that these items have not been changed since the previous submission, indicating date:

- A copy of any compliance review report for reviews conducted in the last three years, along with the purpose or reason for the review, the name of the organization that performed the review, a summary of findings and recommendations, and a report on the status or disposition of the findings and recommendations
- Limited English Proficiency (LEP) plan
- procedures for tracking and investigating Title VI complaints
- A list of Title VI investigations, complaints or lawsuits filed with the agency since the last submission
- A copy of the agency notice to the public that it complies with Title VI and instructions on how to file a discrimination complaint

### **3. Annual review of Title VI program**

Each year, in preparing for the Annual Report and Updates, the Title VI Manager will review the agency's Title VI program to assure implementation of the Title VI plan. In addition, they will review agency operational guidelines and publications, including those for contractors, to verify that Title VI language and provisions are incorporated, as appropriate.

#### **4. Dissemination of information related to the Title VI program**

Information on our Title VI program will be disseminated to agency employees, contractors, and beneficiaries, as well as to the public, as described in the “public outreach and involvement” section of this document, and in other languages when needed according to the LEP plan as well as federal and State laws/regulations.

#### **5. Resolution of complaints**

Any individual may exercise his or her right to file a complaint if that person believes that he, she or any other program beneficiaries have been subjected to unequal treatment or discrimination in the receipt of benefits/services or prohibited by non-discrimination requirements. The Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission will report the complaint to DRPT within three business days (per DRPT requirements), and make a concerted effort to resolve complaints locally, using the agency’s Title VI Complaint Procedures. All Title VI complaints and their resolution will be logged as described under Section 1. Data collection and reported annually (in addition to immediately) to DRPT.

#### **6. Written policies and procedures**

Our Title VI policies and procedures are documented in this plan and its appendices and attachments. This plan will be updated periodically to incorporate changes and additional responsibilities that arise. During the course of the Annual Title VI Program Review (item 3 above), the Title VI Manager will determine whether or not an update is needed.

#### **7. Internal education**

Since VRT is the transit contractor their employees will receive training on Title VI policies and procedures upon hiring and upon promotion. This training will include requirements of Title VI, our obligations under Title VI (LEP requirements included), and required data that must be gathered and maintained. In addition, training will be provided when any Title VI-related policies or procedures change (agency-wide training), or when appropriate in resolving a complaint.

Title VI training is the responsibility of the transit contractor to its employees.

#### **8. Title VI clauses in contracts**

In all federal procurements requiring a written contract or Purchase Order (PO), the Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission’s contract/PO will include appropriate non-discrimination clauses. The Title VI Manager will work with the Finance Director and the Senior Project and Operations Manager who are responsible for procurement contracts and PO’s to ensure appropriate non-discrimination clauses are included.

## **VII. PROCEDURES FOR NOTIFYING THE PUBLIC OF TITLE VI RIGHTS AND HOW TO FILE A COMPLAINT**

### **Requirement to Provide a Title VI Public Notice**

Title 49 CFR Section 21.9(d) requires recipients to provide information to the public regarding the recipient's obligations under DOT's Title VI regulations and apprise members of the public of the protections against discrimination afforded to them by Title VI. At a minimum, Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission shall disseminate this information to the public by posting a Title VI notice on the agency's website and in public areas of the agency's office(s), including the reception desk, meeting rooms, in federally-funded vehicles, etc. The following Sample Public Notice is to be included as APPENDIX A- Title VI Notice to the Public; List of Locations, and displayed in your vehicles and facilities. Place Notice on agency letterhead:

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in programs and activities receiving Federal financial assistance. Specifically, Title VI provides that "no person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, 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" (42 U.S.C. Section 2000d).

The Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission is committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from participation in, or denied the benefits of its transportation services on the basis of race, color, or national origin, as protected by Title VI in Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Circular 4702.1B. If you feel you are being denied participation in or being denied benefits of the transit services provided by Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission, or otherwise being discriminated against because of your race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability, our contact information is:

Name: Brandon Davis

Title: Executive Director

Agency Name: Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission

Address: 400 Kendrick Lane, Suite E

City, State Zip code: Front Royal, VA 22630

Telephone Number: 540-636-8800

Email address: [info@nsvregion.org](mailto:info@nsvregion.org)

## **Title VI Complaint Procedures**

### **Requirement to Develop Title VI Complaint Procedures and Complaint Form.**

In order to comply with the reporting requirements established in 49 CFR Section 21.9(b), all recipients shall develop procedures for investigating and tracking Title VI complaints filed against them and make their procedures for filing a complaint available to members of the public. Recipients must also develop a Title VI complaint form. The form and procedure for filing a complaint shall be available on the recipient's website and at their facilities.

### **Sample of Narrative**

Any individual may exercise his or her right to file a complaint with the Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission if that person believes that he or she has been subjected to unequal treatment or discrimination in the receipt of benefits or services. We will report the complaint to DRPT within three business days (per DRPT requirements), and make a concerted effort to resolve complaints locally, using the agency's Nondiscrimination Complaint Procedures. All Title VI complaints and their resolution will be logged and reported annually (in addition to immediately) to DRPT.

