



Keene Senior Citizens Inc.
70 Court Street
Keene, NH 03431

Title VI Document

UPDATED BY BOARD OF DIRECTORS
June 15, 2023

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Contents

Title VI Document	1
Phone: 603-352-5037.....	1
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
II. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS.....	2
Notice to the Public.....	2
Your Civil Rights	2
Discrimination Complaint Procedures.....	2
The Procedure.....	2
Active Lawsuits, Complaints or Inquiries Alleging Discrimination	4
III. KSC'S PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN	5
Key Principles	5
IV. KSC'S PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS.....	7
Outreach Efforts - Alerting Riders and Encouraging Engagement: We communicate with our current riders through direct mail, email and phone calls.	7
V. Decision Making Bodies: KSC's Board of Directors makes decisions on all policies	10
VII. SUMMARY OF CHANGES	10
VIII. GRANTS, REVIEWS AND CERTIFICATIONS.....	10
Pending Applications for Financial Assistance N/A. Error! Bookmark not defined.	
Civil Rights Compliance Reviews in the Past 3 Years	10
Recent Annual Certifications and Assurances	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Contact	10
IX. LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE PLAN –	11
Improving Access for People with Limited English Proficiency (LEP)	11
LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE PLAN AND POLICY for KSC	11
Service Area Overview	12
The Locations of the LEP Community	12
Oversight.....	13

I. INTRODUCTION

KEENE SENIOR CITIZENS INC.'S (KSC) COMMITMENT TO CIVIL RIGHTS

This update of KSC'S Title VI Program has been prepared to ensure that the level and quality of KSC's demand response services are provided in a nondiscriminatory manner, and that the opportunity for full and fair participation is offered to KSC's riders and other community members. Additionally, through this program, KSC has examined the need for services and materials for persons for whom English is not their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English.

It is a matter of principle that KSC is committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from participation in, or denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination in the receipt of any of KSC's services on the basis of race, color, or national origin. The contents of this program have been prepared in accordance with Section 601 of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Executive Order 13116 (Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency) and other statutes and authorities that prohibit discrimination in any Federally assisted program or service.

"No person shall, on grounds 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 assistance." - Civil Rights Act of 1964

Under the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and as a recipient of federal funding under the programs of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) of the U.S. Department of Transportation (US DOT), KSC has an obligation to ensure that:

- The benefits of its transportation services are shared equitably throughout the service area;
- The level and quality of transportation services are sufficient to provide equal access to all riders in its service area;
- Decisions regarding service changes or facility locations are made without regard to race, color or national origin and that development and urban renewal benefitting a community as a whole not be unjustifiably purchased through the disproportionate allocation of its adverse environmental and health burdens on the community's minority population; and
- A program is in place for correcting any discrimination, whether intentional or unintentional.

II. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

Notice to the Public

To make KSC members aware of its commitment to Title VI compliance, and their right to file a civil rights complaint, KSC has presented the following information, in English on its website and in policies & procedures for riders and volunteer drivers.

Your Civil Rights

Keene Senior Citizens Inc. (KSC) operates its programs and services without regard to race, color, or national origin in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. Any person who believes they have been aggrieved by any unlawful discriminatory practice under Title VI may file a complaint with KSC. For more information on KSC's civil rights program and the procedures to file a complaint, please contact 603-352-5037, email admin@thekeeneselectorcenter.org or visit our location at 70 Court Street, Keene, NH from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. A complaint may be filed with the FTA Office of Civil Rights, Attention: Title VI Program Coordinator, East Building, 5th Floor-TCR, 1200 New Jersey Ave., SE, Washington, DC 20590. For more information about KSC programs and services, visit our web site – www.thekeeneselectorcenter.org. If information is needed in another language, please contact the Executive Director at (603) 352-5037.

Discrimination Complaint Procedures

KSC has established a process for riders to file a complaint under Title VI. Any person who believes that she or he has been discriminated against on the basis of race, color, or national origin by KSC may file a Title VI complaint by submitting to the KSC Title VI Coordinator at The Keene Senior Center, 70 Court Street, Keene, NH 03431.

KSC will notify NHDOT of all formal complaints within five business days of receiving the complaint.

The Procedure

This statement is found in the KSC Volunteer Training manual.

Any person who believes they have been aggrieved by an unlawful discriminatory practice regarding KSC's programs has a right to file a formal complaint with KSC. Any such complaint must be in writing and submitted to the KSC Title VI Coordinator within one hundred eighty (180) days following the date of the alleged occurrence.

