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Title VI/Nondiscrimination Policy and Plan

Affirming Statement

Washington County (hereinafter "WCBOCC") values diversity and welcomes input from all interested parties, regardless of cultural identity, background, or income level. Moreover, WCBOCC believes that the best programs and services result from careful consideration of the needs of all of its communities and members. Thus, WCBOCC does not tolerate discrimination in any of its programs, services, or activities. Pursuant to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, U.S. Department of Homeland Security regulation 6 C.F.R. Part 19 and other federal and state authorities, WCBOCC 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 or family status.

In compliance with other federal programs with which WCBOCC participates, every three years, or commensurate with a change in executive leadership, WCBOCC must certify 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 WCBOCC's commitment to nondiscrimination and equitable service to its community. Second, they serve as a legally enforceable agreement by which WCBOCC may be held liable for breach. Those wishing to view WCBOCC's Nondiscrimination Assurance may do so by visiting WCBOCC's website or administration offices.

The employees of WCBOCC receive training as to WCBOCC obligations under the applicable federal and state laws both from internal administrative personnel and third-party vendors on the obligations to avoid discriminatory statements and actions and comply with WCBOCC's legal requirements.

As described in greater detail below, Aaron Dudley, in the Human Resources Department of Washington County, is responsible for overseeing recipient compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975. Ms. Dudley's responsibilities include overseeing the discrimination complaints process,

developing, and updating civil rights policies and procedures, processing requests for reasonable accommodations, coordinating the translation of vital documents and processing requests for language interpretation. The duties related to this aspect of Ms. Dudley's position, while similar in some respects to employment concerns, are acknowledged to be focused on the County's compliance with the applicable laws, rules, and regulations surrounding citizen and participant involvement and related concerns.

Discrimination Complaints Process

WCBOCC 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, or family status in any WCBOCC program, service or activity may file a complaint with WCBOCC Human Resources employee Aaron Dudley:

Aaron Dudley
1331 South Boulevard
Chipley, FL 32428
Email: adudley@washingtonfl.com
Phone: 850-415-5151
Fax: 850-415-5152

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. In the event that a complainant has limitations due to disabilities or limited English proficiency, reasonable assistance or accommodations will be provided.

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 WCBOCC be unable to satisfactorily resolve a complaint, WCBOCC will forward the complaint, along with a record of its disposition to the appropriate funding office, including but not limited to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties.

This policy and the policy statement of WCBOCC will be available upon request from the Coordinator and will be available via the WCBOCC website.

Disability Access Policy and Procedures

WCBOCC affirms that 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 those with disabilities and ensure that their needs are equitably represented in transportation programs, services, and activities. Notice of WCBOCC policy statement prohibiting discrimination and of how to request accommodations is included in Exhibit No. 1.

The Agency will make every effort to ensure that its facilities, programs, services, and activities are accessible to those with disabilities. The Agency will also make every effort to ensure that its advisory committees, public involvement activities and all other programs, services and activities include representation by communities with disabilities and disability service groups.

The Agency encourages the public to report any facility, program, service, or activity that appears inaccessible to those who are disabled. Furthermore, the Agency will provide reasonable accommodation to individuals with disabilities 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 Agency asks that requests be made at least seven (7) calendar days prior to the need for accommodation.

Questions, concerns, comments, or requests for accommodation should be made to the Agency ADA Officer:

Aaron Dudley
1331 South Boulevard
Chipley, FL 32428
Email: adudley@washingtonfl.com
Phone: 850-415-5151
Fax: 850-415-5152

Language Access Policy and Procedures

WCBOCC affirms that Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Executive Order 13166, and various directives from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security 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 County and the likely costs of the LEP services.

1. Using census data, WCBOCC has determined that LEP individuals speaking English less than well represent approximately 2% of the community. WCBOCC realizes that such statistical data can become outdated or inaccurate. Therefore, the Agency contacted local law enforcement, social services agencies, and the school board to validate the proportion of LEP served by those entities. Spanish was reported to be the prevalent LEP language with an estimate of 1.3% eligible to be served.

2. WCBOCC received zero requests for translation or interpretation of its programs, services, or activities into or other language(s). Thus, WCBOCC estimates its contact with LEP individuals to be minimal.

3. WCBOCC believes that providing appropriate services is of critical importance to its public. In that spirit, Washington County will ensure that all segments of the population, including LEP persons, have been involved or have the opportunity to be involved in the planning process to be consistent with its nondiscrimination goals. To accomplish that goal, WCBOCC has included in its policy statement information for LEP persons to contact Aaron Dudley (contact information above) to address any requests for assistance and will ensure that the policy statement is available in English and Spanish.

4. WCBOCC is fortunate to house within/near its jurisdiction one or more institutions of higher education which have extensive language resources. Further, WCBOCC maintains cordial relationships with faith based and/or community organizations that offer competent language services at low or no cost to WCBOCC. Upon receipt of a request by a LEP person, WCBOCC will engage with such resources or provide sufficient information for any LEP person to individually engage with such resources, if preferred by the LEP person. WCBOCC will also post on its website notice of the availability of free language services.

Given the size of the Spanish LED population and current financial restraints, full language translations of all documents are not considered warranted or cost feasible at this time. However, at a minimum, WCBOCC commits to:

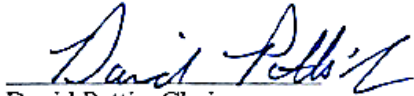
- Maintain a list of employees who competently speak the LEP language(s) and who are willing to provide translation and/or interpretation services.
- Distribute this list to staff that regularly has contact with the public.
- Provide public notification in the LEP language of the availability of language assistance, free of charge.

In addition, WCBOCC understands that its community characteristics change and that the four-factor analysis may reveal the need for more or varied LEP services in the future. As

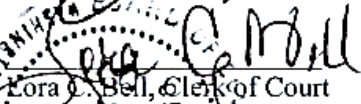
such, it will at least triennially examine its LEP plan to ensure that it remains reflective of the community's needs.

Persons requiring special language services should contact the Agency's Title VI/Nondiscrimination Coordinator as described in WCBOCC's policy statement.

Adopted this 20th day of June, 2024 by the Washington County Board of County Commissioners.



David Pettis, Chairman
Washington County BOCC



Lora C. Bell, Clerk of Court