**A person may also file a complaint directly with the Federal Transit Administration, Office of Civil Rights, Attention: Title VI Program Coordinator, East Building, 5<sup>th</sup> floor – TCR, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590.**

The Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission includes the following language on all printed information materials, on the agency's website, in press releases, in public notices, in published documents, and on posters on the interior of each vehicle operated in passenger service:

***Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission is committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from participation in, or denied the benefits of its transportation services on the basis of race, color or national origin, as protected by Title VI in the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Circular 4702.1B. For additional information on Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission's nondiscrimination policies and procedures, or to file a complaint, please visit the website at <http://nsvregion.org/index.html> or contact Brandon Davis, Executive Director, 400 Kendrick Lane, Suite E, Front Royal, VA 22630.***

Instructions for filing Title VI complaints are posted on the agency's website and in posters on the interior of each vehicle operated in passenger service and agency's facilities, and are also included within Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission's passenger policies and transit brochure.

## **Procedures for Handling and Reporting Investigations/Complaints and Lawsuits**

Should any Title VI investigations be initiated by FTA or DRPT, or any Title VI lawsuits are filed against Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission, the agency will follow these procedures:

### **Procedures**

1. Any individual, group of individuals, or entity that believes they have been subjected to discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin may file a written complaint with the Title VI Manager. The complaint is to be filed in the following manner:
  - a. A formal complaint must be filed within 180 calendar days of the alleged occurrence.
  - b. The complaint shall be in writing and signed by the complainant(s).
  - c. The complaint should include:
    - the complainant's name, address, and contact information
    - (i.e., telephone number, email address, etc.)
    - the date(s) of the alleged act of discrimination (if multiple days, include the date when the complainant(s) became aware of the alleged discrimination and the date on which the alleged discrimination was discontinued or the latest instance).
    - a description of the alleged act of discrimination
    - the location(s) of the alleged act of discrimination (include vehicle number if appropriate)
    - an explanation of why the complainant believes the act to have been discriminatory on the basis of race, color, and national origin
    - if known, the names and/or job titles of those individuals perceived as parties in the incident
    - contact information for any witnesses
    - indication of any related complaint activity (i.e., was the complaint also submitted to DRPT or FTA?)
  - d. The complaint shall be submitted to the Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission's Title VI Manager at 400 Kendrick Lane, Suite E, Front Royal, VA 22630 or [info@nsvregion.org](mailto:info@nsvregion.org).
  - e. Complaints received by any other employee of the Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission will be immediately forwarded to the Title VI Manager.
  - f. In the case where a complainant is unable or incapable of providing a written statement, a verbal complaint of discrimination may be made to the Title VI Manager. Under these circumstances, the complainant will be interviewed, and the Title VI Manager will assist the complainant in converting the verbal allegations to writing.
2. Upon receipt of the complaint, the Title VI Manager will immediately:
  - a. notify DRPT (no later than 3 business days from receipt)
  - b. notify the Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission's Chair of the Board

- c. ensure that the complaint is entered in the complaint database
- 3. Within 3 business days of receipt of the complaint, the Title VI Manager will contact the complainant by telephone to set up an interview.
- 4. The complainant will be informed that they have a right to have a witness or representative present during the interview and can submit any documentation he/she perceives as relevant to proving his/her complaint.
- 5. If DRPT has assigned staff to assist with the investigation, the Title VI Manager will offer an opportunity to participate in the interview.
- 6. The alleged discriminatory service or program official will be given the opportunity to respond to all aspects of the complainant's allegations.
- 7. The Title VI Manager will determine, based on relevancy or duplication of evidence, which witnesses will be contacted and questioned.
- 8. The investigation may also include:
  - a. investigating contractor operating records, policies or procedures
  - b. reviewing routes, schedules, and fare policies
  - c. reviewing operating policies and procedures
  - d. reviewing scheduling and dispatch records
  - e. observing behavior of the individual whose actions were cited in the complaint
- 9. All steps taken and findings in the investigation will be documented in writing and included in the complaint file.
- 10. The Title VI Manager will contact the complainant at the conclusion of the investigation, but prior to writing the final report, and give the complainant an opportunity to give a rebuttal statement at the end of the investigation process.
- 11. At the conclusion of the investigation and within 60 days of the interview with the complainant, the Title VI Manager will prepare a report that includes a narrative description of the incident, identification of persons interviewed, findings, and recommendations for disposition. This report will be provided to the NSVRC Chair of the Board, DRPT, and, if appropriate, Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission's legal counsel.
- 12. The Title VI Manager will send a letter to the complainant notifying them of the outcome of the investigation. If the complaint was substantiated, the letter will indicate the course of action that will be followed to correct the situation. If the complaint is determined to be unfounded, the letter will explain the reasoning, and refer the complainant to DRPT in the event the complainant wishes to appeal the determination. This letter will be copied to DRPT.
- 13. A complaint may be dismissed for the following reasons:
  - a. The complainant requests the withdrawal of the complaint.
  - b. An interview cannot be scheduled with the complainant after reasonable attempts.
  - c. The complainant fails to respond to repeated requests for additional information needed to process the complaint.
- 14. DRPT will serve as the appealing forum to a complainant that is not satisfied with the outcome of an investigation conducted by the Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission. DRPT will analyze the facts of the case and will issue its conclusion to the appellant according to their procedures.

