**Pioneer Resources, Inc. Title VI**
**Plan Revised JUNE 2017**
**Plan Updated: February 2020**
**Plan Updated: July 2023**

## I. Plan Statement

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in programs and activities receiving Federal financial assistance. Specifically, Title VI provides that "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" (42 U.S.C. Section 2000d).

Pioneer Resources is committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from participation in, or denied the benefits of its transit services on the basis of race, color, or national origin, as protected by Title VI in Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Circular 4702.1B. This plan was developed to guide the Pioneer Resources in its administration and management of Title VI-related activities.

**Title VI Coordinator Contact information**

*Pioneer Resources, Inc.*
*Pioneer Resources Title VI Coordinator*
*1145 Wesley Ave, Muskegon, MI 49442*
*(231) 773-5355 ext. 1225*

## II. Title VI Dissemination

Title VI information posters shall be prominently and publicly displayed in Pioneer Resources' administrative office and transportation offices. There are three (3) transportation offices. These are located at 1700 S. Sheridan, Muskegon, MI, 49442, 560 Seminole Rd., Muskegon, MI 49441, and 12330 James Street, Holland, MI, 49424. The name of the Title VI coordinator is available on the Pioneer Resources website as well, at www.pioneerresources.org. Additional information relating to nondiscrimination obligation can be obtained from the Pioneer Resources Title VI Coordinator. The information will also be displayed on appropriately sized posters or cards inside vehicles operated by Pioneer Resources, Inc. for passenger transportation, as well as on brochures. (See Appendix G)

During new employee orientation, new employees shall be informed of the provisions of Title VI, and the Pioneer Resources expectations to perform their duties accordingly.

All employees shall be provided a copy of the Title VI Plan or access to the plan via an employee Intranet. Employees are required to sign that they have been provided access. (Appendix B)

## III. Subcontracts and Vendors

All subcontractors and vendors who receive payments from Pioneer Resources, Inc. where funding originates from federal assistance are subject to the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended. Written contracts shall contain non-discrimination language, either directly, or through the bid specification package, which becomes an associated component of the contract.

## IV. Record Keeping

Pioneer Resources will maintain permanent records, which include, but are not limited to, signed acknowledgements of receipt from the employees indicating the receipt of the of Pioneer Resources Title VI Plan, copies of Title VI complaints or lawsuits and related documentation, and records of correspondence to and from complainants, and Title VI investigations.

## V. Title VI Complaint Procedures

### How to file a Title VI Complaint?

A complainant may file a signed, written complaint up to 180 days from the date of the alleged discrimination. The complaint should include the following information:

- Name of individual filing the complaint, mailing address, and contact information (i.e., telephone number, email address, etc.)
- How, when, where and why the complainant believes he or she was discriminated against, including the location, names and contact information of any witnesses.
- Other information deemed significant.
- The Title VI Complaint Form (see Appendix C) may be used to submit the complaint information. The complaint may be filed in writing with Pioneer Resources at the following address:

  Pioneer Resources, Inc.
  Pioneer Resources Title VI Coordinator
  1145 Wesley Ave, Muskegon, MI 49442

  NOTE: Pioneer Resources encourages all complainants to certify all mail that is sent through the U.S. Postal Service and/or ensure that all written correspondence can be tracked easily. For complaints originally submitted by facsimile, an original, signed copy of the complaint must be mailed to the Title VI Coordinator as soon as possible, but no later than 180 days from the alleged date of discrimination.

**What happens to the complaint after it is submitted?**

All complaints alleging discrimination based on race, color or national origin in a service or benefit provided by Pioneer Resources will be directly addressed by Pioneer Resources. Pioneer Resources shall also provide appropriate assistance to complainants, including those persons with disabilities, or who are limited in their ability to communicate in English. Additionally, Pioneer Resources shall make every effort to address all complaints in an expeditious and thorough manner.

A letter acknowledging receipt of complaint will be mailed within seven days (Appendix D). Please note that in responding to any requests for additional information, a complainant's failure to provide the requested information may result in the administrative closure of the complaint.

**How will the complainant be notified of the outcome of the complaint?**

Pioneer Resources will send a final written response letter (see Appendix E or F) to the complainant. In the letter notifying complainant that the complaint is not substantiated (Appendix F), the complainant is also advised of his or her right to 1) appeal within seven calendar days of receipt of the final written decision from Pioneer Resources, and/or 2) file a complaint externally with the U.S. Department of Transportation and/or the FTA. Every effort will be made to respond to Title VI complaints within 60 working days of receipt of such complaints, if not sooner.

In addition to the complaint process described above, a complainant may file a Title VI complaint with the following offices:

Federal Transit Administration Office of Civil Rights
Attention: Title VI Program Coordinator
East Building, 5th Floor – TCR
1200 New Jersey Ave., SE
Washington, DC 20590

**List of investigations, complaints, or lawsuits filed since the time of the last submission of a Title VI Plan**

There have been no investigations, complaints or lawsuits filed this plan was last submitted in 2015.

## VI. Four Factor Analysis and Language Assistance Plan

Pioneer Resources has a language Assistance Plan based on the Four Factor Analysis that defines what action the agency will take when someone is identified with a limited English proficiency. Please see Attachment H.

## VII. Community Outreach and Public Participation Plan

As an agency receiving federal financial assistance, the agency has made the following community outreach efforts and continues to do so:

- Participation in Ottawa County Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan (Coordinated Plan).
- Participation in Muskegon County Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan (Coordinated Plan).
- Participation in development of Transit Improvement Plan (TIP).
- Serving on the Muskegon County Specialized Services Coordination Committee.
- Ottawa County Specialized Services Coordination Committee.
- Maintaining a Customer Complaint Process. Citizens may call our main office at (231)773-5355 to lodge a complaint or comment. All complaints/comments recorded on a complaint form and then distributed to the relevant supervisor who researches the complaint and responds back to the citizen.
- General Awareness and Surveys. Customer satisfaction surveys are completed on an annual or bi-annual basis. Customers may give opinions on service and other related issues.
- Michigan Department of Transportation annual application process which includes a public notice and a 30-day public comment period.

