

Charleston County Government Title VI Complaint Procedures

Introduction

These procedures apply to complaints filed under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, relating to any program and/or activity administered by Charleston County or its sub-recipients, consultants, and/or contractors. Intimidation or retaliation of any kind is prohibited by law.

These procedures do not deny the right of the complainant to file formal complaints with other State or Federal agencies, or to seek private counsel for complaints alleging discrimination. These procedures are part of an administrative process that does not provide for remedies that include punitive damages or compensatory remuneration for the complainant.

Every effort will be made to obtain early resolution of complaints at the lowest possible level. The option of informal mediation meeting(s) between the affected parties and the investigator may be utilized for resolution, at any stage of the process. Charleston County will make every effort to pursue a resolution of the complaint. Initial interviews with the complainant and the respondent will include requests for informational regarding specific relief and settlement options.

Filing

Any person who believes that he or she or any specific class of persons has been subjected to discrimination or retaliation prohibited by Civil Rights authorities, based upon race, disability, sex, age/gender, religion, color, or national origin (Limited English Proficiency) may file a written complaint to Charleston County's Title VI Program Coordinator. A formal complaint must be filed within 180 calendar days of the alleged occurrence or when the alleged discrimination became known to the complainant. The complaint must meet the following requirements:

- Complaints must be in writing and signed by the complainant(s).
- Complaints must include the date of the alleged act(s) of discrimination (date when the complainant(s) became aware of the alleged discrimination; or the date on which the conduct was discontinued or the latest instance of the conduct).
- Complaint must present a detailed description of the issues, including names, job titles, and addresses of those individuals perceived as parties in the action complained against.
- Complaints forms can be accessed by visiting the Charleston County Government website at <https://www.charlestoncounty.org/title-vi-plan.php> .
- Once completed forms must be printed and mailed to: Amanda Ramage, Title VI Coordinator, Charleston County Government, 4045 Bridge View Drive, Suite B238, North Charleston, SC 29405

Receipt and Acceptance

Upon receipt of the complaint, the Title VI Program Coordinator will determine its jurisdiction, and need for additional information. The complaint will be forwarded to the Title VI Coordinator for a determination of acceptability. The Title VI Coordinator will notify the complainant, in writing, within five (5) calendar days of receipt of the complaint.

To be accepted, a complaint must meet the following criteria:

- a) The complaint must be filed within 180 calendar days of the alleged occurrence or when the alleged discrimination became known to the complainant.
- b) The allegation(s) must involve a covered basis such as race, color, or national origin.
- c) The allegation(s) must involve a program or activity that receives federal financial assistance.

Charleston County will assume responsibility for investigating complaints against any of its sub-recipients. Complaints in which Charleston County is named as the Respondent, shall be forwarded to SCDOT or the appropriate federal agency for proper disposition, in accordance with their procedures.

Dismissal

A complaint may be recommended for dismissal for the following reasons:

- a) The complainant requests withdrawal of the complaint.
- b) The complainant fails to respond to repeated requests for additional information needed to process the complaint.
- c) The complainant cannot be located after reasonable attempts to contact the complainant.

Investigation of Complaints

In cases where Charleston County assumes responsibility for investigations, Charleston County will provide the respondent with the opportunity to respond to the allegations in writing. The Title VI Coordinator will designate an investigative team responsible for evaluating the complaint, developing an investigative plan, conducting interviews, collecting, and analyzing evidence, and preparing an investigative report.

Charleston County's final investigative report will be submitted to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), or appropriate federal agency within 90 days of receipt of the complaint. FHWA will issue a final agency decision (FAD) and provide written notification of the decision to the complainant and respondent.

Appeals

If FHWA concludes that the respondent is in compliance, with laws/regulations and the complaint disagrees, the complainant may, if dissatisfied, file an action in the appropriate U.S. District Court.