## Transportation-Related Title VI Investigations, Complaints, and Lawsuits

### Background

All recipients shall prepare and maintain a list of any of the following that allege discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin:

- Active investigations conducted by FTA and entities other than FTA;
- Lawsuits; and
- Complaints naming the recipient.

This list shall include the date that the transportation-related Title VI investigation, lawsuit, or complaint was filed; a summary of the allegation(s); the status of the investigation, lawsuit, or complaint; and actions taken by the recipient in response, or final findings related to the investigation, lawsuit, or complaint. This list shall be included in the Title VI Program submitted to DRPT every three years and information shall be provided to DRPT quarterly and annually.

### List of Investigations, Lawsuits and Complaints

	<b>Date (Month, Day, Year)</b>	<b>Summary (include basis of complaint: race, color or national origin)</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Action(s) taken</b>
<b>Investigations</b>				
<b>1.</b>				
<b>Lawsuits</b>				
<b>1.</b>				
<b>Complaints</b>				
<b>1.</b>				

## **Public Outreach and Involvement**

### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN**

#### **Introduction**

The Public Participation Plan (PPP) is a guide for ongoing public participation endeavors. Its purpose is to ensure that Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission utilizes effective means of providing information and receiving public input on transportation decisions from low income, minority and limited English proficient (LEP) populations, as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and its implementing regulations.

Under federal regulations, transit operators must take reasonable steps to ensure that Limited English Proficient (LEP) persons have meaningful access to their programs and activities. This means that public participation opportunities, normally provided in English, should be accessible to persons who have a limited ability to speak, read, write, or understand English.

In addition to language access measures, other major components of the PPP include: public participation design factors; a range of public participation methods to provide information, to invite participation and/or to seek input; examples to demonstrate how population-appropriate outreach methods can be and were identified and utilized; and performance measures and objectives to ensure accountability and a means for improving over time.

Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission established a public participation plan or process that will determine how, when, and how often specific public participation activities should take place, and which specific measures are most appropriate.

Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission will make these determinations based on a demographic analysis of the population(s) affected, the type of plan, program, and/or service under consideration, and the resources available. Efforts to involve minority and LEP populations in public participation activities may include both comprehensive measures, such as placing public notices at all transit stations, stops, and vehicles, as well as targeted measures to address linguistic, institutional, cultural, economic, historical, or other barriers that may prevent minority and LEP persons from effectively participating in our decision-making process.

#### **A SAMPLE OF EFFECTIVE PUBLIC OUTREACH PRACTICES INCLUDES:**

- a. Determining and identifying what meetings and program activities lend themselves to client public participation.
- b. Scheduling meetings at times and locations that are convenient and accessible for minority and LEP communities.
- c. Employing different meeting sizes and formats.



- d. Coordinating with community and faith-based organizations, educational institutions, and other organizations to implement public engagement strategies that reach out specifically to members of affected minority and/or LEP communities.
- e. Considering radio, television, or newspaper ads on stations and in publications that serve LEP populations. Outreach to LEP populations could also include audio programming available on podcasts.
- f. Providing opportunities for public participation through means other than written communication, such as personal interviews or use of audio or video recording devices to capture oral comments.

## **VIII. LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE PLAN FOR PERSONS WITH LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY (LEP)**

### **LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE PLAN FOR PERSONS WITH LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY (LEP)**

#### **Introduction and Legal Basis**

LEP is a term that defines any individual not proficient in the use of the English language. The establishment and operation of an LEP program meets objectives set forth in Title VI of the Civil Rights Act and Executive Order 13116, Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP). This Executive Order requires federal agencies receiving financial assistance to address the needs of non-English speaking persons. The Executive Order also establishes compliance standards to ensure that the programs and activities that are provided by a transportation provider in English are accessible to LEP communities. This includes providing meaningful access to individuals who are limited in their use of English. The following LEP language implementation plan, developed by Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission is based on FTA guidelines.

As required, Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission developed a written LEP Plan (below). Using 2010 and American Community Survey (ACS) Census data, has evaluated data to determine the extent of need for translation services of its vital documents and materials.

LEP persons can be a significant market for public transit, and reaching out to these individuals can help increase their utilization of transit. Therefore, it also makes good business sense to translate vital information into languages that the larger LEP populations in the community can understand.

#### **Assessment of Needs and Resources**

The need and resources for LEP language assistance were determined through a four-factor analysis as recommended by FTA guidance.

##### **Factor 1: Assessment of the Number and Proportion of LEP Persons Likely to be Served or Encountered in the Eligible Service Population**

The agency has reviewed census data on the number of individuals in its service area that have limited English Proficiency, as well as the languages they speak.

