



## **Title VI/Nondiscrimination Policy and Plan**


### **Title VI/Nondiscrimination Statement:**

Pursuant to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and other federal and state authorities, Sarasota County will not exclude from participation in, deny the benefits of, or subject to discrimination anyone on the grounds of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, income or family status.

Approved:

X   
\_\_\_\_\_

County Administrator

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Dated

**Policy Statement:**

Sarasota County values diversity and welcomes input from all interested parties, regardless of cultural identity, background or income level. Sarasota County believes the best programs and services result from careful consideration of the needs of all of its communities and when those communities are involved in the transportation decision making process. Thus, Sarasota County does not tolerate discrimination in any of its programs, services or activities.

**Complaint Procedures:**

Sarasota 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, religion, age, disability, family or income status in any of Sarasota County's programs, services or activities may file a complaint with the Sarasota County's Title VI/Nondiscrimination Coordinator:

Title VI/Nondiscrimination  
Coordinator 1660 Ringling Blvd.,  
Sarasota, FL 34236

Phone: 941-232-0744  
Fax: 941-861-5966  
TTY: 7-1-1 or 1-800-955-8771

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

The Title VI/Nondiscrimination Coordinator will respond to the complaint within thirty (30) calendar days and will take reasonable steps to resolve the matter. Should the county be unable to satisfactorily resolve a complaint, the county will forward the complaint, along with a record of its disposition to District 1 of the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT).

Sarasota County's Title VI/Nondiscrimination Coordinator has direct 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, the written complaint may be submitted directly

to Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). FDOT will serve as a clearing house, forwarding the complaint to the appropriate state or federal agency:

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

**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. Furthermore, these laws require federal aid recipients and other government entities to take affirmative steps to reasonably accommodate the disabled and ensure that their needs are equitably represented in transportation programs, services and activities.

Sarasota County will make every effort to ensure that its facilities, programs, services, and activities are accessible to those with disabilities. The county will make every effort to ensure that its advisory committees, public involvement activities and all other programs, services and activities include representation by the disabled community and disability service groups.

Sarasota County encourages the public to report any facility, program, service or activity that appears inaccessible to those who are disabled. 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 accommodation may require outside assistance, organization or resources, the county asks that requests be made at least ten (10) calendar days prior to the need for accommodation.

Questions, concerns, comments or requests for accommodation should be made to the county's ADA Officer, who also functions as the Title VI/Nondiscrimination Coordinator:

Title VI/Nondiscrimination Coordinator  
1660 Ringling Blvd.,  
Sarasota, FL 34236

Phone: 941-232-0744  
Fax: 941-861-5966  
TTY: 7-1-1 or 1-800-955-8771

### **Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Guidance:**

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Executive Order 13166, and various directives from the US Department of Justice (DOJ) and US Department of Transportation (DOT) require federal aid recipients to take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to programs, services and activities by 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:

- The number or proportion of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely to be encountered by the City/County's programs, services or activities.
  - The frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with these programs, services or activities.
  - The nature and importance of the program, service, or activity to people's lives and;
  - The resources available to the City/County and the likely costs of the LEP services.
1. Utilizing the 2010-2014 American Community Survey (ACS), the county has determined that LEP individuals speaking English less than well represent approximately 4.9% of our community. The county reasons that a relatively small portion of its service population are LEP speakers of Spanish or Spanish Creole.
  2. The county has not received any requests for translation or interpretation of its programs, services or activities into Spanish, Spanish Creole, or any other language.
  3. The county believes that transportation is of critical importance to its public, as access to health care, emergency services, employment, and other essentials would be difficult or impossible without reliable transportation systems. In that spirit, the county advises the public of how to access its nondiscrimination and public involvement policies by posting notices in all public county buildings, noting information on published Sarasota County Board agendas, and other printed program materials.
  4. The county is fortunate to house within its jurisdiction a number of institutions of higher education which has extensive language services. Further, the county maintains cordial relationships with a number of faith based and community organizations who offer competent language services at no cost to the county.

The analyses of these factors suggest that LEP services are not required at this time. However, in keeping with Sarasota County's LEP Plan, the county will continue to provide the following services to LEP individuals:

- Publicize the availability of Spanish interpreter services, free of charge, for Sarasota County Board and committee meetings, workshops, forums, or events, utilizing the following tools as appropriate:
  - signage
  - public outreach materials
  - community-based organizations
  - local newspapers
  - local cable outlets (i.e. Verizon, BrightHouse, Comcast)
  - school and library systems
- Request the use of language interpreter services from Sarasota County staff as needed. The county has a diverse set of employees from many different backgrounds capable of translating spoken and written language.

The county understands that its community profile is continually changing. As such, the county will triennially examine its LEP plan to ensure that it remains reflective of the community's needs.

Any persons requiring special language services should contact the city/county's Title VI/Nondiscrimination Officer:

Title VI/Nondiscrimination  
Coordinator 1660 Ringling Blvd.,  
Sarasota, FL 34236

Phone: 941-232-0744  
Fax: 941-861-5966  
TTY: 7-1-1 or 1-800-955-8771

**Public Involvement:**

In order to plan for efficient, effective, safe, equitable and reliable transportation systems, the county must have the input of its public. The county spends extensive staff and financial resources in furtherance of this goal and strongly encourages the participation of the entire community.

As an example of Sarasota County's value that it places on our citizens' input into the decision making process, the county currently has more than 30 citizen advisory boards, councils and committees with more than 300 membership positions in all. Each advisory council focuses on a specific issue or topic, such as the Bicycle/Pedestrian/Trail Advisory Committee or the Citizens Advisory Committee for Public Transportation.

The county also holds a number of transportation meetings, workshops and other events designed to gather public input on project planning and construction. Further, the county attends and participates in other community events to promote its services to the public. Finally, the county is constantly seeking ways of measuring the effectiveness of its public involvement.

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:

Sarasota County Contact Center

[ContactCenter@scgov.net](mailto:ContactCenter@scgov.net)

Phone: 941-861-5000

TTY: 7-1-1 or 1-800-955-8771

### **Data Collection:**

Federal Highway Administration regulations require federal-aid recipients to collect racial, ethnic and other similar demographic data on beneficiaries of or those affected by transportation programs, services and activities. The county accomplishes this through the use of census data, American Community Survey reports, Environmental Screening Tools (EST), driver and ridership surveys, its community development department 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 city/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.

### **Assurances:**

Every three years, or commensurate with a change in county executive leadership, the county must certify to FHWA and FDOT that its programs, services and activities are being conducted in a nondiscriminatory manner. These certifications are termed 'assurances' and serve two important purposes. First, they document the county's commitment to nondiscrimination and equitable service to its community. Second, they serve as a legally enforceable agreement by which the county may be held liable for breach. The public may view the triennial assurance on the county's website or by visiting the county's offices.