

**LOWER SAVANNAH COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
BEST FRIEND EXPRESS AND DIAL-A-RIDE
TITLE VI PUBLIC COMPLAINT PROCESS**

The Lower Savannah Council of Governments, in conjunction with the Transportation Providers, are authorized to implement the attached policy into daily administrative and transit activities. The Best Friend Express and Dial-A-Ride systems consider this its standardized guidelines addressing public complaints regarding Title VI programs.

Lower Savannah Council of Governments (Lower Savannah COG), through its operation and management of the Aiken County Urban Transit System, aka Best Friend Express, makes every effort to ensure that the level and quality of transportation services is provided without regard to race, color, or national origin. Through its planning process, the Lower Savannah COG has reviewed social and economic effects of programs and activities on minority populations and low income populations and has targeted service to the extent possible to these areas.

Through public hearings and advisory committee meetings, as well as through presentations to public groups, the Lower Savannah COG has promoted full and fair participation of all affected populations in transportation decision making. On occasion, members of the minority and low-income population have visited the offices of the Lower Savannah COG to inspect the service maps and make recommendations as to pockets of the population which could be better served. As a result of those visits, routes were modified to include those pockets of low-income residents while maintaining an effective and on-time transit route.

The Lower Savannah COG has made all possible efforts to prevent the denial, reduction or delay in benefits related to programs and activities that benefit minority populations or low-income populations, particularly in service to disabled riders. The Lower Savannah COG has on its staff a full-time mobility manager who is charged with the responsibility of matching riders to the most practical services available.

Although the Lower Savannah COG is still limited in its meaningful access to programs and activities by persons with limited English proficiency, an arrangement is in place between the Workforce Investment Area programs, housed in the COG offices, to utilize their services for limited English proficiency as the need arises. Plans are currently underway to translate all route brochures, as well as the web-site for the Best Friend Express, for easier access by those with limited English proficiency.

Through its Title VI Plan and signed Assurances, the Lower Savannah COG abides by DOT Order 5610.2, Environmental Justice, and DOT Limited English Proficiency, 70 FR 74087. All third party contractors are also be required to comply with the guidance of the circulars. Further, the Lower Savannah COG and its third party contractors at any tier of the project will provide services without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, sex or age and will prohibit discrimination in employment or business opportunity.

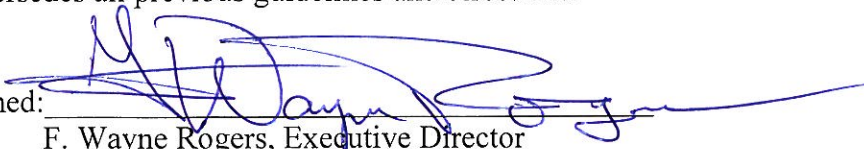
Any member of the general public who feels that their Title VI rights have been violated in any manner should immediately submit a written complaint to the offices of the Lower Savannah Council of Governments, P. O. Box 850, Aiken, S. C. 29802 (for hand-delivered complaints – 2748 Wagener Road, Aiken, S. C.). Lower Savannah COG staff will within 10 working days investigate the written complaint. If necessary, during that 10-working day period, a meeting will be held between all affected parties.

Procedures to correct any deficiencies found through the complaint will be initiated within a 30-working day period. If no deficiencies are found to exist as a result of the complaint, a written response will be sent to the complainant within a 15-working day period, detailing the investigation and the results of that investigation. If the complainant is not satisfied with the results of the investigation, they may further appeal their complaint to the offices of the Federal Transit Administration, Atlanta, Ga.

Further, the Lower Savannah COG shall maintain complete records regarding each complaint received and will report as required to the Federal Transit Administration the nature of all complaints and the resulting decision or correction.

Further, the Lower Savannah COG shall maintain racial and ethnic data showing the extent to which members of minority groups are beneficiaries of programs receiving FTA assistance. This information will be available for view by federal and state agencies and members of the general public, beneficiaries and participants during normal business hours of the Lower Savannah COG.

Finally, there will not be any changes made to these approved guidelines without specific approval from Lower Savannah Council of Governments. This directive supersedes all previous guidelines and directives.

Signed: 
F. Wayne Rogers, Executive Director

Dated: January 10, 2008


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Reviewed March 18, 2009