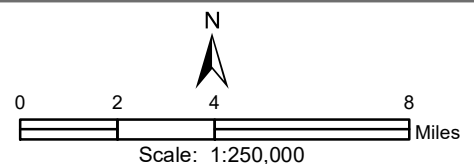
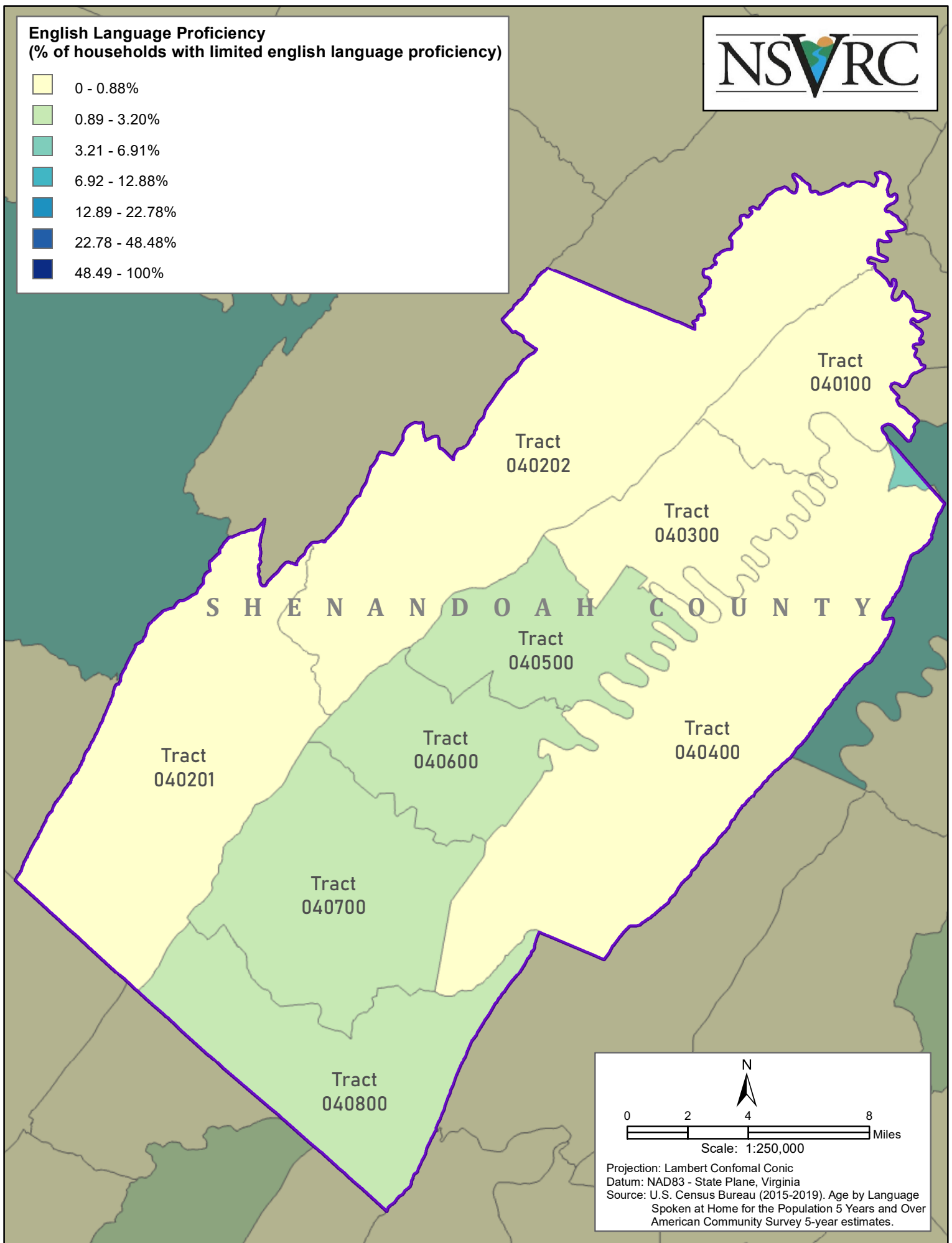
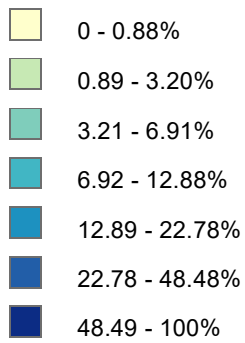
## U.S. Census Data – American Community Survey (2015)

Data from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) were obtained through [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov) by Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission's service area. The agency's service area includes a total of 1400 (3.5%) persons with Limited English Proficiency (those persons who indicated that they spoke English "less than very well," in the 2015 ACS Census).

Information from the 2015 ACS also provides more detail on the specific languages that are spoken by those who report that they speak English less than very well. Languages spoken at home by those with LEP are presented below. These data indicate the extent to which translations into other language are needed to meet the needs of LEP persons.

