

RSVP

Connecting People to Purpose



AmeriCorps
Seniors

Carroll County Retired & Senior Volunteer Program

Title VI Plan

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I. INTRODUCTION

CARROLL COUNTY RETIRED & SENIOR VOLUNTEER PROGRAM'S COMMITMENT TO CIVIL RIGHTS

This update of **Carroll County Retired & Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP's)** Transit's Title VI Program has been prepared to ensure that the level and quality of RSVP's Non-Emergency Medical Transportation Program is provided in a nondiscriminatory manner and that the opportunity for full and fair participation is offered to RSVP's riders and other community members. Additionally, through this program, **RSVP** 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.

While it is a matter of principle that **RSVP** 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 RSVP'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.

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), **RSVP** has an obligation to ensure that:

- ◆ The benefits of its non-emergency medical transportation service are shared equitably throughout the service area;
- ◆ The level and quality of non-emergency medical transportation services are sufficient to provide equal access to all riders in its service area (this service is provided at "No Charge" to clients by volunteer drivers using their own vehicles and all clients must be ambulatory);
- ◆ No one is precluded from participating in **RSVP's** service planning and development process;
- ◆ 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 **Carroll County Retired & Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)** riders aware of its commitment to Title VI compliance, and their right to file a civil rights complaint, RSVP has presented the following information, in English, on its website ride guide.

Your Civil Rights

RSVP operates its programs and services without regard to race, color, or national origin, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act and other statutes and authorities that prohibit discrimination in Federally assisted programs and activities. Any person who believes they have been aggrieved by any unlawful discriminatory practice under Title IV may file a complaint with RSVP. For more information on RSVP's civil rights program and the procedures to file a complaint, please contact (603) 356-9331; email mary.ccrsvp@gmail.com or visit our administrative office at 53 Technology Lane, Conway, NH from 9am to 4pm. A complaint may also be filed directly with the FTA, Office of Civil Rights, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington DC 20590. For more information about RSVP programs and services, visit www.carrollcountyrsvp.org. If information is needed in another language, please contact Carroll County Retired & Senior Volunteer Program at (603) 356-9331.

Discrimination Complaint Procedures

RSVP 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, religion, national , sex, disability, or age by **Carroll County Retired & Senior Volunteer Program** may file a Title IV complaint by completing and submitting the agency's Title VI Complaint available at our administrative offices or on our website www.carrollcountyrsvp.org.

Reference Appendix A for a copy Carroll County Retired & Senior Volunteer Complaint Form.

The Procedure

If you believe that you have received discriminatory treatment by **Carroll County Retired & Senior Volunteer Program** on the basis of race, color, or national origin you have the right to file a complaint Carroll County Retired & Senior Volunteer Program Director Mary Carey Seavey. **Copies of Complaints are also sent to the New Hampshire Department of Transportation for review within five (5) days of receipt of complaint.**

Methods of filing a complaint:

Complete the Complaint Form, and send it to:

**Mary Carey Seavey, Director
Carroll County Retired & Senior Volunteer Program
PO Box 1182
North Conway, NH 03860**

Verbal complaints are accepted and transcribed by Mary Carey Seavey. To make a verbal complaint, call (603)356-9331 and ask for Mary Carey Seavey.

Carroll County Retired & Senior Volunteer Program investigates complaints received no more than 180 days after the alleged incident. **RSVP** will process complaints that are complete. Once the complaint is received, **RSVP** will review it and the complainant will receive an acknowledgement letter informing them whether the complaint will be investigated by **RSVP**.

RSVP has up to thirty days to investigate the complaint. If more information is needed to resolve the case, the **RSVP** 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 **RSVP's** investigator is not contacted by the complainant or does not receive the additional Information within thirty days, **RSVP** 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: 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 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

RVSP maintains a list of active investigations conducted by FTA and entities other than FTA, including lawsuits and complaints naming RVSP 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 RVSP 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, or national origin, or any other form of discrimination.

Active Lawsuits, Complaints or Inquiries Alleging Discrimination

Type (Investigation, Lawsuit, Complaint)	Date	Summary of Complaint	Status	Action(s) Taken
		No Charges as of 06/15/2020		

III. RSVP’S PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

Key Principles

RSVP’s Public Participation Plan (PPP) has been prepared to ensure that no one is precluded from participating in **RSVP’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;
- The public’s contribution can and will influence RSVP’s decision making;
- The concerns of all participants involved will be considered in the decision-making process; and,
- **RSVP** will seek out and facilitate the involvement of those potentially affected.

