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**Title VI Plan and Procedures**

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

Submitted to:

The Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation  
600 East Main Street, Suite 2102  
Richmond, VA 23219

**VersAbility Resources, Inc.**



**Adopted date**

**November 10, 2021**

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## **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 VersAbility Resources incorporates nondiscrimination policies and practices in providing services to the public. VersAbility Resources' 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**

VersAbility Resources supports people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in leading productive and fulfilling lives. Each year we support 1,600 individuals through early childhood, day support, community living, and four diverse employment programs. Our service area includes the entire Hampton Roads region and the ten counties on the Middle Peninsula and Northern Neck.

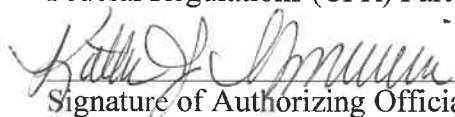
Transportation services are provided to individuals with disabilities VersAbility supports in our Community Living and Envisions Day Support programs. Individuals with disabilities who live in our community homes in Hampton, Newport News, and York County receive transportation to and from their home to either VersAbility or another service agency during the weekdays, on weekends to community activities, and anytime to scheduled appointments. Our Envisions Day Support programs in Newport News and Gloucester transport individuals with disabilities to agency-supported community activities, volunteer projects, and area attractions on weekdays. We also transport individuals in our work programs to and from our other sites to collaborate on contracts or participate in special events together.

### III. POLICY STATEMENT AND AUTHORITIES

#### Title VI Policy Statement

VersAbility Resources 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 VersAbility Resources 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.

  
Signature of Authorizing Official

November 10, 2021  
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 ASSURANCE 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, VersAbility Resources 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, VersAbility Resources confirms to DRPT the agency's commitment to nondiscrimination and compliance with federal and state requirements.

**VersAbility Resources  
2520 58<sup>th</sup> Street  
Hampton, VA 23661**

**Title VI Program Plan and Procedures Board Resolution  
Vote by Email Summary  
November 10, 2021**

VersAbility received a vehicle grant from the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) valued at \$50-100k annually per year. To meet their reporting requirements, the Title VI Program Plan and Procedures Board Resolution below required Board approval.

**RESOLUTION OF  
THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF  
VERSABILITY RESOURCES, INC.**

**WHEREAS, VersAbility Resources is the potential recipient of Federal revenues and is required to meet federal regulatory requirements for Title VI, established by 49 C.F.R. part 21.7; and**

**WHEREAS, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) requires that VersAbility Resources provide a Title VI Program update every three years that ensures no person or group of persons is subjected to discrimination in the level and quality of transportation services and benefits on the basis of race, color, or national origin and that steps are taken to ensure that persons with limited English proficiency are provided these rights; and**

**WHEREAS, VersAbility Resources developed a Title VI Plan based on best practices that meet FTA guidelines.**

**NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors adopts the Title VI Program Plan and Procedures 2018 - 2021.**

**The foregoing resolution was approved by the Board of Directors.**

The Board of Directors voted via email due to time constraints and COVID conditions. The email responses are as follows:

**Approve:** Bob Baker, Jerome Barber, Cyndie Callaway, Jeff Clemons, Doug Burgoyne, Mark Duncan, Jack Ezzell, La'Shawn Littles, Lisa Marston, Ron Murray, Kelly Musick, Jim Schloss, Joycelyn Spight Roache, Dr. Jeffery Smith, Dr. Jeff Tanner, Jackie White

**No response:** Rick Gallaer, Bob Korroch

The Title VI Program Plan and Procedures Board Resolution was approved as presented via email on November 10, 2021.

## Candice Lee

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**From:** Candice Lee  
**Sent:** Monday, November 8, 2021 2:32 PM  
**To:** 2021 Board of Directors  
**Cc:** Alligood, Lynn M.; Pamela Bagley; Turner, Tarsha M.; Kasia Grzelkowski  
**Subject:** RESPONSE NEEDED: Title VI Program Plan and Procedures Board Resolution  
**Attachments:** VersAbility Resources Title VI Plan 11.8.2021.doc

Dear Board Members,

We have received a vehicle grant from the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DPRT) valued at \$50-100k annually per year. Their reporting requirements have recently become much more extensive and require new responses on our part.

