Federal Transit Administration Title VI Program

Version 1223

Emerald Transportation

a program of



Partners in Community Care

Effective Date of Plan: July 22, 2024

Title VI Contact Information

Contact: Kathryn Dalessandro Contact Phone Number: 330-785-2050 x 1639 Contact Email: kbillings@fcsserves.org

Mailing Address: 1400 S. Arlington St. Suite 38 Akron, OH 44306 Website: www.fcsserves.org/program/emerald-transportation

Title VI Plan Table of Contents

The Emerald Transportation Title VI plan includes the following elements:

- 1. Plan Approval, Annual Certifications and Assurances, Revision Log
- 2. Policy Statement
- 3. Notice to the Public
- 4. Complaint Procedure
- 5. Complaint Form
- 6. List of transit related Title VI Investigations, Complaints and Lawsuits
- 7. Public Participation Plan
- 8. Language Assistance Plan
- 9. Minority Representation Table and Description
- 10. Providing Assistance to and Monitoring Subrecipients
- 11. Title VI Equity Analysis for Facility Acquisition
- 12. Fixed Route Transit Provider Requirements
- 13. MPO Requirements

Section 1: Title VI Plan Approval & Compliance Requirements

Title VI Plan Adopted on:	July 22, 2024
Adopted by:	AxessPointe Family Services Board of Directors
Board Signatu	re: Debannman
Executive Dire	ctor Signature:

Please see attached authorizing resolution.

CORPORATE RESOLUTION Axess Family Services

At a meeting of the Board of Directors of Axess Family Service a non-profit organization existing under the law of Ohio with the registered address 1400 S. Arlington St. Akron, OH 44306, with the witness of the Executive Director, the following Corporate Resolution was made on the October 26, 2024.

The Board of Directors of Axess Family Services has given its formal approval of our updated Title VI Plan for the program Emerald Transportation. This plan underscores our unwavering commitment to ensuring equitable access and non-discrimination to those we serve.

After a thorough review and thoughtful deliberation, the Board has endorsed the Title VI Plan, which outlines our strategies for compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. This updated plan reaffirms our dedication to promoting fairness and inclusivity, and it establishes robust measures to ensure that no individual or group is excluded from participation based on race, color, or national origin. We believe that this plan will enhance our ability to serve our community effectively and will strengthen our organization's commitment to civil rights and social justice.

Therefore, it is agreed by the Board President and Executive Director's signatures below, that a significant majority of the Members of the Corporate approves the content within this resolution.

Board of Directors President Signature:

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Printed name: Debbie Mann

Date: 0.28.2024

Executive Director Signature:

Printed name: Mark Frisone

Date: 10/28/2024

Annual Certifications and Assurances

In accordance with 49 CFR Section 21.7(a), every application for financial assistance from FTA must be accompanied by an assurance that the applicant will carry out the program in compliance with Title VI regulations. This requirement shall be fulfilled when the applicant/recipient submits its annual certifications and assurances. Primary recipients will collect Title VI assurances from sub-recipients prior to passing through FTA funds.

Emerald Transportation will remain in compliance with this requirement by annual submission of certifications and assurances as required by ODOT.

The date of last submission of these certifications and assurances (at the time of this Plan's approval) is: July 22, 2024

Date Month/day/year	Section Revised	Summary of Revisions
10/28/24	Title VI Contact	Changed Title VI Contact

Title VI Plan Revision Log

Policy Statement

Emerald Transportation, operating demand response transit provider, as a recipient of Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grant dollars either directly from FTA or through the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT), will comply with the Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d), the U.S. Department of Transportation implementing regulations, FTA Circular 4702.1B, and ODOT Public Transportation requirements as specified in Master Grant Agreement, and State Management Plan. Emerald Transportation operates its programs and services without regard to race, color, and national origin in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act.

