



Southeast Public Transit
Title VI Program

Effective: April 15, 2017
Revised: September 2024

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1. General Information

Southeast Public Transit is the public transit provider for Yankton and Clay Counties in southeast SD. We operate a demand response service in this area five days per week. Monday – Friday, we provide service to neighboring communities on an as needed basis.

The Title VI coordinator is Barb Ballensky. She was appointed on September 18, 2024. Training documentation:

- 11/14/2011 – Brookings, SD with June Hansen about Title VI requirements, pre-awards checklist, and four factor analysis. Attended by Barb Ballensky
- 01/24/2012 – Mitchell, SD with June Hansen about Title VI requirements, pre-awards checklist and four factor analysis. Attended by Barb Ballensky
- 02/19/2014 – Pierre, SD with June Hansen about Title VI three year reviews and updated Title VI Program requirements. Attended by Barb Ballensky

2. Title VI Notice to the Public

The notice to the public is displayed in our office and a shorter version is displayed in the vehicles. The notice to the public is in Appendix G of the Southeast Public Transit Title VI Plan. The plan is attached to this document.

3. Title VI Complaint Procedures

The Title VI complaint procedure is in Section V of the Southeast Public Transit Title VI Plan. The plan is attached to this document.

4. Title VI Complaint Form

The Title VI complaint form is in Appendix C of the Southeast Public Transit Title VI Plan. The plan is attached to this document.

5. List of Title VI investigations, complaints and lawsuits

There are no current Title VI investigations, complaints or lawsuits. The log is attached.

6. Public Participation Plan

1. General Information

The Federal and State government mandate public involvement, because it helps to guide department decisions in providing public transportation services. Public Involvement also benefits Southeast Public Transit (SEPT)

and the public, by allowing for the development of services that meet the needs of area citizens/customers.

The Federal government mandates public involvement prior to raising fares, implementing major reductions in service or applying for grants/loans to finance transportation improvement projects.

2. Public Participation/Engagement

A. Public Meetings

SEPT has a governing board that meets bi-monthly on the third Thursday of the month at 12:00pm. This meeting is open to the public. Location of the meeting is at 901 E. 7th St., Yankton, SD 57078. Online meeting attendance is offered as well. Interested parties may contact SEPT for the location, date and time of an upcoming meeting or the online link. There are no regularly scheduled customer informational meetings. SEPT will schedule public meetings on an as needed basis.

When a public meeting is scheduled, SEPT will post an announcement on the buses, place ads in local shoppers of both communities and send out announcements to a list of local agencies that we coordinate with asking them to post the announcement at their place of business so their clients are aware of the meeting. All meetings locations are accessible. Other accommodations will be made upon request.

B. Coordination

We solicit input from many organizations in the community about our services and opportunities to coordinate or our ability to assist them in providing their services. We attend community events that emphasize services offered in the community. The United Ways and the senior centers in both communities have such events. There are other events that we attend that are not annual events, but we participate when the opportunity presents itself.

C. Public Studies

SEPT conducts an annual customer satisfaction survey. We ask about current services and any needs customers have that are not being met. We also conduct surveys at other times when public comment is warranted, such as a fare increase, expansion of service or major reduction in service.

3. Public Outreach Plan

A. Forms of Advertising

SEPT advertises services provided and the hours of service on our website and Facebook page. When offering special services, we advertise these events on our Facebook page as well, an example would be free rides to the polls on Election Day. We advertise weather related service closings on our Facebook page and the radio.

B. Outreach to minority, LEP and other underserved populations

We work with the International Student Office at the University of South Dakota in Vermillion, SD and Connecting Cultures in Yankton, SD. These organizations are promoting our services with their participants.

We have an account with a call in interpretation service (see appendix for service and contact information), who will serve as our interpreter when needed. We use Google Translate to create printed materials and employees at Connecting Cultures reviews the material and assists with changes to assure understanding.

4. Type of Public Involvement

SEPT involves current riders by conducting customer surveys annually. We have conducted surveys through the chamber of commerce to get input from non-riders, business and community leaders. We have representation from city commission, hospital, school system, non-profit community, business community, riders and higher education on our governing board. We have included faith based, academic and medical institutions in the surveys and interviews we conducted to prepare our Title VI and general coordination plans. We also work with the University of South Dakota to provide a community service known as Safe Ride. It is a late night service that operates during the university school year to provide a safe late night transportation alternative.

7. Language Assistance Plan

SEPT completed a four-factor analysis to determine the need for a Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan. Based on current demographics and demand for language assistance, it has been determined that a formal plan is not necessary. However, SEPT provides meaningful access to LEP individuals by utilizing a call-in translation center. English proficiency will be noted at the intake/orientation process. "I Speak" cards will be used to identify the language that the person speaks. Call Center Information is in the Appendix of this document.

8. Table of Membership

Body	Caucasian	Native American	Latino	African American	Asian American
Population	90%	3%	4%	2%	1%
Executive Board	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%

9. Title VI Equity Analysis

Southeast Public Transit has not constructed a facility in the last three years.

