

Title VI Plan

Telespond Senior Services

Adopted on:

February 23, 2023

Adopted by:

Telespond Board of Directors

Revised on:

This policy is hereby adopted and signed by:

AGENCY

Executive Name/Title:

Donna Sedor / President / CEO

Executive Signature:

Donna Sedor

Policy Statement

Telespond Senior Services, as a recipient of Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grant dollars either directly from FTA or through the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT), will comply with the Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d) and the U.S. Department of Transportation implementing regulations.

Title VI Plan Elements

Telespond's Title VI plan includes the following elements:

1. Evidence of Policy Approval
2. Notice to the Public
3. Complaint Procedure
4. Complaint Form
5. List of transit related Title VI Investigations, Complaints and Lawsuits
6. Public Participation Plan
7. Language Assistance Plan

Telespond will review its policy at least once a year to determine if modifications are necessary.

Policy Updates – Activity Log

Date	Activity (Review/Update/Addendum/ Adoption/Distribution)	Person Responsible	Remarks
2/23/2023	Update to Title VI Policy	CEO & Board of Director	
02/23/2023	Update to Public Participation Plan	CEO & Board of Director	
02/23/2023	Update to Language Participation Plan	CEO & Board of Director	

TITLE VI Notice to the Public

Telespond's Notice to the Public is as follows:

Title VI Notice to the Public – TELESPOND SENIOR SERVICES

- ✓ Telespond Senior Services gives public notice that it complies with the Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and all related statutes.
- ✓ Title VI provides that "no person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."
- ✓ Telespond operates its programs and services without regard to race, color, and national origin in accordance with Title VI.
- ✓ For more information on Telespond's Title VI Program, obligations, procedures and/or receive a form to file a complaint, please: Call (570) 961-1950). Complaint forms may also be picked up or dropped off in person or mailed to Title VI Coordinator, Telespond Senior Services, 1200 Saginaw Street, Scranton, PA 18505.
- ✓ A complaint may also be filed with:
 - directly with the Federal Transit Administration, at FTA Office of Civil Rights, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590.
 - PennDOT's Bureau of Equal Opportunity by dialing 717.787.5891 or online at <https://www.penndot.pa.gov>. If you speak another language, language assistance is available by calling 717.787.5891. Si se necesita información en otro idioma, por favor llame al (717.787.5891)

Telespond's Notice to the Public is posted in the following locations: *(check all that apply)*

- ✓ Agency website: www.telespond.org
- ✓ Public areas of Telespond office (common area, public meeting rooms, etc.)
- ✓ Inside vehicles
- ✓ Intake Packet

Title VI Complaint Procedure

Telespond's Title VI Complaint Procedure is made available in the following locations: *(check all that apply)*

- ✓ Agency website, either as a reference in the Notice to Public or in its entirety
 - ✓ Hard copy in the central office
 - ✓ Available in appropriate languages for LEP populations, meeting the Safe Harbor Threshold.
 - Other, _____
-

Any person who believes she or he has been discriminated against on the basis of race, color, or national origin by Telespond may file a Title VI complaint by completing and submitting Telespond's Title VI Complaint Form.

Telespond investigates complaints received no more than 180 days after the alleged incident. Telespond will process complaints that are complete. Once a complaint is received, Telespond will determine whether an investigation is needed and send a letter to the complainant confirming the receipt of the complaint and the status within 14 days.

- a. If the decision is not to investigate the complaint, the notification shall specifically state the reason for the decision.
 - b. If the complaint is to be investigated, the notification shall state the grounds of Telespond's jurisdiction, while informing the parties that their full cooperation will be required in gathering additional information and assisting the investigator.
 - c. When Telespond does not have sufficient jurisdiction, the CEO or his/her authorized designee will refer the complaint to the appropriate State or Federal agency holding such jurisdiction.
 - d. If further information is needed, that will be requested within 21 days via registered mail. The complainant has 14 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 30 business days, the case can administratively be closed. A case can be administratively closed also if the complainant no longer wishes to pursue their case.
2. If the complaint has investigative merit, the CEO or his/her authorized designee will instruct the Title VI Coordinator to fully investigate the complaint. A complete investigation will be conducted, and an investigative report will be submitted to the CEO within 60 days from receipt of the complaint. The report will include a description of the incident, summaries of all persons interviewed, and a finding with recommendations and proposed resolution where appropriate. If the investigation is delayed for any reason, the Title VI Coordinator will notify the appropriate authorities, and an extension will be requested
3. The CEO or his/her authorized designee will issue letters of finding to the Complainant and Respondent within 90 days from receipt of the complaint.
4. Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the processing and investigation of the complaint.