As a result, we need Board approval via email on the Resolution below (page 6). The full document is attached for reference.

**RESOLUTION OF  
THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF  
VERSABILITY RESOURCES, INC.**

**WHEREAS, VersAbility Resources is the potential recipient of Federal revenues and is required to meet federal regulatory requirements for Title VI, established by 49 C.F.R. part 21.7; and**

**WHEREAS, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) requires that VersAbility Resources provide a Title VI Program update every three years that ensures no person or group of persons is subjected to discrimination in the level and quality of transportation services and benefits on the basis of race, color, or national origin and that steps are taken to ensure that persons with limited English proficiency are provided these rights; and**

**WHEREAS, VersAbility Resources developed a Title VI Plan based on best practices that meet FTA guidelines.**

**NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors adopts the Title VI Program Plan and Procedures 2018 - 2021.**

**The foregoing resolution was approved by the Board of Directors.**

To meet the deadline, please respond to this email by **noon on Wednesday, November 10<sup>th</sup>** with your vote to approve or disapprove the Resolution. If no response is received by noon on Wednesday, we will assume you approve.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns, and we appreciate your prompt response to this request.

Best,  
Candice



**V. PLAN APPROVAL DOCUMENT**

I hereby acknowledge the receipt of the VersAbility Resources Title VI Implementation Plan 2018-2021. 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 transit 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.



Signature of Authorizing Official  
Kathryn Grzelkowski  
President/CEO  
VersAbility Resources

November 10, 2021

Date

**RESOLUTION OF  
THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF  
VERSABILITY RESOURCES, INC.**

WHEREAS, VersAbility Resources is the potential recipient of Federal revenues and is required to meet federal regulatory requirements for Title VI, established by 49 C.F.R. part 21.7; and

WHEREAS, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) requires that VersAbility Resources provide a Title VI Program update every three years that ensures no person or group of persons is subjected to discrimination in the level and quality of transportation services and benefits on the basis of race, color, or national origin and that steps are taken to ensure that persons with limited English proficiency are provided these rights; and

WHEREAS, VersAbility Resources developed a Title VI Plan based on best practices that meet FTA guidelines.

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors adopts the Title VI Program Plan and Procedures 2018 - 2021.

The foregoing resolution was approved by the Board of Directors.



Jocelyn Spright Roache, Secretary

November 10, 2021

Date

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

VersAbility Resources' Facilities Director is responsible for ensuring implementation of the agency's Title VI program. Title VI program elements are interrelated and responsibilities may overlap. 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, VersAbility Resources 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, VersAbility Resources 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. VersAbility Resources will also maintain and provide to DRPT 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. VersAbility Resources 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**

Our 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 Training and Compliance Coordinator.

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

In all federal procurements requiring a written contract or Purchase Order (PO), VersAbility Resources’ contract/PO will include appropriate non-discrimination clauses. The Title VI Manager will work with the Director of Government Contracts or Director of Business Development 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, VersAbility Resources 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.

**SEE APPENDIX A-Title VI Notice to the Public**

**SEE APPENDIX B-Title VI Notice to the Public List of Locations**

## VIII. 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.

Any individual may exercise his or her right to file a complaint with VersAbility Resources 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.

VersAbility Resources 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:

*VersAbility Resources is committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from participation in, or denied the benefits of its transit services on the basis of race, color or national origin, as protected by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.*

*For additional information on VersAbility Resources' nondiscrimination policies and procedures, or to file a complaint, please visit the website at [versability.org](http://versability.org) or contact VersAbility's Facilities Director at 2520 58<sup>th</sup> Street, Hampton, VA 23661, (757) 896-6461, [asumalnap@versability.org](mailto:asumalnap@versability.org).*

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.

**SEE APPENDIX C-Title VI Complaint Form**

## **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 VersAbility Resources 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 VersAbility Resources' Title VI Manager at 2520 58<sup>th</sup> Street, Hampton, VA 23661 or [asumalnap@versability.org](mailto:asumalnap@versability.org).
  - e. Complaints received by any other employee of VersAbility Resources 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 Facilities Services Coordinator 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 VersAbility Resources' Authorizing Official
  - 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 VersAbility Resources' Authorizing Official, DRPT, and, if appropriate, VersAbility Resources' 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 VersAbility Resources. DRPT will analyze the facts of the case and will issue its conclusion to the appellant according to their procedures.

