

## Title VI

### A. Introduction

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 provides that “no person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.” To fulfill this basic civil rights mandate, each federal agency that provides financial assistance for any program is authorized and directed by the United States Department of Justice to apply provisions of Title VI to each program by issuing applicable rules, regulations or requirements. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) of the United States Department of Transportation issued guidelines on October 2012, FTA C 4702.1,B describing the contents of Title VI compliance programs to be adopted and maintained by recipients of FTA administered funds for transit programs.

### B. Title VI Assurances

Exceptional Humans, Inc agrees to comply with all provisions prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, 42 U.S.C. 200d *et seq.*, and with the U.S. DOT regulations, “Nondiscrimination in Federally-Assisted Programs of the Department of Transportation – Effectuation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act,” 49 CFR part 21.

Exceptional Humans assures that no person shall, as provided by Federal and State civil rights laws, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity. Exceptional Humans further ensures every effort will be made to ensure non-discrimination in all programs and activities, whether those programs and activities are federally funded or not.

Exceptional Humans meets the objectives of the FTA Master Agreement which governs all entities applying for FTA funding, including Exceptional Humans and its third-party contractors by promoting actions that:

- Ensure that the level and quality of transportation service is provided without regard to race, color, or national origin.
- Identify and address, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse effects of programs and activities on minority populations and low-income populations.
- Promote the full and fair participation of all affected TitleVI populations in transportation decision making.
- Prevent the denial, reduction, or delay in benefits related to programs and activities that benefit minority populations or low-income populations.
- Ensure meaningful access to programs and activities by persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP).

### C. Agency Information

**Purpose:** Contributing to inclusive communities by empowering individuals with diverse abilities to live full, self-determined lives through education, advocacy, access, and raised expectations.

#### **Mission Statement**

Empowering individuals with diverse abilities to live self-determined lives in their local communities.

## Vision Statement

Connecting with & Contributing to OUR Communities!

## Our Values

- We value all people
- We value person-centered practices and positive supports
- We value self-determination and self-advocacy
- We value practices promoting quality of life outcomes
- We value friendship, love, and fun
- We value rights, choices, and supported decision making
- We value health and wellness
- We value a culture of learning, partnership, and accountability
- We value each other

## What is Meaningful to Individuals with Developmental Disability?

People with developmental disabilities are friends, siblings, employees, community members, students and parents. They are humans who desire the same life outcomes as their typically developing peers: friendships, having fun, obtaining and maintaining community-integrated work, and ongoing training or education.

## History

Kelly Cogan and Jody Michael joined their generous spirit and passions for providing self-determined, community integrated opportunities for people with developmental disabilities to create Exceptional Humans, Inc. Kelly and Jo are the biggest champions and advocates for individuals with exceptionalities—creating many opportunities for them to experience inclusion in every aspect of community life.

Dr. Kelly Cogan was the driving force behind the development of inclusive programs for students with disabilities in school districts throughout the Kansas City northland. During her tenure as a senior program director for an agency that provides services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, she created person-centered programming that included early work experience, community integration, and employment services from the ground up. She also led the agency to obtain the internationally recognized CARF accreditation. Kelly's commitment to excellence is second to none. Over the years she has recruited and mentored exceptional teams to support individuals with disabilities to live the lives they desire and deserve. Dr. Kelly Cogan recently published, *Exploring Postsecondary Transition in Relationship to Quality of Life for Young Adults with Intellectual Disability*, in completion of her doctorate degree.

Jody (Jo) Michael has a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology and has dedicated her career for over 20 years to advocating for people with disabilities. Jo began her career as a Direct Support Professional, and over the years filled many roles, including, House Manager, Program Director, Support Coordinator, Employment Services Specialist, and Quality Assurance Director. Jo's motivation to work in the field of developmental disabilities, is driven by her passion to collaborate with a team of people to create and maintain a safe, inclusive, and equitable community in the Kansas City, Metro area for people with different abilities. Jo's down time is spent with her grandchildren doing what they tell her to do.

## Structure

Exceptional Humans is registered as a Nonprofit Corporation under Chapter 355 RSMo in the state of Missouri. It is governed by a board of directors currently consisting of five members.

**Co-Directors:** Rather than employing an Executive Director, the agency is led by co-directors. The co-directors assure the accomplishment of the agency's mission, vision, values and strategic goals, and are accountable to those we serve and stakeholders.

The Director of Administration and Community Outreach is responsible for oversight of the agency's fiscal integrity and activities of the organization including budgeting, expense management, donor and

grant procurement, and program compliance and audits.

The Director of Programs and Development is responsible for the daily management and development of person-centered, innovative programs and leads, coaches, and cultivates a staff that facilitates natural relationships and community connections for those we serve.