This Title VI Program Plan was adopted by Southeast Public Transit on April 15, 2017.

Board President

Date

POLICY:

I. Plan Statement

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 grounds 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).

Southeast Public Transit (SEPT) is committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from participation in, or denied benefits of its transit services on the basis of race, color or national origin, as protected by Title VI in Federal Transit Administration’s (FTA) most current circular and by other civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination on the basis of age, gender, religion and disability.

This plan was developed to guide SEPT in its administration and management of Title VI-related activities.

Title VI Coordinator Contact

Barb Ballensky
604 ½ High St.
Vermillion, SD 57069
605-624-7433

II. Title VI Information Dissemination

Title VI information posters shall be prominently and publicly displayed in the offices of SEPT at 901 E. 7th St., Yankton, SD 57078 and 604 ½ High St., Vermillion, South Dakota 57069. The name of the Title VI coordinator will be displayed on the poster. Additional information relating to nondiscrimination obligation can be obtained from the SEPT Title VI Coordinator.

During new employee orientation and subsequent employee trainings, information relative to the provisions of Title VI, and SEPT’s expectations to perform their duties accordingly will be reviewed and discussed. All employees shall be provided a copy of the Title VI Plan and are required to sign the Acknowledgement of Receipt (Appendix A & B).

SEPT will ensure that all riders are provided with a copy of the Title VI Plan upon request. The plan will be translated upon request.

The Title VI Plan will be posted on the Southeast Public Transit website for reference.

III. Subcontractors and Vendors

All subcontractors and vendors who receive payments from SEPT where funds originate from any federal assistance are subject to the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended.

Written contracts shall contain non-discrimination language, either directly or through bid specification package which becomes an associated component of the contract.

IV. Record Keeping

The Title VI Coordinator will maintain permanent records, which include, but are not limited to, signed acknowledgements of receipt from employees indicating the receipt of the SEPT Title VI Plan, copies of Title VI complaints or lawsuits and related documentation, and records of correspondence to and from complainants, and Title VI investigations.

V. Title VI Complaint Procedure

Filing a complaint

Any person can file a signed, written complaint up to one hundred and eighty (180) days from the date of the alleged discrimination. The complaint should include the following information (Appendix C):

- Complainant's name, mailing address and viable contact information
- How, when, where and why the complainant believes that they were discriminated against. Include the location, names and contact information of any witnesses
- Other information that is deemed significant

The Title VI Complaint Form (Attached) may be used to submit the complaint information. The complaint may be filed in writing with the SEPT at the following address:

Southeast Public Transit
901 E. 7th St.
Yankton, South Dakota 57078

SEPT encourages all complainants to certify all mail that is sent through the U. S. Postal Service and/or ensure that all written correspondence can be tracked easily. For complaints originally submitted by facsimile, an original, signed copy of the complaint must be mailed to the Title VI Coordinator as soon as possible, but no later than 180 days from the alleged dates of discrimination.

Complaint process

All complainants alleging discrimination based on race, color or national origin in a service or benefit provided by SEPT will be directly addressed by SEPT. SEPT shall also provide appropriate assistance to complainants, including those persons with disabilities, or who are limited in their ability to communicate in English. Additionally, SEPT shall make every effort to address all complaints in an expeditious and thorough manner.

A letter acknowledging receipt of the complaint will be mailed within seven days (Appendix D). Please note that in responding to any requests for additional information, a complainant's failure to provide the requested information may result in the administrative closure of the complaint.

Notification of Complaint

SEPT will send a final written response letter (Appendix E & F) to the complainant. This written response may be drafted subject to review by the SEPT attorney. In the letter notifying complainant that the complaint is not substantiated, the complainant is also advised of his or her right to 1) appeal within seven calendar days of receipt of the final written decision from SEPT, and/or 2) file a complaint externally with the Department of Transportation, and/or the Federal Transit Administration. Every effort will be made to respond to Title VI complaints within 60 working days of receipt of such complaints, if not sooner.

In addition to the complaint process described above, a complainant may file a Title VI complaint with the following offices:

June Hansen, Civil Rights Compliance Officer/ADA Coordinator
SDDOT – Office of Legal Counsel/Civil Rights Program
700 E. Broadway Ave.
Pierre, SD 57501
Phone: 605-773-3540
Fax: 605-773-4442
Email: june.hansen@state.sd.us

VI. Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan

SEPT performed a four-factor analysis to determine the need for a Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan. Based on current demographics and demand for language assistance, it has been determined that a formal plan is not necessary. However, SEPT provides meaningful access to LEP individuals by accessing a call-in translation center. English proficiency will be noted at the intake/orientation process. “I Speak” cards will be used to identify the language that the person speaks.

