

Panhandle Regional Planning Commission

Title VI Plan – Associated with Public Transportation Planning
Funding from TxDOT

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Introduction

The Panhandle Regional Planning Commission (PRPC) is a Council of Governments established in 1969 under Chapter 391 of the Texas Local Government Code. The PRPC is not a transit provider and does not receive funding from the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) or Federal Transportation Administration (FTA) for the provision of direct public transportation. Since 2006 the PRPC has worked with TxDOT in the process of regional public transportation planning and coordination activities, and as such is required to have a Title VI Plan applicable to the customers of the public transportation planning effort. Through its Personnel Procedures, Procurement Policies, and this Title VI Plan the PRPC complies with the requirements of the following:

- Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
- Title IX of the Civil Rights Act of 1972
- Section 504 regulations of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- The Age Discrimination Act of 1975
- The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
- Federal Transportation Administration (FTA) Title VI Regulations of 2012
- FTA Circular 4702.1B
- FTA Circular 4703.1

This Title VI Plan takes effect on September 28, 2023, upon execution by the Executive Director of PRPC on behalf of the PRPC Board of Directors and covers a planning period from September 28, 2023 to September 28, 2026. The PRPC Board of Directors has ratified the Executive Directors signature on September 28, 2023 through formal action. The PRPC does not operate any transit services or provide funding services through FTA grants. The PRPC is a planning agency and does not provide funding to sub-recipients. The PRPC serves the following counties in the State of Texas; Armstrong, Briscoe, Carson, Castro, Childress, Collingsworth, Dallam, Deaf Smith, Donley, Gray, Hall, Hansford, Hartley, Hemphill, Hutchinson, Lipscomb, Moore, Ochiltree, Oldham, Parmer, Potter, Randall, Roberts, Sherman, Swisher, and Wheeler.



Policy Statement

The Panhandle Regional Planning Commission (PRPC) assures that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin as provided by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Civil Restoration Act of 1987 (P.L. 100.59), be excluded from or participation in, be denied benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to, discrimination under any program or activity for which it has sole responsibility. PRPC and PRPOMPT further assure every effort will be made to ensure nondiscrimination in all of its Boards, Councils, Committees, Programs, and activities, regardless of the funding source.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael J. Peters", with a horizontal line underneath it.

Michael J. Peters, Executive Director
Panhandle Regional Planning Commission

Notice to the Public

PRPC informs the public of its compliance with the requirements of the Title VI and related FTA requirements, statutes, and regulations by displaying the Notice to the Public at the PRPC Offices located at 415 SW 8th Avenue in Amarillo Texas and on the PRPC website located at www.theprpc.org. This notice will provide reference to the public regarding the process to file a complaint if a person believes that PRPC has discriminated against them in matters pertaining to public transportation planning. Complaint forms can be found at www.theprpc.org and at the PRPC Offices.

If information is needed in another language, please contact PRPC Offices at (806) 372-3381.

Notifying the Public of Rights Under Title VI
Panhandle Regional Planning Commission
(Public Transportation Planning)

- The PRPC operates its programs without regard to race, color, and national origin in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. Any person who believes they have been aggrieved by any unlawful discriminatory practice under Title VI may file a complaint with PRPC.
- For more information on the PRPC's Civil Rights Program, and the procedures to file a complaint: contact (806) 372-3381, email aguerrero@theprpc.org, or visit the office at 415 SW 8th Ave. in Amarillo, TX 79101. For a copy of the policy visit www.theprpc.org
- A complainant may file directly with the Federal Transit Administration by filing with the Office of Civil Rights, Attention: Title VI Program Coordinator, East Building, 5th Floor – TCR, 1200 New Jersey Ave., SE, Washington, DC 20590 or with the Federal Transit Administration, Region VI, 819 Taylor Street, Room 8A36, Fort Worth, TX 76102
- A complainant may file directly with the Texas Department of Transportation by filing at Attn: TxDOT-PTN, 125 E. 11th Street, Austin, TX 78701-2483

Notice in Spanish

Notificación Pública de los Derechos Consignados en el Título

VI

Panhandle Regional Planning Commission

(Planeamiento de Transporte Público)