Disposition of Complaints:

- **Sustained Complaints** – If the complaint is substantiated, this policy and procedure prohibiting discrimination will be reviewed with the offender. Appropriate disciplinary action and/or training will be taken pursuant to the agency disciplinary procedures.
- **Unsustained Complaints** – If there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation(s), both parties to the complaint will be informed of the reason(s) for this disposition.
- **Unfounded Complaint** – If it is determined that an act reported pursuant to this policy/procedure did not in fact occur, a finding of unfounded shall be made.
- **Exonerated Complaints** – If it is determined that an act reported pursuant to this policy/procedure did in fact occur, but was lawful and proper within the guidelines established herein, a finding of exonerated shall be made.

For more information regarding civil rights complaints, please contact:

Title VI Coordinator
The Keene Senior Center
70 Court Street
Keene, NH 03431
603-352-5037

Methods of filing a complaint:

Send written complaints to:

Title VI Coordinator
The Keene Senior Center
70 Court Street
Keene, NH 03431

Verbal complaints are accepted and transcribed by Title VI Coordinator. To make a verbal complaint, call 603-352-5037 and ask for Title VI Coordinator.

KSC investigates complaints received no more than 180 days after the alleged incident. KSC will process complaints that are complete. Once the complaint is received, KSC will review it and the complainant will receive an acknowledgement letter informing them whether the complaint will be investigated by KSC.

KSC has up to thirty days to investigate the complaint. If more information is needed to resolve the case, the KSC may contact the complainant. The complainant has thirty days from the date of the letter to send requested information to the investigator assigned to the case.

If KSC's investigator is not contacted by the complainant or does not receive the additional Information within thirty days, KSC can administratively close the case. A case can be administratively closed also if the complainant no longer wishes to pursue their case.

After the investigator reviews the complaint, one of two letters will be issued to the complainant:

1. a closure letter. A closure letter summarizes the allegations and states that there was not a Title VI violation and that the case will be closed.
or
2. a letter of finding (LOF). A 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 ten days after the date of the letter or the LOF to do so.

A person may also file a complaint directly with the Federal Transit Administration, at:

Federal Transit Administration
Office of Civil Rights
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590

Active Lawsuits, Complaints or Inquiries Alleging Discrimination

KSC maintains a list of active investigations conducted by FTA and entities other than FTA, including lawsuits and complaints naming KSC that allege discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin. This list includes the date that the transit-related Title VI investigation, lawsuit or complaint was filed; a summary of the allegation(s); the status of the investigation, lawsuit or complaint, and actions taken by KSC in response, or final findings related to the investigation, lawsuit, or complaint.

As of the writing of this program, there are ZERO complaints pending which allege discrimination on the grounds of race, color, national origin or any other form of discrimination.

Type (Investigation, Lawsuit, Complaint)	Date	Summary of Complaint	Status	Action(s) Taken
None (0)	June 2020			

III. KSC'S PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

Key Principles

KSC is a small organization without a formal PPP however it is a member of Monadnock Regional Coordinating Council for Community Transportation (MRCC). The MRCC is guided by a vision to actively engage the Monadnock Region in building an innovative, coordinated and resilient transportation network. It is the mission of the MRCC to help create a regional transportation network for everyone. Since 1994, New Hampshire transportation and human service agencies have been working in conjunction with Regional Planning Agencies to coordinate transportation services. A 2004 federal mandate made coordination of federally funded transportation services a requirement. This mandate led to the federal "United We Ride" program which provides technical resources and funding to help increase coordination.

KSC provides rides to adult members over age 50. Therefore, KSC's Public Participation Plan (PPP) has been prepared to ensure that no one who meets the basic eligibility requirements is precluded from participating in KSC's service planning and development process. It ensures that:

- Potentially affected community members will have an appropriate opportunity to participate in decisions about a proposed activity that will affect their environment and/or health;
- Contributions can and will influence KSC's decision making;
- The concerns of all participants involved will be considered in the decision-making process; and,
- KSC will seek out and facilitate the involvement of those potentially affected.

Through being a member of MRCC, KSC has developed a public participation plan to encourage and guide public involvement efforts and enhance access to KSC's transportation decision-making process by minority and Limited English Proficient (LEP) populations. The public participation plan describes the overall goals, guiding principles and outreach methods that KSC uses to reach its riders.

