

## Title VI, EJ & public transit

Public transit providers offer mobility for all citizens and often provide essential services for many low-income and minority populations who have no other way to get to work, shopping, child care, medical appointments, recreation, or other destinations.

Transit agencies support Title VI and EJ principles when they:

- Ensure that changes in services, the location of new facilities or amenities, and the assignment of new vehicles are allocated equitably;
- Avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority and low-income populations; and
- Enhance public involvement activities to identify and address the needs of minority and low-income populations in making transportation decisions.

As a recipient of federal funds, the TPO has the responsibilities of working closely with the region's transit providers to be sure funds, services, and projects are distributed in a non-discriminatory way. Often federal transit funds come to the region through the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT). The TPO, TDOT, and the public transit providers must prepare a federal Title IV report every three years. These reports document each agency's Title VI programs and policies.

## Looking for Title VI or EJ information?

A major goal of FTA is to be sure all citizens have equal opportunity to participate in the decision-making process and that citizens have access to Title VI information that explains their rights.

Besides the TPO, TDOT and each public transit operator that uses federal funds must also make Title VI information available. The following information provides a contact for Title VI information for each agency.

### Knoxville Regional TPO

Title VI Information  
400 Main Street, Suite 403  
Knoxville, TN 37902  
(865) 215-2500; Fax: (865) 215-2068  
[www.knoxtrans.org](http://www.knoxtrans.org)  
E-mail: [transportation@knoxmpc.org](mailto:transportation@knoxmpc.org)

### Knoxville Area Transit

Title VI Information  
301 Church Avenue  
Knoxville, TN 37915  
(865) 215-7800  
[www.katbus.com](http://www.katbus.com)

### Knox County CAC Transit

Title VI Information  
P.O. Box 51650  
Knoxville, TN 37950-1650  
2247 Western Avenue (Street Address)  
(865) 524-0319  
[www.knoxcac.org](http://www.knoxcac.org)

### ETHRA

Title VI Information  
9111 Cross Park Drive  
Suite D-100  
Knoxville, TN 37923  
(865) 691-2551  
[www.ethra.org](http://www.ethra.org)

### Tennessee Department of Transportation

Civil Rights – Title VI Program  
505 Deaderick Street, Suite 1800  
Nashville, TN 37243  
(615) 741-3681  
[www.tdot.state.tn.us/civil-rights/titlevi](http://www.tdot.state.tn.us/civil-rights/titlevi)

If you cannot determine which transit agency has jurisdiction over a Title VI issue you may ask the Federal Transit Administration as a last resort.

### FTA Office of Civil Rights

Attention: Title VI Program Coordinator  
East Building, 5th Floor – TCR  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20590  
[www.fta.dot.gov/civil\\_rights.html](http://www.fta.dot.gov/civil_rights.html)



## What You Should Know



## About Title VI



## What is Title VI?

Title VI is part of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that ensures “no person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.” Under Title VI, no federally assisted agency or program can discriminate by:

- Denying services, aid, or benefits;
- Providing different services, aid, or benefits, or providing them in a manner different than they are provided to others; or
- Segregating or separately treating individuals in any matter related to the receipt of any service, aid, or benefit.

## What is Environmental Justice (EJ)?

Executive Order 12898 signed in 1994 directs every federal agency to make EJ part of its mission by identifying and addressing the effects of all programs, policies, and activities on “minority populations and low-income populations.” The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) EJ initiatives accomplish this goal by involving the potentially affected public in developing transportation projects that fit harmoniously within their communities without sacrificing safety or mobility.



## Transportation Planning Organization (TPO)

The TPO is a planning agency established by federal law. A main goal of the TPO is to improve coordination and cooperation in transportation planning between all local, state, and federal agencies that plan, build, or

provide transportation infrastructure or services. The TPO represents Knox, Anderson, Blount, Loudon, and Sevier counties, the Town of Farragut, and the Cities of Knoxville, Alcoa, Maryville, Clinton, Oak Ridge, Lenior City, and Loudon. The TPO is composed of an executive board, a technical committee, and staff. The TPO approves the use of federal transportation funds within these boundaries for road, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian projects.



The TPO staff evaluates road projects, analyzes land use and transportation impacts, provides guidance on federal and state programs, and prepares grants. The TPO manages several Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grant programs. The TPO develops a Long Range Mobility Plan and a Transportation Improvement Plan. The first provides a vision of what the transportation system should be 25 years from now. The second lists transportation projects that will be implemented within five years.

## Why are Title VI & EJ important to the TPO?

Title VI & EJ are not new concerns. Today, because of the evolution of the transportation planning process, they are receiving greater emphasis. Effective transportation decision-making depends upon understanding and properly addressing the unique needs of different socioeconomic groups.

The TPO strives to ensure that funds, projects, and services are distributed in an equitable way. It is important to the TPO that our community continues to prosper and providing transportation infrastructure and services are essential to that effort. It should be noted that while equitably distributing resources is an

important goal; each project or service must also be individually evaluated for possible Title VI impacts on the community in which they are located.

The TPO wants to be sure all citizens have a voice in the transportation decision-making process. Often minority communities have been under-represented. Having a “voice” is a fundamental right of everyone. It is also imperative that citizens be allowed to comment early in the planning process. Too often the public becomes engaged near the end of a project when changes cannot be easily accommodated. The TPO has its own Public Involvement Plan (PIP). The PIP describes the various types of meetings and outreach methods that the TPO undertakes to make information and public comment opportunities available to all of the region’s citizens. If a citizen has trouble speaking or reading English the TPO will work to help them understand the information presented, using a variety of techniques, including translating information into a foreign language or using interpreters.



## How can you help?

To fully meet the Region’s need, the TPO must have active participation of well-informed, empowered individuals, community groups, organizations, businesses, and academic institutions. These individuals and groups advance the letter, spirit, and intent of Title VI and EJ when they participate in public involvement activities (meetings, hearings, advisory groups, and task forces) to help the TPO and other federal, state, and local agencies understand community needs, perceptions, and goals. Please check the TPO website to keep up-to-date on transportation meetings and activities.