- La Comisión de Planeamiento Regional del Panhandle (PRPC por sus siglas en inglés) lleva a cabo sus programas sin considerar la raza, el color y la nacionalidad de conformidad con el Título VI de la Ley de Derechos Civiles. Aquella persona que crea que ha sido agraviada por un acto discriminatorio ilícito establecido en el Título VI puede interponer una demanda ante la PRPC.
- Para obtener más información acerca del Programa de Derechos Civiles de la PRPC y de los procedimientos para interponer una demanda, contáctese al (806) 372-3381, email aguerrero@theprpc.org o visite la oficina ubicada en 415 SW 8th Ave., Amarillo, Texas 79101. Para obtener una copia de nuestra política, visite www.theprpc.org.
- El demandante puede interponer su demanda directamente ante la Administración Federal de Tránsito presentándola ante la Oficina de Derechos Civiles en: Title VI Program Coordinator, East Building, 5th Floor – TCR, 1200 New Jersey Ave., SE, Washington, DC, 20590 o para la Administración Federal de Tránsito, Región VI, 819 Taylor Street, Room 8A36, Fort Worth, TX 76102
- El demandante puede interponer su demanda directamente ante el Departamento de Transporte de Texas presentándola en: TxDOT-PTN, 125 E. 11th Street, Austin, TX 78701-2483
 - *Si necesita información en otro idioma, llame al (806) 372-3381*

Complaint Procedure

Any individual who feels they have been discriminated against on the basis of race, color, or national origin by the PRPC (hereinafter referred to as “the Authority”) may file a Title VI complaint by completing and submitting the Authority’s Title VI Complaint Form found on the PRPC website (www.theprpc.org) or by calling (806) 372-3381. The Authority reviews complaints received no more than 180 days after the alleged incident. The Authority will process complaints that are complete. Once the complaint is received, the Authority will review it to determine if the complaint is within its jurisdiction. The complainant will receive an acknowledgement letter informing the complainant whether the complaint will be reviewed.

The Authority has 61 days to investigate the complaint. If more information is needed to resolve the case, the Authority may contact the complainant. The complainant has 7 business days from the date of the letter to send requested information to the reviewer assigned to the case. If the reviewer is not contacted by the complainant or does not receive the additional information within 7 business days, the Authority can administratively close the case. A case can be administratively closed also if the complainant no longer wishes to pursue their case.

After the reviewer reviews the complaint, they will issue one of two letters to the complainant: a closure letter or a letter of finding (LOF). A closure letter summarizes the allegations and states that there was not a Title VI violation and that the case will be closed. An LOF summarizes the allegations and the interviews regarding the alleged incident, and explains whether any disciplinary action, additional training for staff, or other action will occur. If the complainant wishes to appeal the decision, she/he has 7 days after the date of the letter or the LOF to do so.

A person may also file a complaint directly with the Federal Transit Administration, at FTA Office of Civil Rights, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590 or Texas Department of Transportation, Attn: TxDOT-PTN, 125 E. 11th Street, Austin, TX 78701-2483.

PRPC will notify their PTC by email or fax of any Title VI-related complaints received within 10 working days of the receipt of the complaint, including a paper or electronic copy of the complaint form.

The agency will notify their TxDOT Public Transportation Coordinator (PTC) by email or fax of any Title VI related complaints received within 10 working days of the receipt of the complaint, including a paper or electronic copy of the complaint form.

Complaint procedures can be found on the PRPC website (www.theprpc.org)

Procedimiento para interponer una demanda

Aquel individuo que sienta que ha sido discriminado por la PRPC (en adelante referida como “la Autoridad”) a causa de su raza, color o nacionalidad puede interponer una demanda de acuerdo al Título VI completando y presentando el Formulario de Demanda según Título VI de la Autoridad que se encuentra en el sitio web de la PRPC (www.theprpc.org) o llamando al (806) 372-3381. La Autoridad examina las demandas recibidas antes de cumplidos 180 días de producido el supuesto incidente. La Autoridad procesará las demandas que se encuentren completas. Una vez recibida la demanda, la Autoridad la examinará para determinar si tiene competencia sobre ella. El demandante recibirá una carta de constatación informándole si se examinará la demanda.

La Autoridad tiene 61 días para analizar la demanda. Si se necesita más información para resolver el caso, la Autoridad podrá contactar al demandante. El demandante tiene 7 días hábiles a partir de la fecha que figura en la carta para enviar la información solicitada al examinador asignado al caso. Si, dentro de 7 días hábiles, el demandante no contacta al examinador o el examinador no recibe la información adicional, la Autoridad puede cerrar el caso de oficio. Un caso puede cerrarse de oficio si el demandante ya no desea continuar con su caso.