Through an open public process, **Carroll County Retired & Senior Volunteer Program** has developed a public participation plan to encourage and guide public involvement efforts and enhance access to **Carroll County Retired & Senior Volunteer Program’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 RSVP 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

The overarching goals of **Carroll County Retired & Senior Volunteer Program'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 - **Carroll County Retired & Senior Volunteer Program** 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 - **Carroll County Retired & Senior Volunteer Program** develops and maintains partnerships with communities through the methods described in its public participation plan.
- Quality Input and Participation - That comments received by RSVP are useful, relevant and constructive, contributing to better plans, projects, strategies and decisions.

Objectives of the Public Participation Plan

Carroll County Retired & Senior Volunteer Program'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 - **Carroll County Retired & Senior Volunteer Program** will proactively reach out to and engage low income, minority and LEP populations from the **Carroll County Retired & Senior Volunteer Program** 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 – **Carroll County Retired & Senior Volunteer Program** 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. Transportation can be provided by calling (603) 356-9331 to schedule a ride.

Carroll County Retired & Senior Volunteer Program does not charge for transportation services provided through our Non-Emergency Medical Transportation Program. All transportation service is provided by volunteer drivers using their own vehicles.

Regional Partnership/Capital Programming

RSVP does not own any buses. All non-emergency medical transportation is provided by volunteers using their own vehicles. Volunteer drivers are entitled to mileage reimbursement.

IV. RSVP'S PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

Outreach Efforts – Alerting Riders and Encouraging Engagement

Carroll County Retired & Senior Volunteer Program's PPP includes many new mediums extending beyond the traditional approach which relied on legal notices and intermittent media coverage. While **Carroll County Retired & Senior Volunteer Program** maintains these elements to its non-emergency medical transportation program, **Carroll County Retired & Senior Volunteer Program** has availed itself of the communication methods including: social media, emails, telephone calls, website, and the ordinary postal system.

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 service change as an example.

1. An internal review by the appropriate committees is conducted;
2. Proposals are reviewed by RSVP's Advisory Committee;
3. A Title VI review of the proposal is conducted;
4. If required, authorization from the RSVP Advisory Board is sought to proceed to a public comment period;
5. Bilingual public outreach materials and a program are developed, if required;
6. Outreach In advance of public information sessions is released (using tool-box of mediums listed below);
 - An Email is transmitted to RSVP community partners;
 - Local radio station(s);
 - Local TV station;

Selection of Meeting Locations

When determining locations and schedules for public meetings, RSVP 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;
- Ensure that transportation is available to and from the meeting if requested;
- 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.

Carroll County RSVP Mediums

- Print – Newspapers and other periodicals
- Website – RSVP has assembled a comprehensive website with automatic alerts
- Web-Based Feedback
- Social Media – RSVP has used Facebook to help engage community
- Email – RSVP has developed a quarterly email which now 400+readers
- Local Radio
- Direct Mail to Community Partners
- Public Information Sessions
- Public Hearings
- 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 (mail, email, social media, public meetings and others), all comments are assembled into a single document for presentation to the **Carroll County Retired & Senior Volunteer Program** 's Advisory Board 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, RSVP has assembled a listing of stakeholders with whom we regularly communicate through email and direct mail. A complete list of RSVP's community stakeholders can be obtained by contacting RSVP.

Stakeholder List

Any community organization or person can be added to the RSVP stakeholder list and receive regular communications regarding service changes by contacting the RSVP administrative office at (603) 356-9331. Local organizations and businesses can also request that a speaker from RSVP attend their regular meeting at the same number or through the RSVP website www.carrollcountyrsvp.org.

V. DECISION MAKING BODIES

Non-Elected Committees and Councils

At **Carroll County Retired & Senior Volunteer Program**, decisions regarding policy and service changes are made by RSVP's Advisory Council Board. RSVP's Advisory Board is composed of 12-15 members representing all of Carroll County New Hampshire. RSVP also has an external group known as the North Conway Community Center Board of Directors. RSVP's Advisory Council Board hold ongoing meetings to help to guide decisions regarding RSVP's non-emergency medical transportation program our clients. Meetings of the RSVP Advisory Council Board are always open to the public, held at 53 Technology Lane, Conway, NH. In addition, **Carroll County Retired & Senior Volunteer Program** also has an external group known as the Regional Coordinating Council for Region 2 who hold ongoing meetings to help guide decision regarding non-emergency medical transportation and other topics important to the community and **Carroll County Retired & Senior Volunteer Program** clients. Meeting for Region 2 are held monthly in Conway, NH at the Mount Washington Economic Council facility.