After the investigator reviews the complaint, she/he will issue one of two (2) 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.
- A letter of finding (LOF) 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, she/he has 30 days after the date of the letter or the LOF to do so.

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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. A complaint may also be filed with PennDOT's Bureau of Equal Opportunity by dialing 717.787.5891 or online at <https://www.penndot.pa.gov>. If you speak another language, language assistance is available by calling 717.787.5891. Si se necesita información en otro idioma, por favor llame al (717.787.5891).

Title VI Complaint Form

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- ✓ Agency website, either as a reference in the Notice to Public or in its entirety
 - ✓ Hard copy in the central office
 - ✓ Available in appropriate languages for LEP populations, meeting the Safe Harbor Threshold.
- _____ Other, _____

Section I:				
Name:				
Address:				
Telephone (Home):			Telephone (Work):	
Electronic Mail Address:				
Accessible Format Requirements?	Large Print		Audio Tape	
	TDD		Other	
Section II:				
Are you filing this complaint on your own behalf?			Yes*	No
*If you answered "yes" to this question, go to Section III.				
If not, please supply the name and relationship of the person for whom you are complaining:				
Please explain why you have filed for a third party:				
Please confirm that you have obtained the permission of the aggrieved party if you are filing on behalf of a third party.			Yes	No
Section III:				
I believe the discrimination I experienced was based on (check all that apply):				
☐ Race ☐ Color ☐ 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 IV

Have you previously filed a Title VI complaint with this agency?

Yes

No

Section V

Have you filed this complaint with any other Federal, State, or local agency, or with any Federal or State court?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, check all that apply:

☐ Federal Agency: _____

☐ Federal Court _____

☐ State Court _____

☐ State Agency _____

☐ Local Agency _____

Please provide information about a contact person at Telespond/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

Please submit this form in person at the address below, or mail this form to: Telespond 1200 Saginaw Street, Scranton, PA 18505

List of Transit Related Title VI Investigations, Complaints and Lawsuits

Telespond 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, complaint and/or lawsuits filed against us during 2019 - 2022

_____ There have been investigations, complaints and/or lawsuits filed against us.

	Date (Month, Day, Year)	Summary (Include basis of complaint: race, color, or national origin)	Status	Action(s) Taken
Investigations				
1.				
2.				
Lawsuits				
1.				
2.				
Complaints				
1.				
2.				

Public Participation Plan

Strategies and Desired Outcomes

To promote inclusive public participation, Telespond will employ the following strategies, as appropriate:

- Provide for early, frequent and continuous engagement by the public.
- Select accessible and varied meeting locations and times
- Employ different meeting sizes and formats
- Provide childcare and food during meetings, if possible.
- Use social media in addition to other resources as a way to gain public involvement
- Use media that serve LEP populations.
- Expand traditional outreach methods by visiting ethnic stores/markets and restaurants, community centers, libraries, faith-based institutions, local festivals, etc.

Public Outreach Activities

Telespond maintains a log/record of the various types of outreach activities it uses to promote inclusive public participation. On an annual basis, Telespond reviews its log of outreach activities to determine if additional or different strategies are needed to promote inclusive public participation.

The direct public outreach and involvement activities conducted by Telespond are summarized in the table below. Efforts include *meetings, surveys, focus groups, attendance at community events, etc.*

Information collected on the size, location, meeting format, number of attendees, etc. as well as the scope of the distribution method (i.e., posters were placed in all shopping centers in the affected area) will be used for future planning efforts. Examples of additional supporting materials include copies of meeting announcements, agendas, posters, attendee list, etc.

Event Date	Telespond Staffer(s)	Event	Date Publicized and Communication Method (Public Notice, Posters, social media)	Outreach Method (Meeting, Focus Group, Survey, etc.).	Notes
09/09/22	Brian Hughes, Bill Tighe	Senior Fair at the Marketplace at Steamtown, Scranton, PA	Advertising in area media of the event	Booth	
08/18/21	Nancy Grzenda	Mountain View NH Health Fair	Advertising of Event	Booth	
10/14/22	Nancy Grzenda, Brian Hughes, Bill Tighe	AAA Health Fair	Advertising of Event	Booth	

Language Assistance Plan

Plan Components

As a recipient of federal US DOT funding, Telespond 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.

