“Simple justice requires that public funds, to which all taxpayers of all races contribute, not be spent in any fashion which encourages, entrenches, subsidizes, or results in racial discrimination.”

President John F. Kennedy, in his message calling for the enactment of Title VI, 1963

**ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE**

Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations provides:

“Each Federal agency shall make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations.”

There are three fundamental Environmental Justice principles:

- To avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects.
- To ensure the full and fair participation of all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process.
- To prevent the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority populations and low-income populations.

**LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY**

Executive Order 13166, Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP), provides:

“...improve access to Federally conducted and Federally assisted programs and activities for persons who, as a result of national origin, are limited in their English Proficiency....”

This Executive Order is directed at implementing the protections afforded by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related regulations. It prohibits recipients of federal financial assistance from discriminating based on national origin by failing to provide meaningful access to services to individuals who are LEP. This protection requires that LEP persons be provided an equal opportunity to benefit from or have access to services that are normally provided in English.

LEP individuals are those individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and have a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English, as a result of national origin. These individuals may be entitled to language assistance with respect to a particular type of service, benefit, or encounter.

**WHAT DOES ALL THIS MEAN?**

It is illegal for any Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) division or contractor/sub-recipient affiliated with WSDOT to withhold or refuse benefits, services, or funding based on race, color, or national origin.

WSDOT strives to ensure that access to and use of all programs, services, or benefits derived from any WSDOT activity will be administered without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, or socioeconomic status.

WSDOT will not tolerate discrimination by a WSDOT employee or recipient of federal funds such as contractors, consultants, suppliers, universities, colleges, towns, cities, counties, planning agencies, or any other recipients of WSDOT federal-aid highway funds.

WSDOT prohibits all discriminatory practices, which may result in:

- Denial to an individual of any service, financial aid, or benefit provided under the program to which he or she may be otherwise entitled;
- Different standards or requirements for participation;
WHO BEARS RESPONSIBILITY TO TITLE VI?

As a recipient of federal funds, the entire WSDOT organization must comply with all the provisions of Title VI. WSDOT functional program areas directly responsible for ensuring compliance in its program activities are:

- Communications
- Construction
- Consultant Services
- Design / Location
- Education / Training
- Environmental
- Ferries
- Highways and Local Programs
- Maintenance
- Planning
- Public Transportation
- Purchasing
- Rail
- Real Estate Services
- Research and Library Services
- Right of Way
- Tolling

The WSDOT Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO) provides continuous leadership, guidance, and technical assistance to ensure ongoing compliance with Title VI and the Executive Orders on Environmental Justice and Limited English Proficiency.

BENEFITS AND SERVICES

WSDOT’s mission is to provide the people of Washington with a safe, efficient, and effective inter-modal transportation system. All of the work WSDOT performs is intended to assist the transportation needs of all the people of Washington regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, or socioeconomic status.

If you believe that you have been discriminated against because of your race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, or socioeconomic status, you may file a written complaint with the WSDOT OEO.

HOW DO I FILE A DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINT?

If you believe that you or others protected by Title VI have been discriminated against, you may file a complaint with WSDOT OEO in the following manner:

A signed, written complaint should be filed generally within 180 days of the date of the alleged discrimination. It should describe:

- Your name, address, and telephone number.
- Your complaint must be signed. If you are filing on behalf of another person, include your name, address, telephone number, and your relationship to that person (e.g., friend, attorney, parent, etc.)
- How, why, and when you believe you were discriminated against. Include as much background information as possible about the alleged act(s) of discrimination. Include names of individuals whom you allege discriminated against you, if you know them.
- The names of any persons, if known, that the investigator could contact for additional information to support or clarify your allegations.

WHAT WILL WSDOT DO WITH MY COMPLAINT?

Once a complaint is filed, it will be reviewed by WSDOT OEO to determine whether it has jurisdiction to investigate the issues you have raised. Once jurisdiction is determined, WSDOT OEO will investigate your allegations and attempt to resolve violations it has found.

WHAT IF THE RECIPIENT RETALIATES AGAINST ME FOR ASSERTING MY RIGHTS OR FILING A COMPLAINT?

You should be aware that a recipient is prohibited from retaliating against you or any person because he or she opposed an unlawful policy or practice, or made charges, testified, or participated in any complaint action under Title VI. If you believe that you have been retaliated against, you should immediately contact WSDOT’s Office of Equal Opportunity:

WHERE CAN I GO FOR MORE INFORMATION?

Additional information regarding WSDOT’s Title VI Program can be found at WSDOT’s website:

http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/EqualOpportunity/titlevi.htm