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



## **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.

**SEE APPENDIX D- Investigations, Lawsuits and Complaints Document**

## **IX. 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 VersAbility Resources 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.

VersAbility Resources 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.

VersAbility Resources 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.

#### **SOME OF THOSE EFFECTIVE PUBLIC OUTREACH PRACTICES INCLUDE:**

- Newsletters (quarterly)
- Flyers (as needed)
- Focus groups (as needed)
- Telephone and e-mail
- Surveys
- VersAbility website
- VersAbility Facebook page

- Meetings with individuals and their families and caregivers (group and individual meetings)
- Offer sign language interpreter when necessary
- Train staff in sign language

**SEE APPENDIX E-Summary of Outreach Efforts**

## **X. 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 13166, 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 VersAbility Resources is based on FTA guidelines.

As required, VersAbility Resources developed a written LEP Plan (below). Using 2010 and American Community Survey (ACS) Census data, VersAbility Resources 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 (2012-2016)**

Data from the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS) were obtained through [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov) by VersAbility Resources’ service area. The agency’s service area includes a total of **15,432 or 3.91%** persons with Limited English Proficiency (those persons who indicated that they spoke English “less than very well,” in the 2012-2016 ACS Census).

Information from the 2011-2015 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.

VersAbility Service Area			
Language	Number of LEP Population	Percent of County Population Speaking Language	Percent of LEP Population Speaking Language
Spanish or Spanish Creole	6,002	1.52%	38.89%
African languages	3,103	0.79%	20.11%
Vietnamese	1,144	0.29%	7.41%
Korean	1,051	0.27%	6.81%
Tagalog	465	0.12%	3.01%
Other Indic languages	355	0.09%	2.30%
Chinese	347	0.09%	2.25%
Arabic	342	0.09%	2.22%
French	301	0.08%	1.95%
Mon-Khmer	267	0.07%	1.73%
Other Asian languages	251	0.06%	1.63%
Russian	244	0.06%	1.58%
German	231	0.06%	1.50%
Persian	190	0.05%	1.23%
Greek	149	0.04%	0.97%
Japanese	148	0.04%	0.96%
Other Indo-European languages	146	0.04%	0.95%
Gujarati	128	0.03%	0.83%
Hindi	83	0.02%	0.54%
Portuguese or Portuguese Creole	74	0.02%	0.48%
Serbo-Croatian	65	0.02%	0.42%
Italian	59	0.01%	0.38%
Other Pacific Island languages	58	0.01%	0.38%
Thai	53	0.01%	0.34%
Laotian	37	0.01%	0.24%
Urdu	35	0.01%	0.23%
Scandinavian languages	33	0.01%	0.21%
Other Native North American languages	25	0.01%	0.16%
Other Slavic Languages	25	0.01%	0.16%

French Creole	11	0.00%	0.07%
Hebrew	10	0.00%	0.06%
<b>Total LEP Population</b>	<b>15,432</b>	<b>3.91%</b>	
<b>Total Service Area Population</b>	<b>394,337</b>		

It is noted that there are relatively low number of LEP persons in the service area. The most spoken language among LEP individuals is Spanish or Spanish Creole (6,002). Other language groups that surpass the Safe Harbor Provision are African languages (3,103), Vietnamese (1,144), and Korean (1,051).

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

VersAbility Resources 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 one or more of the following channels:

- Calls to VersAbility Resources’ 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 VersAbility Resources;
- Use of VersAbility programs and services

VersAbility Resources’ Administrative Assistant/Children’s Services reports that we have not received phone calls or walk-in visits from LEP persons in the past. Visitors to our website can use Google Translate ([translate.google.com](http://translate.google.com)) to translate the site into the language they prefer. We provide American Sign Language interpreters at events hosted by VersAbility when needed. According to our Disability Services Manager we serve some individuals who use American Sign Language (ASL) or are non-verbal. To provide quality services to those individuals, we utilize staff that are trained in ASL, pictographs, communication apps on tablets, and our Positive Behavior Support Specialist develops other communication devices as needed. Some families and children who receive services through our Early Prevention and Intervention for Children (EPIC) program, have required the use of a language interpreter, which is provided to them through our partnership with Catholic Charities.

