



# **TITLE VI/NONDISCRIMINATION ANNUAL WORK PLAN & ACCOMPLISHMENTS FY2018**



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# INTRODUCTION

The County of Hidalgo, as a recipient of Federal financial assistance and under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related statutes, ensures that no person shall on the grounds of race, religion (where the primary objective of the financial assistance is to provide employment per 42 U.S.C. §2000d-3), color, national origin, sex, age, or disability be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination or retaliation in any federally or non-federally funded program or activity administered by the County of Hidalgo.

This Title VI/Nondiscrimination Annual Work Plan & Accomplishment Report documents Hidalgo County's Title VI Program accomplishments for reporting period September 1, 2017 – August 31, 2018 (fiscal year (FY) 2018) and goals for FY 2019. The report is prepared in accordance with 23 CFR 200.9 and the Federal Highway Administration's Title VI/Nondiscrimination Program.

# TITLE VI/NONDISCRIMINATION COMPONENT

*This section contains the Title VI accomplishments of the County of Hidalgo's Executive Office that are not included in other sections of this report.*

## Title VI Plan Improvements

During FY2018, the Title VI Coordinator met with outside Community Organizations such as La Union del Pueblo Entero (L.U.P.E.) and the Texas Low Income Housing Information Service (Texas Housers) to improve the County's Title VI Plan. Through their continued support and input, the County hopes to have a more complete and clear Title VI Plan to ensure nondiscrimination amongst all parts of County operations. Completion of proposed plan improvements are scheduled for County's Commissioners' Court approval at the beginning of FY2019.

## State Desk Audit

On August 22, 2018, the County responded to the Texas Department of Transportation's request for a desk audit of the its Title VI plan by providing requested information related to the Title VI plan and documentation utilized by the County which contains relevant Title VI related information.

# PROGRAM MONITORING

*This section describes FY2018 accomplishments and FY2019 goals related to internal and external monitoring, including the data collection and Limited English Proficient (LEP) component, of the County of Hidalgo's Title VI Program.*

## **Title VI Reviews Conducted During FY2018**

Reviews of the Title VI/Nondiscrimination data and other plan requirements are conducted annually.

### Dissemination of Title VI Information

In FY2018, the County Executive Officer, Title VI/Nondiscrimination Coordinator sent memorandum to all county departments reminding them of the Title VI Plan requirements to follow the external notifications (i.e. posters and notices) and submit necessary reporting by the establish deadline of August 31, 2018.

## **Title VI Results of Reviews Conducted During FY2018**

Review of requested information provided by county departments were determined to be following the Title VI/Nondiscrimination Plan. However, it was concluded that there is a need to increase compliance with plan requirements by county departments.

The Title VI Coordinator found that several departments had questions about the requirements of the plan. Departments have had issues with implementation of plan requirements, such as, posting of external office posters of the County's Title VI/Nondiscrimination Plan and providing the required reporting of LEP encounters. As such, the Title VI Coordinator recommends departments implement and track the necessary information to ensure compliance of all plan requirements and reporting, and further developed plans for a countywide internal Title VI training.

During FY2018, Title VI Brochures were developed to provide relevant information to the general public; however, they have not been finalized for dissemination to county departments.

## **FY2019 Goals**

The Title VI Coordinator will continue to work with all County departments to ensure compliance with the County's Title VI/Nondiscrimination Plan. The County's FY2019 Goals include:

1. Continue exploring training opportunities to ensure compliance with Title VI, specifically in collecting Title VI related data and analyzing the data to identify and address any potential avenues of discrimination.
2. Continue compliance efforts to ensure required Title VI information and procedures are implemented by all County departments, specifically Special Emphasis Areas, including ensuring all employees meet the requirements detailed on the County's adopted Title VI/Nondiscrimination Plan.
3. Ongoing review of current adopted Title VI/Nondiscrimination Plan to provide changes that will possibly provide a more efficient and effective alternative to ensure county departments comply with required information under the Title VI Plan.
4. Facilitate the disbursement of the Title VI Brochures and relevant posters/notices to county departments.

# LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY (LEP)

In FY2018, the County sought Limited English Proficiency (LEP) related information from County Departments/Offices for use in its annual report. This annual report assists the County to accurately identify and address the changing needs of their LEP communities which, in turn, can help inform the Title VI Coordinator whether there should be changes to the quantity or type of language assistance services. As noted above, County Department's/Office's have faced challenges in implementing Plan requirements. As such, for the time period in question, information reported is detailed below.

From September 1, 2017 through August 31, 2018, County department, Urban County Program, reported a total number of 233 Limited English Proficiency encounters. The most frequently requested language was Spanish. The LEP service most frequently used was written translation and the most frequent method rendered was the LEP person's family/friend. There were no LEP related expenditures reported.