RSVP Advisory Board

Body	Caucasian	African American	Hispanic	Asian	Race 4	Race 5
RSVP Advisory Board	12					
Region 2 Coordinating Council	12					
North Conway Community Center Board of Directors	10					

VI. SERVICE STANDARDS AND POLICIES

RSVP has developed a set of quantifiable service standards and policies. These service standards were updated in 2020.

These service standards and policies include:

- ◆ Client Surveys - Reference Appendix B
- ◆ Volunteer Driver Surveys – Reference Appendix C
- ◆ RSVP Site Surveys - Reference Appendix D

VII. SUMMARY OF CHANGES

Service Change Evaluations Since Jun 1, 2020

Since RSVP’s 2008 Title VI Plan Submission there have been “0” service changes.

Program Specific Requirements

Title VI Monitoring (from 2008 Title VI Plan)

The results of the ongoing monitoring of service standards as defined in the **Carroll County Retired & Senior Volunteer Program’s** 2008 program are not available. The current Director, Mary Carey Seavey, was not aware of monitoring process, until it was brought to her attention with this update.

Equity Analysis for Facility

None

Demographic Service Profile

Because Carroll County Retired & Senior Volunteer Program does not operate any buses, there is no demographic service profile for this plan update.

VIII. GRANTS, REVIEWS AND CERTIFICATIONS

Pending Applications for Financial Assistance

NH Charitable Foundation – COVID-19 related grant - \$5,000.

Civil Rights Compliance Reviews in the Past 3 Years

RSVP has not been the subject of any such reviews since its 2015.

Recent Annual Certifications and Assurances

RSVP executed its most recent Certifications and Assurances to the FTA in 01/2020.

Contact

For additional information on the RSVP 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:

Mary Carey Seavey, Director
Carroll County RSVP
PO Box 1182
North Conway, NH 03860

IX. LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE PLAN

Improving Access for People with Limited English Proficiency (LEP)

In order to ensure meaningful access to programs and activities, RSVP uses the information obtained in a Four Factor Analysis to determine the specific language services that are appropriate. This analysis helps RSVP 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 RSVP;
2. The frequency with which LEP persons come into contact with RSVP services and programs;
3. The nature and importance of RSVP’s services and programs in people’s lives; and

4. The resources available to RSVP for LEP outreach, as well as the costs associated with that outreach.

Factor 1 – Number of LEP Persons in Service Region

The first step in determining the appropriate components of a Language Assistance Plan is understanding the proportion of LEP persons who may encounter RSVP’s services, their literacy skills in English and their native language, the location of their communities and neighborhoods and, more importantly, if any are underserved as a result of a language barrier.

To do this, RSVP evaluated the level of English literacy and to what degree people in its service area speak a language other than English and what those languages are. Data for this review is derived from the United States Census and the American Community Survey 2018. Data was reviewed by RSVP’s Advisory Council and RSVP staff in its entirety.

Service Area Overview

RSVP’s service area encompasses approximately 993 square miles of Carroll County and is home to a population speaking more than five different languages. Of the total service area population, 48,779, less than 1% of residents report speaking English less than very well. The most populous groups in the category are shown below.

Population Estimate July 1, 2019	49,910
Race and Hispanic Origin	
White alone, percent	97.0%
Black or African American alone, percent	0.6%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone, percent	0.4%
Asian alone, percent	0.7%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone, percent	Undefined
Two or More Races, percent	1.2%
Hispanic or Latino, percent	1.6%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino, percent	95.7%

The Locations of the LEP Community

No map is available to illustrate the distribution of population densities by Census Tract where individuals speak English “Less than Very Well”.

Factor 2 – Frequency of LEP Use

There are virtually no clients of the LED population that come into contact with RSVP’s Non-Emergency Medical Transportation Program. If a client of the LED population does come into contact with RSVP, the staff at RSVP would do everything possible to accommodate the LED client.