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. It includes people who reported to the U.S. Census that they speak English less than very well, not well, or not at all.

Limited English Proficient (LEP) Goals of the Public Participation Plan: KSC does have a plan and it is included later in this document.

The overarching goals of KSC's PPP include:

- **Clarity in Potential for Influence** - The process clearly identifies and communicates where and how participants can have influence and direct impact on decision making.
- **Consistent Commitment** - KSC communicates regularly, develops trust with riders and our community and builds community capacity to provide public input.
- **Diversity** - Participants represent a range of socioeconomic, ethnic and cultural perspectives, with representative participants including residents from low-income neighborhoods, ethnic communities and residents with Limited English Proficiency
- **Accessibility** - Every reasonable effort is made to ensure that opportunities to participate are physically, geographically, temporally, linguistically, and culturally accessible.
- **Relevance** - Issues are framed in such a way that the significance and potential effect is understood by participants.
- **Participant Satisfaction** - People who take the time to participate feel it is worth the effort to join the discussion and provide feedback.
- **Partnerships** - KSC develops and maintains partnerships with communities through the methods described in its public participation plan.
- **Quality Input and Participation** - That comments received by KSC are useful, relevant and constructive, contributing to better plans, projects, strategies and decisions.

Objectives of the Public Participation Plan

KSC's Public Participation Plan is based on the following principles:

- **Flexibility** - The engagement process will accommodate participation in a variety of ways and be adjusted as needed.
- **Inclusiveness** - KSC will proactively reach out to and engage people with low incomes, minority and LEP populations who are eligible for services offered in the KSC service area.
- **Respect** - All feedback will be given careful and respectful consideration.
- **Proactive and Timeliness** - Participation methods will allow for early involvement and be ongoing.
- **Clear, Focused and Understandable** - Participation methods will have a clear purpose and use for the input, and will be described in language that is easy to understand.
- **Honest and Transparent** - Information provided will be accurate, trustworthy and complete.
- **Responsiveness** – KSC will respond and incorporate appropriate public comments into transportation decisions.

- **Accessibility** – Meetings will be held in locations which are fully accessible and welcoming to all area residents, including, but not limited to, low-income and minority members of the public and in locations relevant to the topics being presented and discussed. Residents of Keene can receive free transportation from the “Friendly Bus” service provided by HCS. Residents from other towns in Cheshire County can receive rides from volunteer drivers through The Keene Senior Center.

KSC will use its public participation plan when considering major modifications transportation service modes and hours, and other transit planning projects when:

- Trip reservation policy is reduced or increased;
- The service area is changed;
- If a route is established;
- If a route is proposed for elimination;
- Considering the total discontinuance of service on any given day when service is currently offered;
- Any system-wide change in service hours that exceeds (plus or minus) 10% of current total service hours;
- For minor schedule and service changes not rising to the level of those above, KSC will post service change notices on appropriate vehicles and on the website sixty days in advance of the change date.

IV. KSC’S PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

Outreach Efforts - Alerting Riders and Encouraging Engagement: We communicate with our current riders through direct mail, email and phone calls.

KSC communicates with current riders through direct mail, email, and phone calls. While KSC maintains these elements to its outreach program, KSC has availed itself of the communication methods more widely used by members of our community and riders.

While there may be minor variation in the outreach process from time-to-time, the outline below provides the general steps for engaging riders in the decision making process using a fare or service change as an example.

1. A service/fare change proposal is developed internally or as a result of public comment;
2. An internal review by the appropriate committees is conducted.
3. Proposals are reviewed by KSC’s Board of Directors

4. A Title VI review of the proposal is conducted;
5. If required, authorization from the KSC Board of Directors is sought to proceed to a public comment period;
6. Public outreach venues, dates and times are determined with consideration of the proposed changes and their impact on specific locations/populations within the KSC service area;
7. Outreach in advance of public information sessions is released (using tool-box of mediums listed below);
 - a. Letters are sent to KSC riders;
 - b. KSC Board of Directors [summary package is presented detailing the outcome of the public participation process along with staff recommendations];
 - c. The final service/fare change date is set;
 - d. Outreach is conducted in advance of any service or fare change;

Selection of Meeting Locations

When determining locations and schedules for public meetings, KSC will:

- Schedule meetings at times and locations that are convenient and accessible for minority and LEP communities;
- Employ different meeting sizes and formats including town hall type meeting formats;
- Coordinate with community organizations, educational institutions, and other organizations to implement public engagement strategies that reach out specifically to members of affected minority and/or LEP communities;
- Consider radio, television, or newspaper ads as well as podcasts that serve LEP populations.
- Provide opportunities for public participation through means other than written communication, such as one-on-one interviews or use of audio or video recording devices to capture oral comments.