**Staff:** Initially, the organization will be operated by a staff of four including 2 full-time staff and 2 part-time staff. The staffing will consist of the two directors, who will work as volunteers initially, and two paid direct program support staff (Community Ambassadors). (*see attached organizational staffing chart*)

### Programs

We are strongly committed to identifying each person's strengths, dreams, and aspirations. Those strengths and aspirations provide the roadmap for each person's journey to leading a self-determined quality of life. Shared experiences and collective memories help build an authentic, active community life and culture. Based on our Scholar's desires, program activities focus on health, well-being, arts and culture, recreation, community connections and employment. Exceptional Humans has cultivated an extended network of supportive relationships with a variety of community partners. These community environments provide opportunities for employment, education, recreation, health and wellness, arts and culture—and development of natural relationships. Through the cultivation of individual talents and promotion of self-determination skills, people with diverse abilities contribute to the cultural and economic life of all communities.

Human rights are grounded in the principles of autonomy, freedom, and dignity—the inalienable right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness (ARC, 2015). Leading a self-determined quality life is a fundamental human right for all people. One of the most significant factors that influence quality of life is the topic of self-determination. The cornerstone of the Exceptional Human's programs is self-determination. A primary tenant of living a self-determination is the powerful mantra, "Nothing about me without me."

Individuals with ID and their guardians, who typically are family members, face life-long emotional and financial concerns. According to the National Council on Disability (2020), to pay for housing and other essential expenses, many people with disabilities depend on government programs, such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and rental assistance programs from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The average annual income of an individual receiving Supplemental Security Income was \$9,156.00 in 2016, 22% below the federal poverty level for a single person (National Council on Disability, 2020).

National Core Indicators report that Missouri lags the nation in the number of people with IDD who are competitively employed in an integrated environment at 8% versus the national average of 15%. The US Census data indicates that Platte and Clay Counties are the fastest growing in the Kansas City metro area with a combined population in 2016 of approximately 85,000 ages 0 to 18. The Missouri Division of Developmental Disabilities estimates between 1.8% and 3% of the population have IDD. Demand remains steady for person-centered programs that support self-determined skill development, increase community participation, and natural supports throughout the counties of Platte, Clay, and Jackson in the Kansas City Area. Currently, Life Unlimited and Easter Seals Midwest are located in Clay County. In Platte County the Platte County Board of Services and The Farmer's House are the only organizations providing day program services, and their programs are generally at capacity. The programs offered through Exceptional Humans will meet the identified disparity between the potential growth of the population served and current programs available.

## D. Notice to the Public

Notifying the Public of Rights under Title VI

Exceptional Humans, Inc. posts Title VI notices on our agency's website, in public areas of our agency and on our paratransit vehicles.

Exceptional Humans operates transportation services without regard to race, color, or national origin, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

If you believe you have been discriminated against on the basis of race, color, or national origin by Exceptional Humans in the provision of transportation services, you may file a Title VI complaint by completing, signing, and submitting the agency's Title VI Complaint Form.

If you feel you have been discriminated against in the provision of transportation services, please complete the complaint form and mail or return it to the Director of Administration and Community Outreach.

Should you require any assistance in completing this form or need information in alternate formats, please contact the Director of Administration and Community Outreach, 816/807-0756 or [kelly@exceptional-humans.org](mailto:kelly@exceptional-humans.org)

Complaints must be filed within 180 days following the date of the alleged discriminatory occurrence and should contain as much detailed information about the alleged discrimination as possible.

The form must be signed and dated, and include your contact information.

#### E. Procedure for Filing a Title VI Complaint Filing a Title VI Complaint

The complaint procedures apply to participants of Exceptional Human's programs, activities, and services.

**RIGHT TO FILE A COMPLAINT :** Any person who believes they have been discriminated against in the provision of transportation services on the basis of race, color, or national origin by Exceptional Humans may file a Title VI complaint by completing and submitting the agency's Title VI Complaint Form. Title VI complaints must be received in writing within 180 days of the alleged discriminatory complaint.

**HOW TO FILE A COMPLAINT :** Information on how to file a Title VI complaint is posted on our agency's website, and in public areas of our agency.

You may download Exceptional Human's Title VI Complaint Form at [www.exceptional-humans.org](http://www.exceptional-humans.org), or request a copy by submitting your request to [kelly@exceptional-humans.org](mailto:kelly@exceptional-humans.org).

You may file a signed, dated complaint no more than 180 days from the date of the alleged incident. The complaint should include:

- Your name, address and telephone number.
- Specific, detailed information (how, why and when) about the alleged act of discrimination.
- Any other relevant information, including the names of any persons, if known, the agency should contact for clarity of the allegations.