Telespond's Language Assistance Plan includes the following elements:

1. The results of the *Four Factor Analysis*, including a description of the LEP population(s), served.
2. A description of how language assistance services are provided by language
3. A description of how LEP persons are informed of the availability of language assistance service
4. A description of how the language assistance plan is monitored and updated
5. A description of how employees are trained to provide language assistance to LEP persons
6. Additional information deemed necessary

Methodology

To determine if an individual is entitled to language assistance and what specific services are appropriate, Telespond has conducted a *Four Factor Analysis*¹ of the following areas: 1) Demography, 2) Frequency, 3) Importance and 4) Resources and Costs.

LEP Four Factor Analysis

Factor 1: Demography: Identifies the number or proportion of LEP persons served and the languages spoken in the service area.

The first factor of the *Four Factor Analysis* is the basis of the Language Assistance Plan. It requires Telespond to review its US Census data to determine if it meets the *LEP Safe Harbor Threshold*.

US Census and American Community Survey (ACS) Data²

Telespond did the following:

1. Inserted a copy of Telespond's county LEP data in the Title VI plan. This data was found at the LEP website <https://www.lep.gov/maps> or the US Census Bureau American Fact Finder website <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/>

¹ DOT LEP guidance <https://www.transportation.gov/civil-rights/civil-rights-awareness-enforcement/dots-lep-guidance>

² The ACS publishes data in many forms on the Census Bureau American Fact Finder website <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/data.html>

2. Analyzed the LEP demographic data for Telespond's program and/or service area by calculating the *Safe Harbor Threshold* for two to three of the largest language groups identified other than English.
 - a. The *Safe Harbor Threshold* is calculated by dividing the population estimate for a language group that "Speaks English less than very well" by the total population of the county.
 - i. The *LEP Safe Harbor Threshold* provision stipulates that for each LEP group that meets the LEP language threshold (5% or 1,000 individuals, whichever is less of the population to be served) Telespond must provide translation of vital documents in written format for the non-English users.
 - ii. Examples of written translation of vital documents include the Title VI policy statement and/or Notice to the Public (Appendix 2), Title VI Complaint Procedure (Appendix 3), Title VI Complaint Form (Appendix 4), and ADA paratransit eligibility forms.
3. Explained the results of the analysis of the county LEP data in the demographic section of the *Four Factor Analysis*.

Factor 2: Frequency: Identifies the frequency staff comes into contact with LEP persons.

LEP persons are persons identified as speaking English less than very well, not well or not at all. Just because a person speaks a language other than English doesn't mean they don't speak English or are identified as LEP.

The summary below discusses the frequency with which Telespond staff comes into contact with LEP persons. It also provides information on how staff is instructed to meet the needs of LEP persons. Telespond staff persons are encouraged to use LEP resource materials to assist LEP persons.

Factor 3: Importance: Explains how the program, service or activity affects people's lives.

The summary below discusses how Telespond's program and services impact the lives of persons within the community. Telespond will specify the community organizations that serve LEP persons, if available.

Factor 4: Resources and Costs: Discusses funding and other resources available for LEP outreach.

The summary below discusses the low-cost methods Telespond uses to provide outreach to LEP persons as well as train staff on Title VI and LEP principles.

Additional Required Elements

In addition to the *Four Factor Analysis (listed below as item #1)*, Telespond addresses the following elements:

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
And, any additional information deemed necessary.

Telespond Senior Services – Summary of the Language Assistance Plan Components

Item #1 – Results of the Four Factor Analysis <i>(including a description of the LEP population(s) served)</i>
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Factor 1 – Demography

Telespond provides transportation service for the Telespond Service Area in Northeastern Pennsylvania.

The US Census Bureau – American Fact Finder (2008-2012) reports there are numerous languages spoken in Northeastern Pennsylvania. Some of these languages include Spanish, German, Russian, Japanese, Hmong, and Vietnamese. After English, the second largest language group is Spanish.

The Safe Harbor Threshold is calculated by dividing the population estimate for a language group that “speaks English less than very well” by the total population of the county. The LEP Safe Harbor Threshold provision stipulates that for each LEP group that meets the LEP language threshold (5% or 1,000 individuals, whichever is less). The Spanish speaking language group is greater than 1% and above the 5%- or 1,000-person threshold of the population to be served. This means Telespond is required to provide written translation of vital documents. All of the other language groups listed above are below the Safe Harbor Threshold. This means, at this time, Telespond is also not required to provide written translation of vital documents in these languages.