Title VI Notice to the Public

Emerald Transportation's Notice to the Public is as follows:

Notifying the Public of Rights Under Title VI **Emerald Transportation** The Emerald Transportation operates its programs and services without regard to race, color, and national origin in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. Any person who believes she or he has been aggrieved by any unlawful discriminatory practice under Title VI may file a complaint with the Emerald Transportation. For more information on the Emerald Transportation's civil rights program, the procedures to file a complaint, or to file a complaint, please contact the Heather Laliberte at (330) 297-7027 (TTY 800-750-0750); email hlaliberte@fcsserves.org ; or visit our administrative office at 1400 S. Arlington St. Suite 38 Akron, OH 44306. For more information, visit www.fcsserves.org/program/emerald-transportation. For transportation-related Title VI matters, a complaint may also be filed directly with the: Ohio Department of Transportation, Attn: Office of Opportunity, Diversity, and Inclusion, Title VI Coordinator, 1980 West Broad Street, Mailstop 3270, Columbus, Ohio 43223 Federal Transit Administration, Office of Civil Rights, Attention: Complaint Team, East Building, 5th Floor-TCR, 1200 New Jersey Ave., SE Washington, DC, 20590. If information is needed in another language, contact 330-297-7027.

FTA states that: agencies shall inform the public of their rights under Title VI through such measures as posting the Title VI notice on posters, comment cards, or flyers placed at stations, bus shelters, and in transit vehicles. The type, timing, and frequency of these measures are at the recipient's discretion, as long as the type, timing, and frequency are sufficient to notify passengers and other interested persons of their rights under DOT's Title VI regulations with regard to the recipient's program. As such, Emerald Transportation's Notice to the Public can be found at the following locations (check all that apply):

- $oxedsymbol{\boxtimes}$ In public areas of the office, including reception room and meeting rooms.
- \boxtimes On the agency website.
- \boxtimes In the agency brochure.
- \boxtimes In the agency vehicles.
- \Box At stations and/or stops.

Section 4: Title VI Complaint Procedure

Emerald Transportation's Title VI Complaint Procedure is made available in the following locations:

☑ Hard copy in the central office☑ Agency Title VI Plan

Any individual, group of individuals or entity that believes they have been discriminated against on the basis of race, color, or national origin by Emerald Transportation may file a Title VI complaint by completing and submitting the agency's Title VI Complaint Form.

Any individual having filed a complaint or participated in the investigation of a complaint shall not be subjected to any form of intimidation or retaliation. Individuals who have cause to think that they have been subjected to intimidation or retaliation can file a complaint of retaliation following the same procedure for filing a discrimination complaint.

A complaint must be filed with Emerald Transportation no later than 180 days after the following:

- 1. The date of the alleged act of discrimination; or
- 2. The date when the person(s) became aware of the alleged discrimination; or
- 3. Where there has been a continuing course of conduct, the date on which that conduct was discontinued of the latest instance of the conduct.

Once the complaint is received, Emerald Transportation will review it to determine if our office has jurisdiction. A copy of each Title VI complaint received will be forwarded to the New Hampshire Department of Transportation within ten (10) calendar days of receipt. The complainant will receive an acknowledgement letter informing her/him whether the complaint will be investigated by our office.

Emerald Transportation has 45 days to investigate the complaint. If more information is needed to resolve the case, Emerald Transportation may contact the complainant requesting further information. The complainant has **10** business days from the date of the letter to send requested information to the investigator assigned to the case. If the investigator is not contacted by the complainant or does not receive the additional information within **10** business days, Emerald Transportation can administratively close the case.

After the investigator reviews the complaint, the agency will issue one of two (2) letters to the complainant: a closure letter or a letter of finding (LOF).

- ✓ A <u>closure letter</u> summarizes the allegations and states that there was not a Title VI violation and that the case will be closed.
- ✓ A <u>letter of finding (LOF)</u> summarizes the allegations and the interviews regarding the alleged incident, and explains whether any disciplinary action, additional training of the staff member, or other action will occur.

If the complainant wishes to appeal the decision it must direct the appeal to the agency initially. The complainant has **10** days after the date of the closure letter or the letter of finding to do so. If there is outstanding concern, the appeal may be directed to the state DOT or FTA. The appeal process information will be included in the letter.