Community Partners

RSVP also canvassed its community partners to assess the extent to which they came into contact with LEP populations. Community partners were asked the following questions:

1. Do you encounter non-English speaking/reading people who need your services?
2. If so, what are the top three languages that you encounter?
3. How do you address language barriers?
4. Do you find language to be a barrier in preventing you from providing service?

[Information on survey of partners or potential partners]

<u>Question</u>	<u>Partner Name</u>	<u>Partner Name</u>	<u>Partner Name</u>
Do you encounter non-English speaking/reading people who need your services?	North Conway Community Center No	Gibson Center for Senior Services No	Dinner Bell North No
If so, what are the top three languages that you encounter?	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
How do you address language barriers?	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
Do you find language to be a barrier in preventing you from providing service?	No	No	No

Consulting Directly with the LEP Population

In addition to the U.S. Census data, employee survey, and outreach to community partners, RSVP implemented a survey of its riders. *A copy of the survey is attached in Appendix A.*

Factor 3 – The Importance of RSVP Service to People’s Lives

Access to the services provided by RSVP Non-Emergency Medical Transportation Program are critical to the lives of many elderly and veterans in the service area. Many depend on RSVP’s non-emergency medical transportation services for access to both local and long-distance medical appointments. Riders eligible for service under the American’s with Disabilities Act (ADA) require service for the same reasons. Because of the essential nature of the services and the importance of these programs in the lives of many of the region’s residents, there is a need to ensure that language is not a barrier to access.

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. Critical information from RSVP which can affect access includes:

- Complaint and comment forms
- Outreach related to opportunity for client comments

Any person who wants additional information on RSVP's nondiscrimination obligation or believes that he or she individually or as a member of any specific class of persons, has been subjected to discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin may file a complaint with the RSVP within 180 days of the date of the alleged discrimination.

To file a complaint contact RSVP at (603) 356-9331, website carrollcountyrsvp.org, or send a letter to Mary Carey Seavey, Director, RSVP, PO Box 1182, North Conway, NH 03860. A complaint may also be filed directly with the FTA, Office of Civil Rights, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington DC 20590.

Factor 4 – Resources and Costs for LEP Outreach

RSVP has committed resources to improving access to its services and programs for LEP persons. Today, bilingual information will be provided, if requested. To date, the costs associated with these efforts fit within the RSVP's marketing and outreach budget. Costs are predominantly associated with translation services and material production.

Outcomes

New tools and alerting riders of language assistance

Presently RSVP has not received any request for materials for the LEP population in Carroll County service area. If requested, RSVP would provide materials regardless of the total LEP population in the region. These include:

1. Adding Google Translate to the RSVP website;
2. Adding translation services for telephone communications with customer service representatives;
3. Assigning new staff charged with improvement community engagement; and
4. Creating a page with multiple languages for print (system timetable) and web-based posting indicating how RSVP provides language assistance.
5. Use a smart phone with translation application.

Additional recommendations gleaned from the internal staff survey include:

1. Offering employees conversational or transit specific language training
2. Recruiting more multilingual employees.
3. A multi-language touch screen monitor where passengers can access bus route information at the terminal.
4. On-board announcements in different languages.

RSVP would consider all of these items and other methods that become available, if requested.

Oversight

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

The monitoring of the Language Assistance Plan would include:

- ◆ Annual reviews of regional census data for changing patterns of LEP populations;
- ◆ Update the policy every three years;
- ◆ Ongoing collaboration with regional partners;
- ◆ Ongoing review of Google Translate requests at RSVP's website; and
- ◆ Post Event Assessments (PEA)

Post-Event Assessments

Following service changes and planning projects, the RSVP director assesses the effectiveness of public involvement against the goals established in this plan. This assessment will ask the questions:

- ◆ Did the public know there was an opportunity to participate?
- ◆ Was the purpose of the participation clearly articulated to the public?
- ◆ Did the public have access to appropriate resources and information to allow for meaningful participation?
- ◆ Did the decision-making process allow for consideration and incorporation of 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

RSVP conducts annual and new employee training on how to use LEP translation services that are available to the public and how to inform clients and documents available for LEP populations. RSVP 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

RSVP will translate any vital documents into any language, if required. Including:

- ◆ Civil Rights Complaint Form
- ◆ ADA Eligibility Applications
- ◆ ADA Service Overview Booklet
- ◆ Notification of free language services
- ◆ Service Complaint Forms