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

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

VersAbility Resources provides the following programs, activities and services:

Transportation services are provided to VersAbility participants in our Community Living and Envisions Day Support programs. Individuals with disabilities who live in our community homes in Hampton, Newport News, and York County receive transportation from their home to either VersAbility or another service agency and back during the weekdays, on weekends to community activities, and anytime to scheduled appointments. Our Envisions Day Support programs in Newport News and Gloucester transport individuals with disabilities to agency-related, community activities.

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

Our Early Prevention and Intervention for Children program has required the use of language interpreters in the past to provide early intervention services to infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families. We work with Catholic Charities to secure all language interpreters. Based on past experience, no other services/programs have been identified as serving LEP persons.

The following are the most critical services provided by VersAbility Resources for all customers, including LEP persons.

- Safety and security awareness instructions
- Emergency evacuation procedures
- Services targeted at low income persons
- Programs and services for individuals with disabilities (Early Intervention, Day Support, Community Living, and Employment)

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

***Costs***

The following language assistance measures currently being provided by VersAbility Resources

- Language Interpreters for EPIC program – no cost to VersAbility, paid for by IDEA Part C funding and provided by Catholic Charities
- Communication applications on tablets – no cost
- Symbol Stix for visual communication – \$89 per year
- 15 Staff trained in American Sign Language – no current cost, training fees paid two years ago
- ASL interpreters (Volunteer/Student Interns) – no cost

- ASL interpreters for employee orientations, signing documents - \$50 per hour/as needed
- We estimate 60 staff and 10 – 25 % of staff time, depending on job responsibilities of the staff member, is associated with providing language assistance.

We will continue to provide these services and do not anticipate an increase in costs.

Based on the analysis of demographic data and contact with community organizations and LEP persons, VersAbility Resources has determined that no additional services are needed to provide meaningful access.

### ***Resources***

We currently do not have a budget for language assistance, instead any costs are incurred by the specific program. VersAbility Resources has not requested grant funding for language assistance in the past. In addition, in-kind assistance may be available through community organizations and transit agencies who may be able to partner for language assistance services.

### ***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:

- Providing language interpreters through Catholic Charities for children and families receiving services through our EPIC program.
- Offering communication applications on tablets
- Providing pictographs to individuals who are non-verbal
- Utilizing staff who are bilingual and staff who can communicate using ASL

## **LEP Implementation Plan**

Through the four-factor analysis, VersAbility Resources has determined that the language assistance we are currently offering (listed above) are most needed and feasible. Should any additional language assistance measures become needed we will implement them at that time.

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

Agency staff who come into contact with LEP persons can access language services by utilizing communication applications on tablets and the assistance of bilingual staff and staff who can communicate using ASL. 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 by transferring the caller to a bilingual staff member who speaks the caller's language.

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

Should VersAbility receive written communications from LEP persons we will work with staff who are literate in that language to respond to the writer.

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

Should LEP persons visit our administrative office we enlist the support of bilingual staff who can assist LEP visitors. VersAbility Resources has not received questions from LEP persons on board a VersAbility Resources vehicle. Should we ever begin serving an LEP person with disabilities, we will work with the operator of the vehicle and support staff to ensure that individual's needs are met.

### ***Staff Training***

As noted previously, all VersAbility Resources 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 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. Two years ago, VersAbility Resources provided American Sign Language training to staff. These staff members are available as mentors to other staff who wish to learn ASL.

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

As VersAbility Resources serves a target population of individuals with disabilities and their families, we do not provide notice to the general public and instead notify individuals and their families of these services should they require them.

### ***Monitoring/Updating the Plan***

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, VersAbility Resources will solicit feedback on the effectiveness of language assistance provided and unmet needs. In addition, we will conduct periodic internal meetings with staff who assist LEP persons of the adequacy and quality of the language assistance provided, and determine changes to LEP needs.