A person may also file a complaint directly with the: Ohio Department of Transportation, Attn: Office of Opportunity, Diversity and Inclusion 1980 West Broad Street, Mailstop 3270, Columbus, OH 43223

Federal Transit Administration, Office of Civil Rights, Attention: Complaint Team, East Building, 5th Floor-TCR, 1200 New Jersey Ave., SE Washington, DC, 20590.

If information is needed in another language, then contact 330-297-7027.

Section 5: Title VI Complaint Form

Emerald Transportation's Title VI Complaint Procedure is made available in the following locations:

Agency website, if available: www.fcsserves.org/program/emerald-transportation

- \boxtimes Hard copy in the central office
- Agency Title VI Plan

Section I:				
Name:				
Address:		·····		
Telephone (Home):		Telephone	(Work):	
Email Address:	······································	I		
Accessible Format	Large Print		Audio Tape	
Requirements? Section II:		Other		
Are you filing this complaint on y			Yes*	No
'If you answered "yes" to this qu	estion, go to Section III.			
f not, please supply the name a are complaining:	and relationship of the perso	on for whom you	1	
Please explain why you have file	ed for a third party:			
4				
Please confirm that you have ob f you are filing on behalf of a thi	tained the permission of the rd party.	aggrieved party	Yes	No
Section III:				
boliovo the discrimination that				
believe the discrimination I exp				
]Race []Co		[] National O	rigin	
Date of Alleged Discrimination (N	/onth Day, Year)	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	_	
Explain as clearly as possible whe who were involved. Include the n is well as names and contact inf	ame and contact information	of the nerson(s)	who discrimin	ated against you (if know
ection IV				
lave you previously filed a Title	VI complaint with this agenc	y?	Yes	No
ection V			<u> </u>	
ave you filed this complaint with	any other Federal State	r local agonov, a	vr with only Ead	loral or State
	No	riodal agency, t	n with any Feu	
yes, check all that apply:				
Federal Agency:				
] Federal Court		[] State Agen	су	

[] State Court	[] Local Agency
Please provide information about a contact perso	on at the agency/court where the complaint was filed.
Name:	
Title:	
Agency:	
Address:	
Telephone:	
Section VI	
Name of agency complaint is against:	
Contact person:	
Title:	
Telephone number:	

You may attach any written materials or other information that you think is relevant to your complaint. Signature and date required below

Signature

Date

If information is needed in another language, contact 330-297-7027

Please submit this form to:

Emerald Transportation Heather Laliberte 705 Oakwood St. Suite 115 Ravenna, OH 44266 (330) 297-7027 hlaliberte@fcsserves.org

Section 6: List of Transit Related Title VI Investigations, Complaints and Lawsuits

Emerald Transportation maintains a list or log of all Title VI investigations, complaints, and lawsuits, pertaining to its transit-related activities.

Check One:

There have been no investigations, complaints, and/or lawsuits filed against Emerald Transportation since the last plan submission.

There have been investigations, complaints, and/or lawsuits filed against Emerald Transportation. See list below. Additional information is to be attached as needed.

ş

Section 7: Public Participation Plan

Strategies and Desired Outcomes

To promote inclusive public participation, Emerald Transportation will employ the following strategies, as appropriate (make these determinations based on a demographic analysis of the population(s) affected, type of plan, program and/or service under consideration, and the resources available):

Provide for early, frequent and continuous engagement by the public

Select accessible and varied meeting locations and times

Employ different meeting sizes and formats

Use social media in addition to other resources as a way to gain public involvement

Use radio, television or newspaper ads on stations and in publications that serve LEP populations.

Outreach to LEP populations may also include audio programming available on podcasts.

Expand traditional outreach methods by visiting ethnic stores/markets and restaurants, community centers, libraries, faith-based institutions, local festivals, etc.

Public Outreach Activities

The public outreach and involvement activities conducted by Emerald Transportation since the last Title VI Program submission are summarized in the table below.