VII. Community Outreach

As an agency receiving federal financial assistance, we have made the following community outreach efforts:

- SEPT will ensure all riders are provided with a copy of the Title VI Plan upon request. The plan will be posted on the Southeast Public Transit website (www.septransit.com). Any questions or concerns may be forwarded to the Title VI Coordinator through the dispatcher or an appointment may be made in person to discuss questions or concerns with the Title VI Coordinator.
- A satisfaction survey is provided to all transit riders on a yearly basis. This survey is reviewed by the Operations Director, Title VI Coordinator, Executive Director and governing board.
- Customers’ complaints are forwarded to the Operations Director for review and investigation.

Appendix A
Employee Annual Education Form

Title VI Policy

No person shall, on the grounds 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.

All employees of SEPT are expected to consider, respect and observe this policy in their daily work and duties. If a citizen approaches you with a question or complaint, direct him or her to the Title VI Coordinator and Director of SEPT.

[Interpretation Service Information:](#)

[Name](#)

[Phone number](#)

[Process for using](#)

Appendix B
Acknowledgement of Receipt of the Title VI Plan

I hereby acknowledge the receipt of the SEPT Title VI Plan. I have read the plan and am 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 in the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) most current circular.

Employee Signature

Print Name

Date

Appendix C
TITLE VI COMPLAINT FORM

Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act Requires 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 subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.” If you feel you have been discriminated against in transit services, please provide the following information in order to assist us in processing your complaint and send it to:

Southeast Public Transit
901 E. 7th St.
Yankton, SD 57078

Please print clearly:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip Code: _____

Telephone Number: Home: _____ Cell: _____

Message: _____

Person discriminated against: _____

Address of person discriminated against: _____

City, State, Zip Code: _____

Please indicate why you believe the discrimination occurred:

_____ race or color

_____ national origin

What was the date of the alleged discrimination? _____

Where did the alleged discrimination take place? _____

Please describe the circumstances as you saw it:

Please list any and all witnesses' names and phone numbers:

What type of corrective action would you like to see taken?

Please attach any documents you have which support the allegation. Then date and sign this form and send it to the Title VI Coordinator at:

SEPT
Barb Ballensky
Title VI Coordinator
604 ½ High St.
Vermillion, South Dakota 57069
605-624-7433

Signature

Print Name

Date

Appendix D
Letter Acknowledging Receipt of a Complaint

Today's Date

Complainant's Name and address

Dear _____:

This letter is to acknowledge receipt of your complaint against Southeast Public Transit alleging

_____.

An investigation will begin shortly. If you have additional information you wish to convey or questions concerning this matter, please feel free to contact this office by telephoning 605-624-7433 or write to me at this address.

Sincerely,

Barb Ballensky
Title VI Coordinator

Appendix E
Letter Notifying Complainant that the Complaint is Substantiated

Today's date

Complainant's Name and Address

Dear _____:

The matter referenced in your letter of _____(date) against Southeast Public Transit alleging Title VI violation has been investigated.

(An/several) apparent violation(s) of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, including those mentioned in your letter (was/were) identified. Efforts are underway to correct these deficiencies.

Thank you for calling this important matter to our attention. You were extremely helpful during our review of the program. (If a hearing is requested, the following sentence may be appropriate) You may be hearing from this office, or from federal authorities, if your services should be needed during the administrative hearing process.

Sincerely,

Barb Ballensky
Title VI Coordinator

Appendix F
Letter Notifying Complainant that the Complaint is not Substantiated

Today's Date

Complainant's Name and address

Dear _____:

The matter referenced in your complaint of _____ (date) against Southeast Public Transit, alleging _____ has been investigated.

The results of the investigation did not indicate that the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 had in fact been violated. As you know, Title VI prohibits discrimination based on race, color or national origin in any program receiving federal financial assistance.

SEPT has analyzed the materials and facts pertaining to your case for evidence of the agency's failure to comply with any of the civil rights laws. There was no evidence found that any of these laws have been violated.

I therefore advise you that your complaint has not been substantiated, and that I am closing this matter in our files.

You have the right to 1) appeal within seven calendar days of receipt of this final written decision from SEPT, and/or 2) file a complaint externally with the South Dakota Department of Transportation:

June Hansen, Civil Rights Compliance Officer/ADA Coordinator
SDDOT – Office of Legal Counsel/Civil Rights Program
700 E. Broadway Ave.
Pierre, SD 57501
Phone: 605-773-3540
Fax: 605-773-4442
Email: june.hansen@state.sd.us

Thank you for taking the time to contact us. If I can be of assistance to you in the future, do not hesitate to call me.

Sincerely,

Barb Ballensky
Title VI Coordinator

Appendix G
Samples of Narrative to be included in Posters to be Displayed in Revenue Vehicles and Facilities

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin on programs and activities receiving Federal financial assistance. Specifically, Title VI 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 subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance” (42 U.S.C. Section 2000d).

SEPT 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 in Federal Transit Administration’s (FTA) most current circular. If you feel you have been denied participation in or being denied benefits of the transit services provided by SEPT, or otherwise being discriminated against because of your race or color national origin our contact information is:

SEPT
 Barb Ballensky
 Title VI Coordinator
 901 E. 7th St.
 Yankton, SD 57078
 605-624-1987

Date of Complaint	Issue Involved	How complaint was resolved