**COMPLAINT ACCEPTANCE:** Exceptional Humans will process complaints that are complete. Once a completed Title VI Complaint Form is received, Exceptional Humans will review it to determine if Exceptional Humans has jurisdiction. The complainant will receive an acknowledgement letter informing them whether or not the complaint will be investigated by Exceptional Humans.

**INVESTIGATIONS:** Exceptional Humans will generally complete an investigation within 90 days from receipt of a completed complaint form. If more information is needed to resolve the case, Exceptional Humans may contact the complainant. Unless a longer period is specified by Exceptional Humans, the complainant will have ten (10) days from the date of the letter to send requested information to the investigator assigned to the case.

If the requested information is not received within that time frame the case will be closed. Also, a case can be administratively closed if the complainant no longer wishes to pursue the case.

**LETTERS OF CLOSURE OR FINDING:** After the Title VI investigator reviews the complaint, the Title VI investigator will issue one of two letters to the complainant: a closure letter or 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 provides an explanation of the corrective action taken.

If the complainant disagrees with Exceptional Human's determination, the complainant may request reconsideration by submitting the request in writing to the Title VI investigator within seven (7) days after the date of the letter of closure or letter of finding, stating with specificity the basis for the reconsideration. Exceptional Humans will notify the complainant of the decision either to accept or reject the request for reconsideration within ten (10) days. In cases where reconsideration is granted, Exceptional Humans will issue a determination letter to the complainant upon completion of the reconsideration review.

A person may also file a complaint directly with the Federal Transit Administration, at the FTA Office of Civil Rights, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590.

If information is needed in another language, contact Exceptional Humans Director of Administration and Community Outreach.

#### **F. Monitoring Title VI Complaints, Investigations, Lawsuits Documenting Title VI Complaints/Investigations**

All Title VI complaints will be entered and tracked in Exceptional Human's complaint log. Active investigations will be monitored for timely response on the part of all parties. The agency's Title VI Coordinator shall maintain the log.

Date complaint filed	Complainant	Basis of complaint R-C-NO	Summary of allegation	Pending status of complaint	Actions taken	Closure Letter (CL)	Letter of Finding (LOF)	Date of CL or LOF

## Public Notice

### G. Public Participation/Engagement Plan

To provide notification of the opportunity for members of the general public to participate in transportation related public engagement plan development, including participation in open Board/council meetings, and advisory committees Exceptional Humans will:

- Use social media, website and email in addition to other communication resources as a way to gain public involvement

#### Public Engagement Process/Outreach Efforts:

To promote inclusive public participation, Exceptional Humans will employ the following strategies, as appropriate when open board or committee meetings are held:

- Provide for early, frequent and continuous engagement by the public.
- Select accessible and varied meeting locations and times.
- Select locations that are easily accessible to public transit and compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

## Public Comment

When appropriate Exceptional Humans will hold a formal public comment period to solicit and accept comments on major public involvement efforts around an agency transportation service or system change. Comments may be accepted through the following various means:

- Email
- US postal mail
- Forms using an outside database for compilation
- Phone

## Response to Public Input

All public comments will be provided to the Board of Directors prior to decision making. A publicly available summary report will be compiled, including all individual comments.

## H. Language Assistance Plan

## Exceptional Humans Limited English Proficiency Plan

This limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan has been prepared to address Exceptional Humans responsibilities as a recipient of federal financial assistance as they relate to the needs of individuals with limited language skills. The plan has been prepared in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Federal Transit Administration Circular 4702.1B, dated October 1, 2012, which states that the level and quality of transportation service is provided without regard to race, color, or national origin.

Executive order 13166, titled "Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency," indicates that differing treatment based upon a person's inability to speak, read, write or understand English is a type of national origin discrimination. It directs each federal agency to publish guidance for its respective recipients clarifying their obligation to ensure that such discriminations do not take place. This order applies to all state and local agencies which receive federal funds.

Exceptional Humans has developed this LEP Plan to help identify reasonable steps for providing language assistance to persons with limited English proficiency who wish to access services provided by Exceptional Humans. As defined in Executive Order 13166, LEP persons are those who do not speak English as their primary language and have limited ability to read, speak, write or understand English. This plan outlines how to identify a person who may need language assistance, and the ways in which assistance may be provided.

### Staff Training

The following training will be provided to Exceptional Human's staff:

1. Information on Exceptional Human's Title VI Procedures and LEP responsibilities.
2. Description of language assistance services offered to the public.
3. Documentation of language assistance requests.

### Monitoring and Updating the LEP Plan

The LEP Plan is a component of Exceptional Human's Title VI Plan.

Exceptional Humans will update the LEP plan as required. At a minimum, the plan will be reviewed annually and updated when higher concentrations of LEP individuals are present in the area served by Exceptional Humans.