Event Date	Insert Agency Name Staffer(s} or Department	Activity	Communication Method (Public notice, posters, social media}	Notes
8/17/2024	AxessPointe Community Health Centers Marketing Team	Tabling at Dog Days of Summer event	Brochures	
9/21/2024	Emerald Transportation	Tabling at Ravenna Balloon A-Fair	Brochures, talking to prospective clients	

Specific Public Participation activities are listed in the table below:

Section 8: Language Assistance Plan

Plan Components

As a recipient of federal US DOT funding, Emerald Transportation is required to take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to our programs and activities by limited-English proficient (LEP) persons.

Limited English Proficient (LEP) refers to persons for whom English is not their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English. This includes those who have reported to the U.S. Census that they speak English less than very well, not well, or not at all.

Emerald Transportation's Language Assistance Plan includes the following elements:

- Item #1: The results of the Four Factor Analysis, including a description of the LEP population(s), served.
- Item #2: A description of how language assistance services are provided by language
- Item #3: A description of how LEP persons are informed of the availability of language assistance service

Item #4: A description of how the language assistance plan is monitored and updated

Item #5: A description of how employees are trained to provide language assistance to LEP persons

Four Factor Analysis Methodology

To determine if an individual is entitled to language assistance and what specific services are appropriate, Emerald Transportation has conducted a *Four Factor Analysis* of the following areas: 1) Limited-English Proficient (LEP) Speaker Demography, 2) Contact Frequency, 3) Importance of Service, and 4) Resources and Costs.

Factor 1: The number or proportion of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely to be encountered by the program or recipient. In addition to the number or proportion of LEP persons served, Emerald Transportation will identify:

- (a) How LEP persons interact with the recipient's agency;
- (b) Identification of LEP communities, and assessing the number or proportion of LEP persons from each language group to determine the appropriate language services for each language;
- (c) The literacy skills of LEP populations in their native languages, in order to determine whether translation of documents will be an effective practice; and
- (d) Whether LEP persons are underserved by the recipient due to language barriers.

Factor 2: The frequency with which LEP persons come into contact with the program: Identifies and assesses the frequency Emerald Transportation's staff comes into contact with LEP persons. Examples of contact could include:

(a) Use of bus and rail service;

(b) Purchase of tickets through vending machines, outlets, websites, and over the phone;

(c) Participation in public meetings;

(d) Customer service interactions;

- (e) Ridership surveys;
- (f) Operator surveys.

Factor 3: The nature and importance of the program, activity, or service provided by the program to people's lives. Generally speaking, the more important the program, the more frequent the contact and the likelihood that language services will be needed.

Factor 4: The resources available to the recipient for LEP outreach, as well as the costs associated with that outreach. Resource and cost issues can often be reduced by technological advances, reasonable business practices, and the sharing of language assistance materials and services among and between recipients, advocacy groups, LEP populations and Federal agencies. Large entities and those entities serving a significant number of LEP persons should ensure that their resource limitations are well substantiated before using this factor as a reason to limit language assistance.

Item #1 – Results of the Four Factor Analysis (including a description of the LEP population(s) served)

Factor 1: The number or proportion of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely to be encountered.

Of the **161,791** residents in Emerald Transportation's service area, 4.1% of residents describe themselves as speaking English less than "very well". People of Hispanic descent are the primary LEP persons likely to utilize Emerald Transportation services. For Emerald Transportation's service area, the latest U.S. Census Bureau data shows that among the area's population 4.1% speak English "*less than very well*." <u>Of these groups</u> who speak English "less than very well", 1.2% speak Spanish.

	Total Number	Percent of Population	Total Population of County
Speak English Less than Very Well	6,633	4.1%	161,791
Spanish	80	>1%	161,791

Portage County - Languages Spoke at Home

Factor 2: The frequency with which LEP persons come into contact with the program.