Después de que el examinador examine la demanda, emitirá o bien una carta de cierre de caso, o bien una carta de resolución (CDR). La carta de cierre de caso resume todas las afirmaciones y establece que no existió una violación al Título VI y que se cerrará el caso. La CDR resume todas las afirmaciones y las entrevistas en relación con el supuesto incidente y explica las acciones disciplinarias, la capacitación adicional del personal u otra acción que ocurra.

Si el demandante desea apelar la decisión, puede hacerlo dentro de los 7 días posteriores a la fecha que se encuentra en la carta de cierre o en la CDR. Una persona también podrá interponer una demanda directamente ante la Administración Federal de Tránsito en: FTA Office of Civil Rights, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC, 20590 o bien en el Departamento de Transporte de Texas, en TxDOT-PTN, 125 E. 11th Street, Austin, TX 78701-2483.

La PRPC notificará a su Coordinador de Transporte Público (CTP) por email o fax acerca de cualquier demanda relacionada al Título VI que haya sido recibida dentro de los 10 días posteriores a la recepción de la demanda, incluyendo copias en papel o electrónicas del formulario de demanda.

La agencia notificará al Coordinador de Transporte Público (CTP) del Departamento de Transporte de Texas (TxDOT) por email o fax acerca de cualquier demanda relacionada al Título VI que haya sido recibida dentro de los 10 días posteriores a la recepción de la demanda, incluyendo copias en papel o electrónicas del formulario de demanda.

Los procedimientos para interponer una denuncia se pueden encontrar en el sitio web de la PRPC (www.theprpc.org).

Si necesita información en otro idioma llame al (806)372-3381.

Complaint Form

Section I:	
Name:	
Address:	
Telephone (Home):	Telephone (Work):
Electronic Mail Address:	
Section II:	
I believe the discrimination I experienced was based on (check all that apply): <input type="checkbox"/> Race <input type="checkbox"/> Color <input type="checkbox"/> National Origin Date of Alleged Discrimination (Month, Day, Year): _____ Explain as clearly as possible what happened and why you believe you were discriminated against. Describe all persons who were involved. Include the name and contact information of the person(s) who discriminated against you (if known) as well as names and contact information of any witnesses. If more space is needed, please use the back of this form.	
Section III:	
You may attach any written materials or other information that you think is relevant to your complaint. Signature and date required below _____ Signature Date _____ Please submit this form in person at the address below, or mail this form to: Panhandle Regional Planning Commission 415 SW 8 th Ave. Amarillo, TX 79101 aguerrero@theprpc.org <i>Si necesita información en otro idioma contacte (806)372-3381</i>	

Formulario de denuncia

Sección I:	
Nombre:	
Domicilio:	
Teléfono (casa):	Teléfono (trabajo):
Dirección de correo electrónico:	
Sección II:	
Creo que la discriminación que sufrí se basó en (marque todas las que correspondan): <input type="checkbox"/> Raza <input type="checkbox"/> Color <input type="checkbox"/> Nacionalidad Fecha en que se produjo la supuesta discriminación (Mes, Día, Año): _____ Explique con la mayor claridad posible lo ocurrido y por qué cree que sufrió una discriminación. Describa a todas las personas involucradas. Incluya el nombre y la información de contacto de las personas que lo discriminaron (si lo sabe) así como los nombres y la información de contacto de cualquier testigo. Si necesita más espacio, utilice el reverso de este formulario.	
Sección III:	
Usted puede adjuntar materiales escritos u otra información que crea relevante para su denuncia. Se requiere firma y fecha a continuación	
_____ Firma	
Fecha _____	
Por favor entregue este formulario en persona en la dirección que figura a continuación o envíelo por correo a: Panhandle Regional Planning Commission 415 SW 8 th Ave. Amarillo, Texas 79101 aguerrero@theprpc.org <i>Si necesita información en otro idioma llame al (806)372-3381.</i>	

Transit Investigations, Complaints, and Lawsuits:

Note that the PRPC is not a transit provider. Additionally, PRPC has had no complaints, investigations, or lawsuits at any point related to the Title VI Plan or the broader Title VI scope.

