U.S. Department of Justice
Civil Rights Division

Your Rights Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

"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."



U.S. Department of Justice
Civil Rights Division
Washington, D.C. 20530

"Simple justice requires that public funds, to which all taxpayers of all races contribute, not be spent in any fashion which encourages, entrenches, subsidizes, or results in racial discrimination."

(President John F. Kennedy, in his message calling for the enactment of Title VI, 1963).

What is Title VI?

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 is the Federal law that protects individuals from discrimination on the basis of their race, color, or national origin in programs that receive Federal financial assistance.

What programs are covered by Title VI?

Approximately 30 Federal agencies provide Federal financial assistance in the form of funds, training, and technical and other assistance to State and local governments, and non-profit and private organizations. These recipients of Federal assistance, in turn, operate programs and deliver benefits and services to individuals (known as "beneficiaries") to achieve the goals of the Federal legislation that authorizes the programs.

Federally assisted programs address such broad and diverse areas as:

- elementary, secondary, and higher education
- health care, social services, and public welfare
- public transportation
- parks and recreation
- natural resources and the environment
- employment and job training
- housing and community development
- law enforcement and the administration of justice
- agriculture and nutrition

What discrimination is prohibited by Title VI?

There are many forms of illegal discrimination based on race, color, or national origin that can limit the opportunity of minorities to gain equal access to services and programs. Among other things, in operating a federally assisted program, a recipient cannot, on the basis of race, color, or national origin, either directly or through contractual means:

- Deny program services, aids, or benefits;
- Provide a different service, aid, or benefit, or provide them in a manner different than they are provided to others; or
- Segregate or separately treat individuals in any matter related to the receipt of any service, aid, or benefit.

How can I file a discrimination complaint?

Each Federal agency that provides Federal financial assistance is responsible for investigating complaints of discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in the use of its funds. If you believe that you or others protected by Title VI have been discriminated against, you may file a complaint with the Federal agency that provides funds for the program where you believe the discrimination is occurring.

A signed, written complaint should be filed with the appropriate Federal agency, generally within 180 days of the date of the alleged discrimination. It should describe:

- Your name, address, and telephone number. Your complaint must be signed. If you are filing on behalf of another person, include your name, address, telephone number, and your relation to that person (e.g., friend, attorney, parent, etc.)
- The name and address of the agency, institution, or department you believe discriminated against you.
- How, why, and when you believe you were discriminated against. Include as much background information as possible about the alleged acts of discrimination. Include names of individuals whom you allege discriminated against you, if you know them.
- The names of any persons, if known, that the investigating agency could contact for additional information to support or clarify your allegations.

What will the Federal agency do with my complaint?

Once a complaint is filed, it will be reviewed by the agency to determine whether it has jurisdiction to investigate the issues you have raised. Each agency's procedures are different, but an agency generally will investigate your allegations and attempt to resolve violations it has found. If negotiations to correct a violation are unsuccessful, enforcement proceedings may be instituted.

What is the Department of Justice's role?

The Department of Justice, under Executive Order 12250, coordinates the enforcement of Title VI and related statutes by all agencies that administer federally assisted programs.

If you cannot determine what Federal agency may have Title VI jurisdiction, or if you do not know where to send your complaint, you may send it to the Department of Justice. As the government-wide Title VI "clearinghouse," the Department of Justice will refer your complaint to the appropriate agency. The address is:

U.S. Department of Justice
Civil Rights Division
Coordination and Review Section-NWB
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20530
Title VI (1-888-848-5306)
(202) 307-2678 (TDD)

What if the recipient retaliates against me for asserting my rights or filing a complaint?

You should be aware that a recipient is prohibited from retaliating against you or any person because he or she opposed an unlawful policy or practice, or made charges, testified, or participated in any complaint action under Title VI. If you believe that you have been retaliated against, you should immediately contact the Federal agency with authority to investigate your complaint.