In preparing the triennial update of this plan, VersAbility Resources 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, VersAbility Resources 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 VersAbility Resources will attempt to identify the most cost-effective approaches.

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

## **XI. 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.”

VersAbility Resources has transit-related, non-elected planning boards, advisory councils or committees, or similar committees, the membership of which we select.

1. We engage members of the business community as well as regional leaders who are passionate about creating opportunities for people with disabilities. Before asking someone to join our Board of Directors, potential members are provided with a tour of VersAbility and receive an in-depth view of our organization. Board members of VersAbility are elected by VersAbility’s membership.
2. A table depicting the racial breakdown of the membership of VersAbility’s Board of Directors is provided.

**SEE APPENDIX F- TABLE MINORITY REPRESENTATION ON COMMITTEES BY RACE**

## **XII. 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.

## **APPENDIX A - TITLE VI NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC**

The following is printed on VersAbility Resources letterhead and posted in the locations listed in Appendix B:

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).

VersAbility Resources 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 VersAbility Resources, or otherwise being discriminated against because of your race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability, our contact information is:

**Aries Sumalnap**  
**Facilities Director**  
**VersAbility Resources**  
**2520 58<sup>th</sup> Street**  
**Hampton, VA 23661**  
**(757) 896-6461**  
[asumalnap@versability.org](mailto:asumalnap@versability.org)

## **APPENDIX B - TITLE VI NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC LIST OF LOCATIONS**

Public Notices are posted in the following locations:

- All VersAbility federally funded vehicles
- VersAbility website
- VersAbility offices:
  - 2520 58<sup>th</sup> Street, Hampton, VA 23661
  - 11830 Fishing Point Drive, Suite 213 and 215, Newport News, VA
  - 6632 Main Street, Gloucester, VA 23061
  - 8401 Hampton Blvd, Suite 5, Norfolk, VA 23505
  - 2600 International Parkway, Virginia Beach, VA 23452

**APPENDIX C - TITLE VI COMPLAINT FORM**



**Title VI Complaint Form**

<b>Section 1</b>				
Name:				
Address:				
Telephone (Home):			Telephone (Work):	
E-Mail Address:				
Accessible Format Requirements?  (please check if required)	Large Print		Audio Tape	
	TDD		Other	
<b>Section 2</b>				
Are you filing this complaint on your own behalf?		Yes*	No	
*If you answered "yes" to this question, go to Section 3.				
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:    				
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 3</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.				

Section 4		
Have you previously filed a Title VI complaint with this agency?	Yes	No
Section 5		
Have you filed this complaint with any other Federal, State, or local agency, or with any Federal or State court?	Yes	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:		
Section 6		
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



**APPENDIX D - INVESTIGATIONS, LAWSUITS AND COMPLAINTS DOCUMENT**

**VersAbility Resources' List of Title VI Investigations, Lawsuits, and Complaints**

	Date (Month, Day, Year)	Summary (include basis of complaint: race, color, or national origin)	Status	Action(s) taken
<b>Investigations</b>				
1.	None	None	None	None
<b>Lawsuits</b>				
1.				
<b>Complaints</b>				
1.				

## **APPENDIX E - SUMMARY OF OUTREACH EFFORTS**

As a private, nonprofit agency, VersAbility Resources works one-on-one with the individuals with disabilities we support and their families to ensure they are notified of any program, service, agency, or transportation changes or additions.

Some of those effective public outreach practices include:

- Newsletters (quarterly)
- Flyers (as needed)
- Focus groups (as needed)
- Telephone and e-mail
- Surveys
- VersAbility website
- VersAbility Facebook page
- Meetings with individuals and their families and caregivers (group and individual meetings)
- Offer sign language interpreter when necessary
- Train staff in sign language

**APPENDIX F -TABLE MINORITY REPRESENTATION ON COMMITTEES BY RACE**

**Minority Representation on VersAbility’s Board of Directors**

Committee	Black or African American	White / Caucasian	Latino / Hispanic	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	Other	Totals
VersAbility Board of Directors	4	15					*Note	19
% of VersAbility Board of Directors	21%	79%						100%

\*Note – Other races reported: n/a