Emerald Transportation assessed the frequency with which staff and drivers have, or could have, contact with LEP persons. Emerald Transportation provides approximately 0 passenger trips per year. If an individual has speech limitations, the dispatcher or driver will work with the Ohio Department of Transportation, if needed, to ensure the individual receives access to the transit services.

Item # 2 – Description of how Language Assistance Services are Provided, by Language

Emerald Transportation has identified, developed, and uses the following:

- a) Individuals who have contact with the public are provided with "I Speak" language cards to identify language needs in order to match them with available services. Language cards verified and distributed by the Director as need.
- b) Emerald Transportation has developed partnerships with local agencies, organizations, law enforcement, colleges/universities, local school districts and social service agencies that are available to assist with it LEP responsibilities.
- c) A list of web-based translation services can be provided by contracting the Human Resources Department.

ltem # 3 –	Description of how LEP Persons are Informed of the Availability of Language Assistance	1
	Service	

In order to ensure that LEP individuals are aware of Emerald Transportation's language assistance measures, Emerald Transportation provides the following:

- Title VI Program including the Language Assistance Plan is made available on website, if applicable, and hard copy in central office.
- Drivers and dispatchers are provided "I Speak" language cards to identify language needs in order to match them with available services.

Item # 4 - Description of how the Language Assistance Plan is Monitored and Updated

Emerald Transportation will continue to update the LEP plan as required by U.S. DOT. At a minimum, the Title VI Plan will continue to be reviewed and updated every three (3) years in conjunction with the Title VI submission and use data from the U.S. Decennial Census or the American Community Survey as available, or when it is clear that the concentrations of LEP individuals are present in Emerald Transportation service area.

Updates will continue to include the following:

- The number of documented LEP person contacts encountered annually.
- How the needs of LEP persons have been addressed.
- Determination of the current LEP population in the service area.
- Determination as to whether the need for translation services has changed.
- Determine whether local language assistance programs have been effective and sufficient to meet the need.
- Determine whether Emerald Transportation's financial resources are sufficient to fund language assistance resources needed.
- Determine whether Emerald Transportation has fully complied with the goals of this LEP Plan.
- Determine whether complaints have been received concerning Emerald Transportation's failure to meet the needs of LEP individuals

Item # 5 - Description of how Employees are Trained to Provide Language Assistance to LEP Persons

The following training will continue to be provided to Emerald Transportation staff:

- Information on the Emerald Transportation Title VI Procedures and LEP responsibilities.
- Description of language assistance services offered to the public.
- Use of "I Speak" language cards (used to identify language preference).

- Documentation of language assistance requests.
- Use of web-based interpreter services (over the phone interpretation provider).
- How to handle a potential Title VI / LEP complaint.

Limited English Proficient (LEP) Resource Materials:

LEP Policy

Emerald Transportation shall provide for communication for limited English proficient riders to ensure them equal opportunity to benefit from services. Family members or friends of limited English proficient riders will not be used as translators unless specifically requested by that individual. Arrangements have been made with Language Services Inc. to obtain translators. The agency will also utilize web-based translator programs if available.

If you need help with English, please call 330-297-7027

Si usted necesita ayuda con el inglés, por favor llame 330-297-7027

"I Speak" Language Identification Card

Note: For additional languages visit the US Census Bureau website http://www.lep.gov/ISpeakCards2004.pdf

Mark this Box if you		
speak	Language Identification Chart	Language
	Mark this box if you read or speak English	English
	Marque esta casilla si lee o habla español	Spanish
	Kos lub voj no yog koj paub twm thiab hais lus Hmoob	Hmong
	如果 说中国在方框内打勾	Chinese
	Xin ñaùnh daáu vaøo oâ naøy neáu quyù vò bieát ñoïc vaø noùi ñöôïc Vieät Ngöõ.	Vietnamese
·····	당신이한국어말할경우이 상자를표시	Korean
	Markahan itong kuwadrado kung kayo ay marunong magbasa o magsalita ng Tagalog.	Tagalog
	Kreuzen Sie dieses Kästchen an, wenn Sie Deutsch lesen oder sprechen	German
	Отметить этот флажок, если вы говорите по-русски	Russian
	Означите ову кућицу ако говорите српски	Serbian
	आप हिंदी बोलते हैं तो इस बक्से को चिहिनत करें	Hindi
	پر نشان لگائیں تو اس باکس بولتے ہیں اردو اگر آپ	Urdu