In the future, if Telespond meets the Safe Harbor Threshold for any additional language group, it will provide written translation of vital documents in such languages and also consider measures needed for oral interpretation.

Factor 2 – Frequency

Telespond employees will be trained on what to do when they encounter a person that speaks English less than well. Telespond will track the number of encounters and consider making adjustments as needed to its outreach efforts to ensure meaningful access to all persons and specifically to LEP and minority populations of Telespond's programs and services.

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
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

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

Telespond provides rides to 50 persons per year. While formal data has not been collected, Telespond has encountered (0) LEP persons using the service within the last six months.

Telespond has an open-door policy and will provide rides to any person who requests a ride and meets the qualifications for transport. If an individual has speech limitations, the dispatcher or driver will work with family and staff to ensure the individual receives access to the transportation service.

The "I Speak" Language identification card listed below is a document that is placed in our transit and at our front desks, and it is used by Telespond staff to assist LEP individuals. Additional languages can be added as needed to match the demographic changes of Telespond's service area.

"I Speak" Language Identification Card

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 vaø oâ naøy neáu quyù vò bieát ñoïc vaø noùi ñöøïc Vieät Ngöô.	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 चिह्नित करें	Hindi
	پر نشان لگائیں تو اس باکس بولتے ہیں اردو اگر آپ	Urdu

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

Factor 3 – Importance

Telespond understands an LEP person with language barrier challenges also faces difficulties obtaining health care, education, access to employment and nutrition meal sites, recreational services and socialization. A transportation system is a key link to connecting LEP persons to these essential services.

Telespond has identified activities and services which would have serious consequences to individuals if language barriers prevented access to information or the benefits of those programs. The activities and

services include providing emergency evacuation instructions in our facilities and vehicles and providing information to the public on security awareness or emergency preparedness.

Telespond's assessment of the programs, activities and services that are most critical include contact with community organization(s) that serve LEP persons, as well as contact with LEP persons themselves to obtain information on the importance of the modes or the types of services that are provided to the LEP populations.

Factor 4 – Resources and Costs

Telespond does not have a separate budget for LEP outreach; however, the organization has worked to implement low-cost methods of reaching LEP persons.

Telespond's staff conducts outreach activities to LEP communities throughout the year to inform the public services available. These outreach/resource awareness efforts are low-cost methods and are accomplished by existing staff resources and the use of posting website information and developing and printing brochure/materials.

Training of Telespond employees as to Title VI and LEP requirements is conducted internally. At this point, no additional training costs are incurred with the exception of printing/photocopying materials.

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

Telespond has a bilingual speaking person on staff. In addition, we work to ensure mechanisms are in place to reach LEP persons in the service area. In addition, Telespond has developed relationships with language teachers in area schools as well as local leaders to use a resource to assist in meeting the need of LEP persons, if needed.

Item # 3 - Description of how LEP Persons are Informed of the Availability of Language Assistance Service

Telespond does the following to inform LEP persons of the availability of language assistance services:

- Publish key access information in Spanish on Telespond website
- Review outreach activities and the frequency of contact with LEP individuals to determine whether additional language assistance services are needed
- Utilize the bilingual speaking person on staff to assist with the development of bilingual outreach materials, including pictograms and other symbols
- Prioritize the hiring of bilingual staff, as needed

Telespond uses a variety of low-cost outreach methods such as visiting ethnic stores/markets and restaurants, community centers, libraries, faith-based institutions and local festivals. The cost is relatively low but the ability to reach the LEP population is high.

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

Telespond reviews its plan on an annual basis or more frequently as needed. In particular, Telespond will evaluate the information collected on encounters with LEP persons as well as public outreach efforts to determine if adjustments should be made to the delivering of programs and services to ensure meaningful access to minority and LEP persons.

In addition, Telespond's key management staff meet on an annual basis to ensure the Title VI requirements are met. The last approval and site-visit of the contractor/transit provider was on 01/25/2023.

Item # 5 - Description of how Employees are Trained to Provide Language Assistance to LEP Persons
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Telespond employees are oriented on the principles of Title VI and Telespond's Language Assistance Plan. New employees will be provided guidance on the needs of clients served and how best to meet their needs.

If a driver, dispatcher or employee needs further assistance related to LEP individuals, her/she will work with Telespond's Logistics Coordinator to identify strategies to meet the language needs of the participants of the program or service.

Telespond will meet with our transit provider during an audit to discuss updates Telespond's Language Assistance Plan.