Shenandoah County, Virginia		
Label	Estimate	Margin of Error
Total:	40,337	±103
Speak only English	37,041	±237
Spanish or Spanish Creole:	2,622	±200
Speak English "very well"	1,222	±249
Speak English less than "very well"	1,400	±261
French (incl. Patois, Cajun):	61	±46
Speak English "very well"	49	±44
Speak English less than "very well"	12	±15
French Creole:	0	±25
Speak English "very well"	0	±25
Speak English less than "very well"	0	±25
Italian:	41	±35
Speak English "very well"	41	±35
Speak English less than "very well"	0	±25
Portuguese or Portuguese Creole:	48	±77
Speak English "very well"	48	±77
Speak English less than "very well"	0	±25
German:	100	±68
Speak English "very well"	75	±56
Speak English less than "very well"	25	±24
Yiddish:	0	±25
Speak English "very well"	0	±25
Speak English less than "very well"	0	±25
Other West Germanic languages:	10	±16
Speak English "very well"	10	±16
Speak English less than "very well"	0	±25
Scandinavian languages:	0	±25

**English Language Proficiency**  
(% of households with limited english language proficiency)



Projection: Lambert Conformal Conic  
Datum: NAD83 - State Plane, Virginia  
Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2015-2019). Age by Language Spoken at Home for the Population 5 Years and Over American Community Survey 5-year estimates.

It is noted that there are relatively low number of LEP persons in the service area - no language is spoken by over 5% or a total of 1,000 persons in the LEP population.

**Factor 2: Assessment of Frequency with Which LEP Individuals Come Into Contact with the Transit Services or System**

Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission reviewed the relevant benefits, services, and information provided by the agency and determined the extent to which LEP persons have come into contact with these functions through the following channels:

- Contact with transit vehicle operators;
- Contact with transit station managers;
- Calls to Virginia Regional Transit's customer service telephone line;
- Visits to the agency's headquarters;
- Access to the agency's website;
- Attendance at community meetings or public hearings hosted by Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission;
- Contact with the agency's ADA complementary paratransit system (including applying for eligibility, making reservations, and communicating with drivers).

We will continue to identify emerging populations as updated Census and American Community Survey data become available for our service area. In addition, when LEP persons contact our agency, we attempt to identify their language and keep records on contacts to accurately assess the frequency of contact. To assist in language identification, we use a language identification flashcard based on that which was developed by the U.S. Census. (<http://www.lep.gov/ISpeakCards2004.pdf>)]

**Information from Community Organizations that Serve LEP Persons**

To supplement the Census, education, and labor department data, Virginia Regional Transit conducted community outreach to the following organizations that work with LEP populations. VRT works in conjunction with the following:

- *State and local governments;*

VRT works with the responsible transportation entity in each service area as requested to include public meetings and transportation meetings to include human service organizations.

**Factor 3: Assessment of the Nature and Importance of the Transit Services to the LEP Population**

Virginia Regional Transit provides public transportation which focuses on the needs for people who have no transportation options as well as those who choose to ride public

transit. VRT works closely with the local governments to identify transportation needs such as senior living and the LEP populations to ensure rides are provided to improve their quality of life. Specific needs include work, school, medical appointments and shopping.

Based on past experience serving and communicating with LEP persons and interviews with community agencies, we learned that the following services/routes/programs are currently of particular importance LEP persons in the community.

- VRT provides demand response service in each service area which allows transportation for LEP persons. This service has been an overwhelming success as reported to the local governments in the service areas.

The following are the most critical services provided by Virginia Regional Transit for all customers, including LEP persons.

- Safety and security awareness instructions
- Emergency evacuation procedures
- Public transit services, including reduced fare application process
- ADA paratransit services (if your agency operates fixed-route), including eligibility certification process
- Other paratransit services
- Services targeted at low income persons

#### **Factor 4: Assessment of the Resources Available to the Agency and Costs**

The following language assistance measures currently being provided by Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission:

- Due to this being a new transit system and the low number of LEP individuals, NSVRC will monitor new requests for services due to language barriers on an annual basis.

We anticipate that these activities and costs will increase as follows.

Based on the analysis of demographic data and contact with community organizations and LEP persons, Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission has determined that the following additional services are ideally needed to provide meaningful access:

Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission will make incremental changes to the type of written and oral language assistance provided as well as to their staff training and community outreach programs. The cost of proposed changes and the available resources will affect the changes that can be made and

therefore Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission will attempt to identify the most cost effective approaches.

### ***Resources***

The available budget that could currently be devoted to additional language assistance expenses is \$100. This amount is likely to be stable over time.

Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission has not requested additional grant funding for language assistance at this time.

In addition, in-kind assistance may be available through the Department of Rail and Public Transportation or the Virginia Department of Transportation.

### ***Feasible and Appropriate Language Assistance Measures***

Based on the available resources, the following language assistance measures are feasible and appropriate for our agency at this time: This being a new transit system, we have not had a call for language assistance but could get help from DRPT or VDOT.

## **LEP Implementation Plan**

The Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission contracts with the Virginia Regional Transit to deliver transit services.

Through the four-factor analysis, Virginia Regional Transit has determined that the following types of language assistance are most needed and feasible:

- Translation of vital documents into Spanish. These documents include:
  - System Map and Ride Guide
  - Application for reduced fare
  - All printed materials on ADA Paratransit, including brochure, eligibility application package, and passenger policies and procedures
- Attempt to hire bilingual staff with competency in spoken and written (Spanish)
- Language Line Translation Services for telephone contacts.
- In-person translation for ADA eligibility assessments.

### ***Staff Access to Language Assistance Services***

Agency staff who come into contact with LEP persons can access language services by offering the individual a language identification flashcard. All staff will be provided with a list of available language assistance services and additional information and referral resources (such as community organizations which can assist LEP persons). This list will be updated at least annually.