Furthermore, department(s) reported a total of 594 documents translated upon request, and 22 vital documents translated. This was a substantial increase from FY2017 reporting.

There were no LEP complaints received for FY2018.

As noted in the County's LEP Plan, a large portion of the County's population speaks the English language less than very well. Further, the Spanish language is spoken by a large portion of individuals in the County. As such, a significant number of verbal LEP encounters occur in Spanish. As indicated above, due to the significant frequency and volume of these verbal encounters on a daily basis, it is difficult and highly impractical for County Offices/Departments to report/document these LEP encounters. However, each office/department generally has several bilingual staff members readily available to assist these individuals and address these LEP encounters. Additionally, since recording of the LEP encounters has presented a challenge to many of the County's

departments/offices, the LEP encounter reporting forms are currently under review in an effort to make them more user- friendly.

### **FY2019 Goals**

1. The Title VI Coordinator will continue to remind all County Departments/Offices of the need to document and report Title VI/Nondiscrimination related information to the extent practicable.
2. A training is currently being coordinated for all Department/Office heads or designees.
3. The County will make additional efforts to inform the public of language assistance services, (i.e.: verify use of "I speak" cards, LEP posters, etc.).



# ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

The County of Hidalgo addresses environmental justice issues and outreach through general and grant funded programs through our county departments/offices that provide social services to disproportionate families or the minority population through Community Development Block Grants (CDBGs), rental assistance, housing repairs, food vouchers and so on.

Our County will continue to strive in ensuring compliance of all federal requirements including but not limited to compliance with Title VI/Nondiscrimination Plan. Our Title VI Coordinator, in coordination with county departments, will gather data to establish demographic characteristics and trends. The data will assist in identifying and engaging traditionally underserved populations, including those covered under existing Environmental Justice policies, as well as populations with Limited English Proficiency (LEP).

Each county department assist with public involvement activities throughout the county for projects/programs coordinated through their offices. Based on the information reported for FY2018, Census Maps with LMI Data and EJ Screen ACS Summary Reports, and other pertinent reports are gathered and included as part of the Environmental Justice evaluation for each project under Urban County. Furthermore, the department conducts demographic surveys and collects public meeting comment forms to comply with the County's Title VI Plan and ensure public participation is considered during the development and implementation of county projects.

# TITLE VI TRAINING SUMMARY

*This section provides an overview of training activities conducted by the County of Hidalgo's Title VI Coordinator for FY2018.*

## **Training provided by the County of Hidalgo**

The Title VI Coordinator, resubmitted the Plan to each Department/Office and fielded questions from specific Department/Offices regarding the same; however, a formal training program is currently being developed for implementation for the upcoming fiscal year.

## **Training attended by the County of Hidalgo**

Reporting of relevant trainings which may have been attended by county representatives have been difficult to identify. As such, the Title VI Coordinator will assess the current county practices to determine if attendance of relevant external trainings could be feasibly tracked for reporting purposes. The report will be supplemented as necessary should information be obtained.

## **FY2019 Goals**

The Title VI Coordinator will continue its efforts to develop and implement trainings to county departments to include:

1. Discussion of Title VI Plan Changes and how the Title VI Plan applies to each department.
2. Inform of program requirements, reporting and department expectations.
3. Explore better methods for collecting and reporting Title VI data and related information.
4. Provide feedback to improve departments Title VI efforts, reporting, and compliance.
5. Develop specific training videos/presentations that concentrate on specific Title VI topics at a time (i.e. LEP, Environmental Justice, Reporting, Public Notices/Posters, etc.).

# **TITLE VI COMPLAINTS SUMMARY**

The County of Hidalgo did not receive any internal or external discrimination complaints related to Title VI for FY2018.

# COMMISSIONERS' COURT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The County of Hidalgo, as a recipient of Federal financial assistance and under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related statutes, ensures that no person shall on the grounds of race, religion (where the primary objective of the financial assistance is to provide employment per 42 U.S.C. §2000d-3), color, national origin, sex, age, or disability be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination or retaliation in any federally or non-federally funded program or activity administered by the County of Hidalgo.

This annual report was adopted by the County of Hidalgo Commissioner's Court on the 18th day of December, 2018.

## Hidalgo County Commissioners' Court

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Ramon Garcia, Hidalgo County Judge

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David Fuentes  
Commissioner, Precinct 1

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Eduardo Cantu  
Commissioner, Precinct 2

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Jose M. Flores  
Commissioner, Precinct 3

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Joseph Palacios  
Commissioner, Precinct 4