KSC Mediums [choose all that apply and/or add]

- Print – Newspapers and other periodicals
- Website – KSC has assembled a comprehensive website
- Social Media – KSC has used Facebook
- Email – KSC has developed a monthly email newsletter
- Radio (if available and appropriate)
- Direct Mail to Community Partners
- Public Information Sessions
- Legal Notices

Addressing Comments

The Incorporation of Public Comments into Decisions

All comments received through the public participation plan are given careful, thoughtful consideration. Because there are a number of different ways riders or members of the community can comment on proposed service or fare changes (mail, email, social media, public meetings and others), all comments are assembled into a single document for presentation to the KSC Board of Directors for consideration.

Identification of Stakeholders

Our Community Partners

Stakeholders are those who are either directly or indirectly affected by a plan, or the recommendations of the plan. Those who may be adversely affected, or who may be denied benefits of a plan's recommendation(s), are of particular interest in the identification of specific stakeholders. Stakeholders can come from a number of groups including general citizens/residents, minority and low-income persons, public agencies, and private organizations and businesses. While stakeholders may vary based on the plan or program being considered, KSC has assembled a listing of stakeholders with whom we regularly communicate through email and direct mail. A complete list of KSC's community stakeholders can be obtained by contacting KSC.

Stakeholder List

Any community organization or person can be added to the KSC stakeholder list and receive regular communications regarding service changes by contacting the KSC administrative office at 603-352-5037. Local organizations and businesses can also request that a speaker from KSC attend their regular meeting at the same number or through the KSC website https://thekeeneseniorcenter.org
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V. Decision Making Bodies

KSC's Board of Directors makes decisions on all policies. The Board meets the third Thursday of every month at 4:00 pm at The Keene Senior Center or virtually. Meetings are open to the public, members, potential members and interested parties. Board and committee recruitment and nominations are made based on experience and skills needed. As of June 16, 2023 there are 13 persons on the Board, 6 women and 7 men and is mostly white. An Annual Meeting open to members and the public is conducted each January when board members and officers are elected. There is an annual survey of members each year which includes questions about transportation needs.

VI. SUMMARY OF CHANGES

Service Change Evaluations Since 2008

Since KSC's 2019 Title VI Plan Submission there have been no changes in KSC's fare structure. KSC does not collect fares for rides provided.

These changes, the associated outreach and Title VI determination and KSC Board Approval are available by contacting KSC.

VII. GRANTS, REVIEWS AND CERTIFICATIONS

Civil Rights Compliance Reviews in the Past 3 Years

KSC has not been the subject of any such reviews as of June 16, 2023.

Contact

For additional information on the KSC Title VI Plan, or its efforts to comply with the Civil Rights Act of 1964 or Executive Order 13166 Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency, please contact:

Executive Director
The Keene Senior Center
70 Court Street
Keene, NH 03431 603-352-5037
admin@thekeeneseniorcenter.org

VIII. LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE PLAN –

Improving Access for People with Limited English Proficiency (LEP)

In order to ensure meaningful access to programs and activities, KSC uses the information obtained in a Four Factor Analysis to determine the specific language services that are appropriate. This analysis helps KSC to determine if it communicates effectively with LEP persons and informs language access planning.

The Four Factor Analysis is a local assessment that considers:

1. The number or proportion of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely to be encountered by KSC;
2. The frequency with which LEP persons come into contact with KSC services and programs;
3. The nature and importance of KSC's services and programs in people's lives; and
4. The resources available to KSC for LEP outreach, as well as the costs associated with that outreach.

LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE PLAN AND POLICY for KSC

For Addressing Individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP)

Updates adopted by KSC Board of Directors on June 16, 2023

LEP individuals do not speak English as their primary language and have a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English. LEP individuals include people in the process of learning English and may read, write, speak, or understand some English, but not sufficiently enough to communicate detailed information such as medical information, eyewitness accounts, or information elicited in an interrogation in English.

Federal law prohibits national origin discrimination and requires meaningful access to LEP persons, including inmates, in federal and federally assisted programs and activities. Executive Order 13166 "Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency", signed by the President on August 11, 2000, requires recipients of Federal funds to examine the services they provide, identify any need for services to those with limited English proficiency (LEP), and develop and implement a system to provide those services so LEP persons can have meaningful access to them.

