

2.2 TITLE VI COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

What Is Title VI?

Title VI is a section of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 requiring 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 subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.”

How Do I File a Complaint?

Any person who believes that he or she has been excluded from participation in, been denied the benefits of, or otherwise subjected to unlawful discrimination under any Valley Metro or City of Phoenix service, program or activity, and believes the discrimination is based on race, color or national origin, may file a formal complaint with Valley Metro Customer Service or directly with the City of Phoenix. This antidiscrimination protection also extends to the activities and programs of Valley Metro’s and City of Phoenix’s third-party Transit Service Provider (TSP) contractors. Valley Metro and the City of Phoenix use the Customer Assistance System (CAS) to capture all complaints received for the regional transit system. Any such complaint must be filed within 180 days of the alleged discriminatory act (or latest occurrence).

To submit a complaint online, complete the online complaint form at the following link: valleymetro.org/form/title-vi-complaint-form

Complaints can also be submitted in writing using the Title VI complaint form, or by calling Customer Service at (602) 253-5000, TTY: (602) 251-2039. Completed and signed forms should be mailed to:

Regional Public Transportation Authority
4600 East Washington Street, Suite 101
Phoenix, AZ 85034
Email: csr@valleymetro.org
Phone: (602) 253-5000
TTY: (602) 251-2039

The complaint form is located on our website:
valleymetro.org/about/civil-rights

To file a complaint directly with the City of Phoenix:

Attention: Title VI Coordinator
City of Phoenix Public Transit Department
302 N. 1st Avenue, Suite 900
Phoenix, AZ 85003
Email: PHXTransitEO@phoenix.gov
Phones: (602) 262-7242
phoenix.gov/publictransit/title-vi-notice

Individuals may also file complaints directly with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) within the 180-day timeframe:

Federal Transit Administration (FTA)
Attention: Title VI Coordinator
East Building, 5th Floor –TCR
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Customer Service

Complaints received by Valley Metro Customer Service representatives or by the City of Phoenix Title VI Coordinator will be documented and assigned to the appropriate TSP (operator or administrator of the service) responsible for investigation in accordance with federal standards (28 CFR Part 35 and FTA Circular 4702.1B). The TSP has 30 days to investigate each complaint. If more information is needed to resolve the case, the TSP may contact the complainant and request additional information. Complainants must provide additional information within 10 days of the request or the complaint may be deemed undeterminable and will be administratively closed. Cases may also be administratively closed if a complainant informs Valley Metro or the City of Phoenix that they no longer wish to pursue the complaint. Requests to close a complaint can be requested by phone, email or in writing (see contact information above). Complaints may be administratively closed for non-responsiveness by the complainant.

Following the investigation, all complaints shall be concluded with a determination entered in the CAS. The determination entry shall state the investigation determined the complaint was valid,¹ invalid,² or undeterminable.³ If the investigation determines the alleged Title VI complaint violations of race, color or national origin discrimination are valid, a detailed corrective resolution to remedy the situation shall be provided to the complainant. If the investigation results determine there was no alleged Title VI discrimination based on race, color or national origin, the case will be closed. The complainant shall be notified of the investigation results in the manner identified (for example, email, phone). A complainant can appeal the decision within **60 days** of notification of the investigation results. Appeals must be submitted to Valley Metro or the City of Phoenix.

All Title VI complaints and investigations are reviewed by Valley Metro, the Customer Service Administrator (CSA) and City of Phoenix staff.

For more information on Valley Metro's Title VI Program and procedures by which to file a complaint, contact the Title VI Coordinator at (602) 322-4514.

For more information on the City of Phoenix's Civil Rights Program and the procedures by which to file a complaint, contact the Title VI Coordinator at (602) 262-7242.

¹ Valid: fact-based, binding, acceptable, enforceable

² Invalid: null and void, unacceptable, unenforceable

³ Undeterminable: incapable of being decided, settled, or fixed; not determinable

Requesting Information

Note: To request information in alternative formats, please contact Customer Service at csr@valleymetro.org or phone: (602) 253-5000 or at the City of Phoenix at phone (602) 262-7242, TTY: (602) 251-2039

Tracking a Title VI Complaint

As complaints are received, they are logged into the CAS. Within 24 to 48 hours of logging the complaint, the Valley Metro CSA assigns the complaint to the appropriate TSP for investigation and documentation.

The TSP has 30 days to complete their investigation, including obtaining additional information needed from the complainant to investigate or to resolve the case. The investigator will follow the complaint process, and once the investigation is concluded, the case resolution will be documented in the CAS.

The CAS is programmed to notify the CSA if a complaint has not been responded to within the required time frame. Upon system notification, the CSA will send out a reminder notice to the appropriate TSP that the case is not yet resolved or closed out.

Once the case has been resolved, the complainant will receive a response in the manner identified.

Valley Metro and the City of Phoenix monitors the process monthly to ensure Title VI complaints are fully investigated, adequately documented, and that the complainant was responded to in the manner requested. Should an inaccuracy be found, Valley Metro and/or the City of Phoenix will work with the CSA and the appropriate TSP to reopen the complaint for further investigation until resolution or completion.

Investigating a Title VI Complaint

Each documented Title VI investigative report must address each of the “Seven Federal Investigative” steps found in 28 CFR, Part 35, and in FTA Circular 4702.IA. The five steps are:

STEP ONE: The TSP will review the complaint information entered into CAS by Valley Metro Customer Service staff. Any new issues identified during the investigation should also be documented in CAS.

STEP TWO: Interviews and collections of facts.

- TSP identifies respondents to interview, if needed.
- TSP interviews respondents identified and documents details from the interviews in the CAS.
- Investigate every “issue” (stated in the statement of issues noted in step one).
- Separate facts from opinions.

“Respondent” is not confined to the transit vehicle operator. “Respondent” is defined as *any* source of information that can contribute to the investigation, such as:

- Complainant
- Operator

- Radio/Dispatch/OCC reports
- Maintenance staff
- City Transit staff
- Witnesses
- Other transit employees

The TSP identifies, collects and reviews other information and/or documents that provide facts for the investigation. Any applicable information is to be documented in CAS. Documents to review can include:

- GPS tracking software and programs
- Maintenance records
- Spotter reports
- Video (camera) and/or audio recordings
- Courtesy cards
- Incident reports (supervisor, transit police, fare/security inspectors)
- Route history
- Other documents deemed appropriate by the TSP

STEP THREE: TSP documents pertinent regulations, rules, policies and procedures that apply to the investigation in the CAS under the case number assigned.

Pertinent regulations, rules, policies, and procedures may include:

- Title VI requirements
- Company rules and procedures
- Valley Metro and City of Phoenix policies and service standards
- Contractual requirements

STEP FOUR: Complaint determination.

- TSP compares each fact from “findings of fact” to the list of regulations, rules, etc.
- TSP makes a fact-based determination of alleged violation(s)

STEP FIVE: Description of resolution for each valid violation.

- TSP describes specific corrective actions for *each* violation found.
- TSP documents follow-up action, if applicable.
- TSP documents the complaint resolution in the CAS.

TSP Complaint Resolution(s):

- Must include a specific complaint resolution for each valid violation noted.
- Document a follow-up action plan, where applicable.
- If no valid violations are found, note policies, procedures, etc. reviewed during the investigation and with transit operator.
- Documented complaint information should always include staff initials, title, and dates.

Response to Customer

TSP will respond to the customer in the manner identified and will document the response provided in CAS under the case number assigned.