Log of LEP Encounters

Date	Time	Language Spoken By Individual (if available)	Name and Phone Number of Individual (if available)	Service Requested	Follow Up Required	Staff Member Providing Assistance	Notes
				· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·			

Section 9: Minority Representation Information

Recipients that have <u>transit-related</u>, non-elected planning boards, advisory councils or committees, or similar committees, the membership of which is selected by the recipient, must provide a table depicting the racial breakdown of the membership of those committees, and a description of efforts made to encourage the participation of minorities on such committees.

***Guidance:** Elected transit-related board, committee, or council, do not need to complete the table below, and write in section B that there are no non-elected transit-related boards, committees, or councils.

A. Minority Representation Table

Table Depicting Membership of Board, Committees, Councils, Broken Down by Race

Body	Caucasian	Hispanic	African American	Asian American	Native American	Two or More Races/ Other
Portage County Population Breakdown	89%	2%	5%	2%	>1%	2%
AxessPointe Community Health Centers Board of Directors Breakdown	61%	0%	22%	4%	0%	13%

Note: insert the number of people and % of total board membership

B. Efforts to Encourage Minority Participation

To encourage participation on its boards, committees, and councils, the Emerald Transportation will make every effort to encourage minority participation on the boards.

Section 10: Providing Assistance to and Monitoring Subrecipients

- 1. Does agency provide funding to subrecipients?
 - \boxtimes No, the agency does not have subrecipients.

Section 11: Title VI Equity Analysis for Facility Acquisition

Title 49 CFR, Appendix C, Section (3)(iv) requires "the location of projects requiring land acquisition and the displacement of persons from their residences and business may not be determined on the basis of race, color, or national origin." For purposes of this requirement, "facilities" does not include bus shelters, as they are considered transit amenities. It also does not include transit stations, power substations, or any other project evaluated by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. Facilities included in the provision include, but are not limited to, storage facilities, maintenance facilities, operations centers, etc. Has the agency built a facility? Check a response below.

☑ No, Emerald Transportation has not built a facility.

□ Yes, Emerald Transportation has built a facility and completed a Title VI equity analysis to compare the equity impacts of various siting alternatives, and the analysis must occur before the selection of the preferred site. Include at the end of the Title VI plan a copy of the Title VI equity analysis.

Section 12: Fixed Route Transit Providers Service Standards and Policies

FTA Circular 4702.1B, Chapter III, Paragraph 10: All fixed route transit providers shall set service standards and policies for each specific fixed route mode of service they provide.

Emerald Transportation is **not** a fixed route transit provider. As such, the remainder of Section 12 is not applicable to Emerald Transportation and may be deleted from this document.

All MPOs must meet the following requirements if the agency is included in the MPO constituency.

MPO Requ	irements (Ref: FTA Circular 4702.1B Chapter VI)	Status
1)	Does the plan contain a demographic profile of the metropolitan area that includes identification of the locations of minority populations in the aggregate?	□Y □N
2)	A description of the procedures by which the mobility needs of minority populations are identified and considered within the planning process?	ΩY ΩN
3)	Demographic maps that overlay the percent minority and non-minority populations as identified by Census or American Community Survey (ACS) data, at the Census tract or block group level, and charts that analyze the impacts of the distribution of State and Federal funds in the aggregate for public transportation purposes, including federal funds managed by the MPO as a designated recipient?	ΩΥΩΝ
4)	Analysis of disparate impacts on the basis of race, color, or national origin, and, if so, determines whether there is a substantial legitimate justification for the policy that resulted in the disparate impacts, and if there are alternatives that could be employed that would have a less discriminatory impact.	□Y □N
Comments:		·····