The Program Year 2023 - 2026

<u>Action</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Summary</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Action Taken</u>
Investigation	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Complaints	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Lawsuits	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Internal Actions

Note that PRPC is not a transit provider, and such has very limited direct contact with clients. However, PRPC makes a great effort to include individuals from all walks of life in its regional transportation planning efforts. The Panhandle Regional Organization to Maximize Public Transportation (PROMPT) is the advisory group that assists with the regional public transportation planning effort and associated pilot projects. The composition of the group is dictated by TxDOT to include members representing the elderly, disabled, low-income, and other under-represented groups. The current racial composition of the group is as follows.

Body	Caucasian	Hispanic	African American	Asian American	Native American	Two or More Races
Population	80%	31%	4.8%	2%	0.9%	2.5%
Panhandle Regional Organization to Maximize Public Transportation (Non-Elected Portion)	80%	7%	13%	0%	0%	0%

PRPC also strives for the inclusion of all crosswalks in the region in its employees and boards. The PRPC Board of Directors' minority composition actually surpasses the regional minority population percentages. Special provisions are in place for the Board of Directors composition to include at-large minority representatives as well as elected minority representatives. Further, PRPC includes anti-discrimination and Section 43 language in its Personnel Policies and Procurement Policies that is enforceable. In instances where allowable, minority citizens are actively seeking to fill key positions on boards and advisory groups.

Panhandle Regional Organization to Maximize Public Transportation (PROMPT)

The Panhandle Regional Organization to Maximize Public Transportation (PROMPT) advisory board serves as the steering committee for all regional planning efforts undertaken by the Panhandle Regional Planning Commission (PRPC). This board is composed of both elected and non-elected members and is responsible for collection of data, plan development, and oversight of planning activities before they are passed through to TxDOT.

PROMPT non-elected committee members include:

Representative	Agency
Jason Riddlespurger	City of Amarillo Community Development
Benny Wilson	Hansford County
Laura Reyher	Senior Ambassador Coalition
Lylene Springer	Panhandle Community Services – Transit
Chris Quigley	Amarillo City Transit
Kathryn English	Area Agency on Aging – Panhandle Region
Richard Neill	Texas Department of Transportation
Timothy Holland	Veterans Affairs Hospital – Amarillo, TX
Susan Stevenson	Amarillo Education Foundation
Travis Muno	Amarillo Metropolitan Planning Organization
Trent Morris	Workforce Solutions – Panhandle
Grace Strait	Modiv Care
Chris Sharp	Amarillo College
Commissioner Cody Jones	City of Canyon
Joe Rogers	PILC
Judge Dan Looten	Carson County
Garrett Spradling	City of Borger
Judge Nancy Tanner	Potter County
Kacie Bell	Coalition of Health Services
Judge Rowdy Rhoades	Moore County

Outreach Efforts

PRPC has engaged in the following outreach efforts since the last Title VI plan submission:

- 1) Meetings, focus-groups and workshops regarding public transportation were held in various locations throughout the Panhandle Region on the following time periods;
 - In 2020 - December
 - In 2021 - January, April, September and November
 - In 2022 - January, May, August and November
 - In 2023 - February, March, May, July, August and September
- 2) Actively sought out LEP, minority, elderly persons, and persons with disabilities to serve on the Panhandle Regional Organization to Maximize Public Transportation (PROMPT) advisory board.
- 3) Provided information to the public and transit riders through transit providers regarding PRPC's Title VI plan, compliance, and identified languages through the four-factor analysis as detailed below. Information was provided at the above noted time periods from the last submission of the Title VI plan.
- 4) Provided LEP access and access to any persons in attendance at PROMPT advisory board meetings and any other public transportation-related workshops, meetings, and other activities.

Language Assistance Plan

A four-factor analysis applicable to Limited English Proficiency (LEP) persons was performed to determine future plans for specific transportation planning services in the 1) LEP Demography, 2) Contact Frequency, 3) Importance of Service, and 4) Resources Available.

1) Number and Proportion of LEP Persons Served or Encountered in the Service Area. The planning service will not determine how the LEP persons interact with service providers but may at times through planning identify LEP communities as well as assess the number of LEP persons from each language group to determine the appropriate language services needed for each language. Findings related to numbers and locations of LEP persons from planning efforts shall be provided to transit providers through plans and pilot project reports. The PRPC coordinates with all transit providers in the region that facilitates data, demographic data, and maps to identify minority populations in the non-urbanized areas of the state based on the 2020 Census.

