

**FRANKLIN COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING
COURTHOUSE ANNEX, COMMISSION MEETING ROOM
OCTOBER 3, 2023
9:00 AM
MINUTES**

Commissioners Present: Ricky Jones-Chairman, Jessica Ward-Vice-Chairman, Ottice Amison
Commissioner Absent: Noah Lockley
Commissioner Present Via Zoom: Ottice Amison
Others Present: Michele Maxwell-Clerk of Court, Michael Shuler-County Attorney, Michael Moron-County Coordinator, Erin Griffith-Fiscal Manager/Grants Coordinator, and Jessica Gay-Clerk to the Board

The following is an excerpt from the minutes of the October 3, 2023, Regular Meeting of the Franklin County Board of County Commissioners:

Erin Griffith – Fiscal Manager/Grants Coordinator

1. BOARD ACTION: UPDATE TITLE VI AND NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY AND PLAN

The county abides by nondiscriminatory policies and procedures and State and Federal Grants require the acknowledgement and documentation of these practices at a minimum of every three years. The previous acknowledgement and policy were last signed in February of 2021. The updated documents include a mandated data collection disclosure and will bring the county policy into compliance with the new rules from the United States Treasury.

Board action to approve and authorize the chairman to sign the updated Title VI and Nondiscrimination Policy and Plan.

On a motion by Commissioner Ward, seconded by Commissioner Sanders, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved and authorized the Chairman to sign the updated Title VI and Nondiscrimination Policy and Plan. Motion carried 3-0.

The minutes are in draft form and have not been approved by the Franklin County Board of County Commissioners.



Deputy Clerk – Jessica Gay



**FRANKLIN COUNTY, FLORIDA
TITLE VI AND NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY AND PLAN**

Policy Statement:

Franklin 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 public policy and governmental services result from careful consideration of the needs of all its communities and when those communities are involved in the public policy and governmental services 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 related laws and regulations, the County will not exclude from participation in, deny benefits of, or subject to discrimination anyone on the grounds of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, income, or family status.

Complaint Procedures:

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

Michael Moron
County Coordinator
34 Forbes Street, Suite 1
Apalachicola, Florida 32320
850-653-9783 x-155 (voice)
850-653-9799 (fax)
michael@franklincountyflorida.com

If possible, the complaint should be in writing and contain the identity of the complainant, the basis for the allegations (i.e., race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, income, 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.

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The Title VI/Nondiscrimination Coordinator will respond to the complaint within thirty (30) days and will take reasonable steps to resolve the matter. Should the County be unable to satisfactorily resolve the complaint, the Title VI/Nondiscrimination Coordinator will forward the complaint, along with a record of its disposition, to the appropriate Federal and/or State agency for further processing.

The County's Title VI/Nondiscrimination Coordinator has easy access to the County Administrator and is not required to obtain management or other approval to discuss discrimination issues with the County Administrator. However, should the complainant be unable or unwilling to complain to the County, or if the complainant is dissatisfied with the County's handling of a complaint, the written complaint may be submitted directly to the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ). DOJ will ensure that the matter is assigned to the correct Federal or State authority for processing.

U.S. Department of Justice
Civil Rights Division
Federal Coordination and Compliance Section, NWB
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20530
Title VI Hotline: 1-888-TITLE-06
(1-888-848-5306) (Voice/TTY)
<http://www.justice.gov/crt.about.cor.coord.titlevi.php>

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. A disabled person is defined as any person who has a physical or mental disability that substantially limits one or more major life activities, has a record of such an impairment, or is regarded as having such an impairment. Furthermore, these laws require federal aid recipients and other government entities to take affirmative steps to reasonably accommodate those with disabilities and ensure that their needs are equitably represented in County programs, services, and activities.

The County will make every effort to ensure that its facilities, programs, services, and activities are accessible to those with disabilities.

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The County encourages the public to report any facility, program, service, or activity that appears inaccessible to those with disabilities. 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 accommodations may require outside assistance, organization or resource, the County asks that requests be made at least five (5) calendar days prior to the need for accommodation.

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

Steve Paterson, Building Inspector
34 Forbes Street, Suite 1
Apalachicola, Florida 32320
850-653-9783 x-157 (voice)
850-653-9799 (fax)
stevep@franklincountyflorida.com

Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Guidance:

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Executive Order 13166, and various directives from federal agencies require federal aid recipients to take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to programs, services, and activities to 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 County's programs, services, or activities.*

Complete data at the county level from the 2020 Census is not currently available, but using what is available it is estimated that 6.1% of the county's population speak a language other than English at home. Out of these 6.1% of non-English speakers the majority speak Spanish. 75.7% of the non-English speakers speak English very well or well with only 24.3% speaking English less than very well. This means with a county population of approximately 12,125 people that about 182 people speak English less than well.

2. *The frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with these programs, services or activities.*

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The County departments report that they rarely encounter anyone who cannot speak English enough to make themselves understood. The library reported that several years ago a lady came in for assistance in filling out her food stamp application who did not speak any English, but she brought in her daughter to serve as a translator.

3. *The nature and importance of the program, service, or activity to people's lives.*

Services provided by the County are important to the public. Some services, such as emergency management, are vital to safety. The Emergency Management Office has certain of its documents available in Spanish. It has also prepared Spanish announcements for broadcast in the event a general evacuation of the County has to be ordered.

4. *The resources available to the County and the likely costs of the LEP services.*

Although no current County employees are fluent in Spanish, there are people in the community who are fluent and can provide translation services. Generally, they are willing to provide translation services for free. Almost all non-English speakers who come into contact with County programs bring their own translator with them.

The analysis of these factors suggests that LEP services are not required at this time. Franklin County will annually review the need to provide services for non-English speakers in the future. If the community changes so that non-English speaking services are required, the County will provide for those services. Persons requiring special language services should contact the County's Title VI/Nondiscrimination Officer:

Michael Moron
County Coordinator
34 Forbes Street, Suite 1
Apalachicola, Florida 32320
850-653-9783 x-155 (voice)
850-653-9799 (fax)
michael@franklincountyflorida.com

Public Involvement:

To plan for efficient, effective, safe, equitable and reliable government services, the County must have the input of its public. The County spends extensive staff and

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financial resources in furtherance of this goal and strongly encourages the participation of the entire community. Any person may attend any County Commission meeting and speak during the Public Comments portion of the agenda concerning a matter of County business of concern to the person. County Commission meetings are generally held the first and third Tuesdays of each month at 9:00 a.m. at the Courthouse Annex, 34 Forbes Street, Apalachicola, Florida 32320. Persons should check the County's website, www.franklincountyflorida.com for any changes to meeting dates, times, or locations. Meeting locations are accessible to the disabled.

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:

Michael Moron
County Coordinator
34 Forbes Street, Suite 1
Apalachicola, Florida 32320
850-653-9783 x-155 (voice)
850-653-9799 (fax)
michael@franklincountyflorida.com

Data Collection:

FHWA regulations and other federal agency grantor regulations require federal aid recipients to collect racial, ethnic, and other similar demographic data on beneficiaries of or those affected by programs, services, and activities. The County accomplishes this using census data and American Community Survey reports 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. Moreover, the County will not release or otherwise use this data in any manner inconsistent with the federal regulations.

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Assurances:

Every three years the County must certify to FHWA and FDOT that its programs, services, and activities are being conducted in a nondiscriminatory manner. The certifications are termed 'assurances' and document the County's commitment to nondiscrimination and equitable service to its community. The public may view the assurances on the County's website or by visiting the County's offices.

This plan was approved by the Franklin County Board of County Commissioners on the 3rd day of October 2023.