### ***Responding to LEP Callers***

Staff who answer calls from the public respond to LEP customers as follows:

Calls received from LEP persons are transferred to the appropriate language speaking person usually on staff. For those we cannot accommodate, we have a language line available from our local governments to ensure the passenger needs are met.

### ***Responding to Written Communications from LEP Persons***

The following procedures are followed when responding to written communications from LEP persons are addressed and handled by an appropriate bi-lingual staff member for accuracy purposes.

### ***Responding to LEP Individuals in Person***

The following procedures are followed when an LEP person visits our customer service and administrative office to include a person from management as well as a bi-lingual staff member to meet the needs of the person.

The following procedures are followed by operators when an LEP person has a question on board a Virginia Regional Transit vehicle: incidents regarding a driver are usually handled over the radio (point to point) with an appropriate bi-lingual staff member or a physical appearance from our supervisory team along with a language speaking staff member when available.

### ***Staff Training***

The Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission contracts with the Virginia Regional Transit to deliver transit services. Virginia Regional Transit per the contract will deliver their own staff training.

As noted previously, all Virginia Regional Transit staff are provided with a list of available language assistance services and additional information and referral resources, updated annually.

All new hires receive training on assisting LEP persons as part of their sensitivity and customer service training. This includes:

- A summary of the transit agency's responsibilities under the DOT LEP Guidance;
- A summary of the agency's language assistance plan;
- A summary of the number and proportion of LEP persons in the agency's service area, the frequency of contact between the LEP population and the agency's programs and activities, and the importance of the programs and activities to the population;



- A description of the type of language assistance that the agency is currently providing and instructions on how agency staff can access these products and services; and
- A description of the agency's cultural sensitivity policies and practices.

Also, all staff who routinely come into contact with customers, as well as their supervisors and all management staff, receive annual refresher training on policies and procedures related to assisting LEP persons.

### ***Providing Notice to LEP Persons***

LEP persons are notified of the availability of language assistance through the following approaches:

- following our Title VI policy statement included on our vital documents.
- on our website, with links to translations of vital documents in other languages.
- through signs posted on our vehicles and in our customer service and administrative offices.
- Through outreach efforts to community organizations

LEP persons will also be included in all community outreach efforts related to service and fare changes.

### ***Monitoring/updating the plan***

The Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional will partner with Virginia Regional Transit, the contractor for transit services, in monitoring and updating the plan as outlined below.

This plan will be updated on a periodic basis (at least every three years), based on feedback, updated demographic data, and resource availability.

As part of ongoing outreach to community organizations, Virginia Regional Transit will solicit feedback on the effectiveness of language assistance provided and unmet needs. In addition, we will conduct a review of updated Census data of the adequacy and quality of the language assistance provided, and determines changes to LEP needs.

In preparing the triennial update of this plan, Virginia Regional Transit will conduct an internal assessment using the Language Assistance Monitoring Checklist provided in the FTA's "Implementing the Department of Transportation's Policy Guidance Concerning Recipients' Responsibilities to Limited English Proficient (LEP) Persons: A Handbook for Public Transportation Providers."

Based on the feedback received from community members and agency employees, Virginia Regional Transit will make incremental changes to the type of written and oral language assistance provided as well as to their staff training and community outreach programs. The cost of proposed changes and the available resources will affect the

enhancements that can be made, and therefore Virginia Regional Transit will attempt to identify the most cost-effective approaches.

As the community grows and new LEP groups emerge, Virginia Regional Transit will strive to address the needs for additional language assistance.

#### **MINORITY REPRESENTATION ON PLANNING AND ADVISORY BODIES**

Title 49 CFR Section 21.5(b)(1)(vii) states that a recipient may not, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, “deny a person the opportunity to participate as a member of a planning, advisory, or similar body which is an integral part of the program.”

The Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission and Virginia Regional Transit participate in transit related, non-elected planning boards, advisory councils and/ or committees. NSVRC and VRT currently do not have its own Title VI committee.

## **IX. REQUIREMENTS OF TRANSIT PROVIDERS**

### **Requirements and Guidelines for Fixed Route Transit Providers**

The requirements apply to all providers of fixed route public transportation (also referred to as transit providers) that receive Federal financial assistance, inclusive of States, local and regional entities, and public and private entities.

Transit providers that are sub-recipients will submit the information to their primary recipient (the entity from whom they directly receive transit funds) every three years on a schedule determined by the primary recipient. The requirements are scaled based on the size of the fixed route transit provider. Virginia Regional Transit is a sub-recipient to the Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission and is contracted to provide transit services.

#### **REQUIRED: Service Standards and Policies**

- **Service Standards**
  - Vehicle load, Vehicle headway, On-time performance, Service availability
- **Service Policies**
  - Transit amenities, Vehicle assignment

Virginia Regional Transit is required to plan and deliver transportation services in an equitable manner. This means the distribution of service levels and quality is to be equitable between minority and low income populations and the overall population. Virginia Regional Transit has reviewed its services and policies to ensure that those services and benefits are provided in an equitable manner to all persons.

