

Title VI Complaint Procedures

If a person believes they have been excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination based on race, color, national origin, age, disability, family, sex or religious status by Santa Rosa County, they may file an official Title VI complaint with the Title VI Coordinator, DeVann Cook, Risk Management Director, 6495 Caroline Street, Suite I, Milton, FL 32570 or by calling (850) 983-1863. We encourage that complaints be submitted in writing (see Title VI Complaint Form – Appendix C), and include the following:

- Name, address and contact information (phone number, email address, etc.)
- How, why, when and where the complainant believes they were discriminated against. Include the location, names and contact information of any witnesses. If the alleged incident occurred on the bus, give date, time of day, and bus number if available.
- The complainant must sign the letter of complaint or have complainant authorization.

A complaint should be filed no later than 60 days after the date of the alleged discrimination, unless the time for filing is extended by FTA or other state and federal agencies with jurisdiction. Santa Rosa County will process complaints that are complete. Once the complaint is received, Santa Rosa County will review it to determine if the information is complete.

All complaints will be investigated promptly. Reasonable measures will be undertaken to preserve any information that is confidential. The Title VI Coordinator will review every complaint, and when necessary, begin the investigation process. At a minimum the investigation will:

- Identify and review all relevant documents, practices and procedures;
- Identify and interview persons with knowledge of the Title VI violation, i.e., the person making the complaint; witnesses or anyone identified by the Complainant; anyone who may have been subject to similar activity, or anyone with relevant information.

Upon completion of the investigation, the Title VI Coordinator will complete a final report for the County Administrator. If a Title VI violation is found to exist, remedial steps as appropriate and necessary will be taken immediately. The Complainant will also receive a final report together with any remedial steps.

If more information is needed to resolve the case, Santa Rosa County may contact the complainant. The complainant has 30 business days from the date of the letter to send requested information to the investigator assigned to the case. If the investigator is not contacted by the complainant or does not receive the additional information within 30 business days, Santa Rosa County can administratively close the case. A case can be administratively closed also if the complainant no longer wishes to pursue their case.

After the investigator reviews the complaint, she/he will issue a written notice to the complainant: a closure letter or a letter of finding (LOF). A closure letter summarizes the allegations and states there was not a Title VI violation and that the case will be closed. An LOF summarizes the allegations and the information regarding the alleged incident, and explains whether any disciplinary action, additional training of the staff member, or other action will occur. If the complainant wishes to appeal the decision, she/he has 30 business days after the date of the letter or the LOF to do so.

The County Title VI Coordinator has 'easy access' to the County Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and is not required to obtain management or other approval to discuss discrimination issues with the CEO. However, should the complainant be unable or unwilling to complain

to the County, the written complaint may be submitted directly to another state and federal agency that is subject of the complaint, State Human Rights Division or the Federal Office of Civil Rights. For transportation complaints, FDOT serves as a statewide clearinghouse for Title VI purposes and will either assume jurisdiction over the complaint or forward it to the appropriate federal or state authority for continued processing:

Florida Department of Transportation
Equal Opportunity Office
ATTN: Title VI Complaint Processing
605 Suwannee Street MS 65
Tallahassee, FL 32399

If no violation is found and the complainant wishes to appeal the decision, he or she may contact the Federal Transit Administration, 230 Peachtree St., N.W., Suite 800, Atlanta, GA 30303 Attn: Region IV Civil Rights Officer or by calling (404) 865-5620, web site:

<https://www.transit.dot.gov/regulations-and-guidance/civil-rights-ada/file-complaint-fta>

Complainants may also file their initial Title VI complaint directly, no later than 180 days after the date of the alleged discrimination, and he or she may contact the Federal Transit Administration, 230 Peachtree St., N.W., Suite 800, Atlanta, GA 30303 Attn: Region IV Civil Rights Officer or by calling (404) 865-5620, web site:

<https://www.transit.dot.gov/regulations-and-guidance/civil-rights-ada/file-complaint-fta>

For more information about Santa Rosa County, contact:

Title VI Coordinator
DeVann Cook, Risk Management Director
6495 Caroline Street, Suite I
Milton, FL 32570
850-983-1863
850-983-1868 FAX
Devann@santarosa.fl.gov