KSC performed a four-factor analysis to determine the frequency in which LEP individuals may need language assistance and the types of services that may need to be available.

Factor 1: The proportion and number of LEP persons within KSC's Service Area (20 towns in Cheshire County) is very small

http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/community_facts.xhtml. The following table outlines the number and percent of individuals who speak English less than very well within the KSC service area.

Service Area Overview

KSC's service area encompasses approximately 729 square miles of Cheshire County and is home to a population speaking more than 33 different languages. Of the total service area population (76,085) *, 1.0% of residents report speaking English less than very well. The language groups in the category are shown below.

The Locations of the LEP Community

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017-2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

*Total service area population is 76,473(2021).

Exhibit A

Speak English "Less than very well"	Population in the Language Group	Percent of specified language speakers
Spanish or Spanish Creole	325	16.9%
Other languages	1062	19.4%

Factor 2: The frequency of contact between limited English speaking persons and KSC services is extremely rare. 100% of our clients/riders use the telephone or email to make their ride requests since the transportation program started in 2017.

Factor 3: KSC considered the nature and importance of the services it provides and determined that it would not be life threatening to limited English speaking individuals if we were unable to meet their needs immediately (volunteer rides to non-emergency medical appointments, social services, and procuring basic needs.) Affording KSC a reasonable amount of time to secure a means to communicate would not render a person

ineligible for services or cause a service to be inaccessible to a person struggling with English.

If limited English proficiency is a barrier to using these services, then the consequences for the individual could limit their access to obtain health care, education or employment. Critical information from KSC which can affect access includes:

- Information regarding making the best use of the services
- Complaint and comment forms
- Outreach related to opportunity for comments
- What to do in an emergency (where to look for service change announcements)

Factor 4: Numerous resources are available and the resource selected is based on the service requiring access, the language spoken, and other individual circumstances. A variety of language assistance services are available for in-person, telephone, and electronic assistance. Language identification signs are available in the office.

The policy of KSC is to take reasonable steps to provide meaningful access to LEP individuals accessing public services provided by KSC. The policy is to ensure that language will not prevent staff from communicating effectively with LEP persons and that limited English proficiency will not prevent people from accessing KSC services.

Language services will be provided through the use of qualified interpreters, translation services, technology, or telephonic interpretation services. Considering requests for language assistance at KSC are very rare, a case-by-case approach shall be used to determine the most appropriate method for communicating with the LEP person based on the service they are accessing and their particular language needs.

Two services are available for telephone interpretation:

1. The Language Bank, 603-410-6183; <http://www.ascentria.org/languagebank;info@thelanguagebank.org>
2. Language Line Solutions Personal Interpreter Program 800-752-6096; www.language.com. (cost is \$3.95 per minute and requires payment by credit card)

Oversight

Monitoring, Evaluating and Updating the Language Assistance Plan and Public Participation Process

The monitoring of the Language Assistance Plan will include:

- Annual reviews of regional census data for changing patterns of LEP populations;

- Update the policy every three years;
- Ongoing collaboration with regional partners; and,
- Post Event Assessments (PEA)

Post-Event Assessments

Following service changes, fare increases and planning projects, the Executive Director assesses the effectiveness of public involvement against the goals established in this plan.

This assessment will ask the questions:

- Did the eligible public know there was an opportunity to participate?
- Was the purpose of the participation clearly articulated?
- Did the eligible public have access to appropriate resources and information to allow for meaningful participation?
- Did the decision making process allow for consideration and incorporation of eligible public input?
- Were there complaints about the public engagement process?
- Were the public engagement efforts cost effective?
- What additional methods could have been employed to improve the process?
- Should the Public Participation Process or Language Assistance Plan be amended?

Training Employees

KSC conducts annual and new employee training on how to use LEP translation services that are available to the public and how to inform passengers of services and documents available for LEP populations. KSC also conducts training for office staff on how to use translation applications.

Employee awareness training for the ability to basically communicate with the LEP and low-literacy population.

Translation of Vital Documents

The list of documents that will be translated upon request is provided below:

- Civil Rights Complaint Form
- Service change announcements
- Notification of free language services
- Maps and schedules, rider information, ADA service information, news and event announcements on KSC's website www.thekeeneseniorcenter.org
- Service Complaint Forms