#### **Service Standards**

The agency has set standards and policies that address how services are distributed across the transit system service area to ensure that the distribution affords users equitable access to these services. As shown in the following maps, the agency's routes (Please see website for route maps). The agency's demand responsive services are available to all callers on a first-come first-served basis, without regard for race, color or national origin.

The following system-wide service standards are used to guard against service design or operations decisions from having disparate impacts. All of Virginia Regional Transit's services meet the agency's established standards; thus it is judged that services are provided equitably to all persons in the service area, regardless of race, color or national origin.

- **Vehicle load** -Vehicle load is expressed as the ratio of passengers to the total number of seats on a vehicle at its maximum load point. The standard for maximum vehicle

load varies among bus types due to customer demand, all of Virginia Regional Transit's services meet these standards

- **Vehicle headway** -Vehicle headway is the amount of time between two vehicles traveling in the same direction on a given route. A shorter headway corresponds to more frequent service. The standard for vehicle headways is 30-60mins., all of Virginia Regional Transit's services meet this standard.
- **On-time performance** -On-time performance is a measure of runs completed as scheduled. This criterion first must define what is considered to be "on time." The standard for on-time performance is 85%, all of Virginia Regional Transit's services meet this standard.
- **Service availability** - Service availability is a general measure of the distribution of routes within a transit provider's service area or the span of service. The standard for service availability is 95% all of Virginia Regional Transit's services meet this standard.

### ***Service and Operating Policies***

The Virginia Regional Transit's service and operating policies also ensure that operational practices do not result in discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin.

- **Distribution and Siting of Transit Amenities** -Transit amenities refer to items of comfort, convenience, and safety that are available to the general riding public. Virginia Regional Transit has a policy to ensure the equitable distribution of transit amenities across the system. This policy applies to seating (i.e., benches, seats), bus shelters and canopies, (c) provision of information, Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS), waste receptacles (including trash and recycling). Passenger amenities are sited based on the agreement between Virginia Regional Transit and the local jurisdictions served in the regions.
- **Vehicle assignment** - Vehicle assignment refers to the process by which transit vehicles are placed into service and on routes throughout the system. Virginia Regional Transit assigns vehicles with the goal of providing equitable benefits to minority and low income populations. Vehicles are assigned with regard to service type (fixed-route, demand-response, or a hybrid type) and ridership demand patterns (routes with greater numbers of passengers need vehicles with larger capacities). For each type of assignment, newer vehicles are rotated to ensure that no single route or service always has the same vehicle. The Transit Managers Eric Lev Dahl for NOVA and Angela Richards Central region review the vehicle assignments on a monthly basis to ensure that vehicles are indeed being rotated and that no single route or service always has the old or new vehicles.

Vehicles are placed on route by service demand requirements, age of bus and mileage on bus as dictated by the operations team.

## **Monitoring Title VI Complaints**

As part of the complaint handling procedure, the Title VI Manager investigates possible inequities in service delivery for the route(s) or service(s) about which the complaint was filed. Depending on the nature of the complaint, the review examines span of service (days and hours), frequency, routing directness, interconnectivity with other routes and/or fare policy. If inequities are discovered during this review, options for reducing the disparity are explored, and service or fare changes are planned if needed.

In addition to the investigation following an individual complaint, the Title VI Manager periodically reviews all complaints received to determine if there may be a pattern. At a minimum, this review is conducted as part of preparing the Annual Report and Update for submission to DRPT.

## **Fare and Service Changes**

Virginia Regional Transit does not control fare increase or decrease. Virginia Regional Transit follows the adopted local jurisdictions written policy for the public comment process for major service reductions and fare increases. With each proposed service or fare change, the local jurisdictions consider the relative impacts on, and benefits to, minority and low income populations, including LEP populations. All planning efforts for changes to existing services or fares, as well as new services, have a goal of providing equitable service.



NORTHERN SHENANDOAH VALLEY  
REGIONAL COMMISSION

400E Kendrick Lane  
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## Title VI Notice to the Public

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in programs and activities receiving Federal financial assistance. Specifically, Title VI provides that "no person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, 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" (42 U.S.C. Section 2000d).

The Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission is committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from participation in, or denied the benefits of its transportation services on the basis of race, color, or national origin, as protected by Title VI in Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Circular 4702.1B. If you feel you are being denied participation in or being denied benefits of the transit services provided by Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission, or otherwise being discriminated against because of your race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability, our contact information is:

Name: Brandon Davis

Title: Executive Director

Agency Name: Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission

Address: 400 Kendrick Lane, Suite E

City, State Zip code: Front Royal, VA 22630

Telephone Number: 540-636-8800

Email address: [info@nsvregion.org](mailto:info@nsvregion.org)



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## **Title VI List of Posting Locations**