Assessment of the Number and Proportion of LEP Persons Likely to be Served or Encountered in the Eligible Transportation Service Population. The number or proportion of LEP persons in the service area who may be affected or are likely to require transportation services. The Coordinated Transportation Planning Committee of PROMPT reviewed the 2020 US Census Report and determined that 403,327 persons in the transportation service area of PROMPT* (26% of the population) or 106,171 speak a language other than English. *Of those 106,171, persons 38,859 have limited English proficiency; that is, they speak English "not well" or "not at all", this is 10% of the overall population in the planning region. In the PROMPT planning region, of those persons with Limited English Proficiency, 31,280 speak Spanish, 1,231 speak Indo-European, and 4,522 speak Asian or other Pacific Islander Languages and 1,826 speak other languages. PROMPT planning region: Armstrong, Briscoe, Carson, Castro, Childress, Collingsworth, Dallam, Deaf Smith, Donley, Gray, Hall, Hansford, Hartley, Hemphill, Hutchinson, Lipscomb, Moore, Ochilree, Oldham, Parmer, Potter, Randall, Roberts, Sherman, Swisher, and Wheeler.

2) Frequency with which LEP Individuals Come into Contact with the Program: PRPC rarely comes into contact with LEP persons and shall never do so through a transit service; however, LEP persons may participate in public meetings – PRPC maintains a subscription to Language Line that can be utilized to assist LEP individuals. Language Line is available at all public meetings which are facilitated for the planning process and is utilized when LEP individuals need the service. PRPC staff are trained on Title VI compliance procedures and LEP responsibilities, the use of Language Line services for LEP persons, and documentation of complaints.

3) Importance to LEP Persons of Program Activities and Services: Please note that PRPC is not a transit provider. The regional public transportation planning effort and associated pilot projects are highly important to the PRPC region because it serves as a process by which transit providers may coordinate efforts, identify areas of weakness, and pilot programs to help address those weaknesses. Public transit providers in the region serve an LEP population that exceeds regional rates, and as such, the benefit of the planning effort to the transit providers serves as an indirect benefit to LEP persons. PRPC is not a transit provider. The regional transportation planning efforts undertaken by the PRPC include the identification of gaps and other areas of concern related to mobility for minority populations. It is the goal of all regionally coordinated planning activities to identify gaps in mobility and access for minority populations. The end result of the regionally coordinated planning process includes recommendations to support the mobility and access needs of these populations. PRPC distributes the Regionally Coordinated Transportation Plan to all PROMPT members, transit agencies, local governments, and other stakeholders at the conclusion of the planning process. PRPC also conducts stakeholder meetings regarding gaps and needs to be related to the mobility of minority populations each year when annual updates to the Coordinated Plan are made. Finally, the PROMPT Board includes a dedicated agenda item at all meetings to discuss gaps, needs, and emerging issues related to mobility in the minority population communities.

4) Determine the Resources Available to Recipient and Costs: Though PRPC has highly minimal direct exposure to LEP persons related to transportation, the organization has invested in Language Line. This is a service that provides translation assistance to individuals on phone calls or in-house through a phone line. Additionally, the PRPC employs multiple Spanish speakers who assist with callers and in the translation of documents and notices that are issued to areas of the region where LEP populations of Spanish speakers exceed 10% of the population.

5) Translation of Vital Documents: The following documents will be available in the foreign language.

- Notice to the Public
- Complaint Procedures
- Complaint Form

6) Outreach Efforts Undertaken since Previous Title VI Plan Approval: The PRPC has engaged in stakeholder meetings with the PROMPT board in order to facilitate effective communication with LEP and underserved populations. At each PROMPT board meeting, members discuss their current efforts in outreach to these populations. In addition, the language line is an existing resource through the PRPC and is often used through the various departments as an activity to further communication channels to LEP persons.

Conclusion

PRPC takes the concepts and precepts of equality and access to services to all included in Title VI very seriously. Though the organization is not a transit provider it has been deemed appropriate for the organization to adopt this Title VI Policy for any program areas receiving TxDOT assistance.