All ShenGo Transit vehicles

Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission Offices

ShenGo Transit Offices

ShenGo Transit Website

Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission Website



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## Title VI Complaint Form

### Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission

<b>Section I:</b>				
Name:				
Address:				
Telephone (Home):			Telephone (Work):	
Electronic Mail Address:				
Accessible Format Requirements?	Large Print		Audio Tape	
	TDD		Other	
<b>Section II:</b>				
Are you filing this complaint on your own behalf?			Yes*	No
*If you answered "yes" to this question, go to Section III.				
If not, please supply the name and relationship of the person for whom you are complaining:				
Please explain why you have filed for a third party:				
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Please confirm that you have obtained the permission of the aggrieved party if you are filing on behalf of a third party.			Yes	No
<b>Section III</b>				
I believe the discrimination I experienced was based on (check all that apply):				
<input type="checkbox"/> Race	<input type="checkbox"/> Color	<input type="checkbox"/> National Origin		
Date of Alleged Discrimination (Month, Day, Year): _____				
Explain as clearly as possible what happened and why you believe you were discriminated against. Describe all persons who were involved. Include the name and contact information of the person(s) who discriminated against you (if known) as well as names and contact information of any witnesses. If more space is needed, please use the back of this form.				
_____				
_____				
<b>Section IV</b>				
Have you previously filed a Title VI complaint with this agency?			Yes	No
<b>Section V</b>				
Have you filed this complaint with any other Federal, State, or local agency, or with any Federal or State court?				





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<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
If yes, check all that apply:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Federal Agency: _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Federal Court _____	<input type="checkbox"/> State Agency _____
<input type="checkbox"/> State Court _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Local Agency _____
Please provide information about a contact person at the agency/court where the complaint was filed.	
Name: _____	
Title: _____	
Agency: _____	
Address: _____	
Telephone: _____	
<b>Section VI</b>	
Name of agency complaint is against: _____	
Contact person: _____	
Title: _____	
Telephone number: _____	

You may attach any written materials or other information that you think is relevant to your complaint.

Signature and date required below

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Please submit this form in person at the address below, or mail this form to:

Brandon Davis  
Title VI Manager, NSVRC  
400 Kendrick Lane, Suite E  
Front Royal, VA 22630



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REGIONAL COMMISSION

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## Formulario de Quejas del Título VI

<b>Sección I:</b>				
Nombre				
dirección:				
Teléfono (Casa):			Teléfono (Trabajo):	
Dirección de correo electrónico:				
Requisitos formato accesible?	ampliación de foto		Cinta de audio	
	TDD		Otro	
<b>Sección II:</b>				
¿Está presentando esta queja en su propio nombre?			Sí*	No
* Si su respuesta es "sí" a esta pregunta, vaya a la Sección III. Si no es así, por favor proporcione el nombre y la relación de la persona a la que usted se queja:				
Por favor, explique por qué se ha declarado en un tercero:				
Por favor, confirma que ha obtenido el permiso de la parte perjudicada si está presentando en nombre de un tercero.			Sí	No
<b>Sección III:</b>				
Creo que la discriminación que experimenté fue basado en (marque todo lo que corresponda): <input type="checkbox"/> Carrera				
<input type="checkbox"/> Color <input type="checkbox"/> Origen nacional				
Fecha de la supuesta discriminación (mes, día, año):				
Explicar lo más claramente posible lo que pasó y por qué cree que fue discriminado. Describir todas las personas que participaron. Incluir el nombre y la información de contacto de la persona (s) que lo discriminó (si se conoce), así como los nombres y la información de contacto con los testigos. Si se necesita más espacio, por favor use la parte de atrás de este formulario.				
<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>				
<b>Sección IV</b>				
Ha presentado previamente una queja del Título VI con esta agencia?			Sí	No



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#### Sección V

¿Ha presentado esta queja con cualquier otro federal, estatal o local, o con cualquier tribunal federal o estatal?

☐ Sí ☐ No

En caso afirmativo, marque todo lo que

aplique: ☐ Agencia Federal: ☐ Corte

Federal

☐ Agencia del estado

☐ Corte del Estado

☐ Agencia Local

Sírvanse proporcionar información sobre una persona de contacto en la agencia / tribunal donde se presentó la queja.  
Nombre: Título:

Agencia: Dirección: Teléfono:

#### Sección VI

Nombre de la agencia de queja es en contra: Persona de

contacto: Título:

Número de teléfono:



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Puede adjuntar cualquier material escrito o cualquier otra información que usted piensa que es relevante para su queja.

Firma y fecha requerida a continuación

\_\_\_\_\_  
Firma

\_\_\_\_\_  
Fecha

Por favor, envíe este formulario en persona en la dirección indicada más abajo, o envíe este formulario a:

Brandon Davis  
Title VI Manager,  
NSVRC 400  
Kendrick Lane,  
Suite E  
Front Royal , VA 22630



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## Investigations, Complaints, and Lawsuits Log

	<b>Date</b> (Month, Day, Year)	<b>Summary</b> (include basis of complaint: race, color or national origin)	<b>Status</b>	<b>Action(s) taken</b>
<b>Investigations</b>				
<b>1.</b>				
<b>Lawsuits</b>				
<b>1.</b>				
<b>Complaints</b>				
<b>1.</b>				

## **Appendix D**

### **Summary of Outreach Efforts**

**Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission will partner with the  
Virginia Regional Transit's Public Outreach Practices**

- Meet quarterly in different regions regarding the LEP populations and outreach programs necessary to establish communication and form a committee.
- Create, print, and distribute Spanish language route brochures in the Central Region bus service.