*2022 updates:*

- Advertised the availability of www.lakeshoreridelink.org via online news sources and television. This is a website attempting to improve mobility management in western Michigan and provide passenger access to information.
- Participated in strategic planning initiatives for transportation conducted by Community Mental Health Services of Muskegon County regarding transportation needs for persons with developmental disabilities.
- Provided information booths about transportation resources at: a) Latinos Working for the Future summer event, b) parent-teacher conferences for special education students, and c) transition conferences sponsored by the Muskegon Area Intermediate School District, and local health fairs.
- Had Pioneer Resources general informational brochure translated into Spanish.

**Outreach and Non-Elected Committees and Councils**

The Local Advisory Council is an important advisory council in the planning process for transportation. The LAC is chosen by the public transportation provider, Muskegon Area Transit System (MATS) in this area. Pioneer Resources, as a recipient, is not in a position to select or determine the composition of this group. Nevertheless, a membership breakdown of the current LAC is depicted below.

| Body | Caucasian | Latino | African American | Asian American | Native American |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| LAC | 99.5% | 0% | 0.5% | 0% | 0% |

The LAC also has a member who is a person with a disability. This member is employed by a disability advocacy organization which adds a voice for this important constituency.

Pioneer Resources will engage with the LAC as appropriate and encourage the appointing authority to include minority representation.

**Title VI Equity Analysis**

Pioneer Resources has no plans for construction of facilities at this time. However, should the organization plan to construct a vehicle storage facility, operation center, maintenance building or similar structure in the future, the agency will comply with the provisions outlined, including:

- Pioneer Resources will complete a Title VI equity analysis during the planning stage with regard to where a project is located or sited to ensure the location is selected without regard to race, color or national origin. Pioneer Resources shall engage in outreach to persons potentially impacted by the siting of facilities. The Title VI equity analysis must compare the equity impacts of the various siting alternatives, and the analysis must occur before eth selection of the preferred site.
- When evaluating locations of facilities, Pioneer Resources will give attention to other facilities with similar impacts in the area to determine if any cumulative adverse impacts might result. Analysis should be done at the Census tract or block group where appropriate to ensure that proper perspective is given to localized impacts.
- If Pioneer Resources determines that the location of the projects will result in a disparate impact on the basis of race, color or national origin, then the agency will only locate the project in that location if there is a substantial legitimate justification for locating the project there, and where there are no alternative locations that would have a less disparate impact on the basis of race, color or national origin. Pioneer Resources

will show how both tests are met; it is important to understand that in order to make this showing, Pioneer Resources must consider and analyze alternatives to determine whether those alternatives would have less of disparate impact on the basis of race, color, nor national origin, and then implement the least discriminatory alternative.

**Appendix A:**

**Employee Annual Education Form**

**Title VI Policy**

No person 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.

All employees of the Pioneer Resources are expected to consider, respect, and observe this policy in their daily work and duties. If a citizen approaches you with a question or complaint, direct him or her to the Pioneer Resources Title VI coordinator.

**Appendix B:**

**Acknowledgement of Receipt of Title VI Plan**

I hereby acknowledge the receipt of the Pioneer Resources Title VI Plan. I have read the plan and am committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from participation in, or denied the benefits of its transit services on the basis of race, color, or national origin, as protected by Title VI in Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Circular 4702.1B.

_____

Your signature

_____

Print your name

_____

Date

**Appendix C Title VI Complaint Form**

Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act requires that "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." If you feel you have been discriminated against in transit services, please provide the following information in order to assist us in processing your complaint and sent it to:

Please mail to:

Pioneer Resources, Inc.
Pioneer Resources Title VI Coordinator
1145 Wesley Ave, Muskegon, MI 49442

Please print clearly:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip Code: _____

Telephone Number: _____(home) _____(cell) _____(message)

Person discriminated against: _____

Address of person discriminated against: _____

City, State, Zip Code: _____

---

Please indicate why you believe the discrimination occurred:

_____race or color

_____national origin

_____income

_____other

What was the date of the alleged discrimination? _____ Where did the alleged discrimination take place? _____ Please describe the circumstances as you saw it: _____

Please list any and all witnesses' names and phone numbers:

What type of corrective action would you like to see taken?

Please attach any documents you have which support the allegation. Then date and sign this form and send to the Title VI Coordinator at:

Pioneer Resources, Inc.
Pioneer Resources Title VI Coordinator
1145 Wesley Ave, Muskegon, MI 49442

Your signature: _____

Print your name: _____ Date: _____

**Appendix D Letter Acknowledging Receipt of Complaint**

Today's Date

Ms. Jo Doe
1234 Main St.
Clarksville, Tennessee 37040

Dear Ms. Doe:

This letter is to acknowledge receipt of your complaint against the Pioneer Resources alleging _____ _____.

An investigation will begin shortly. If you have additional information you wish to convey or questions concerning this matter, please feel free to contact this office by telephoning (231)773-5355; or write to me at 1145 Wesley Ave, Muskegon, MI 49442.

Sincerely,

Pioneer Resources Title VI Coordinator

**Appendix E Letter Notifying Complainant that the Complaint Is Substantiated**

Today's Date

Ms. Jo Doe
1234 Main St.
Clarksville, Tennessee 37040

Dear Ms. Doe:

The matter referenced in your letter of _____ (date) against Pioneer Resources alleging Title VI violation has been investigated.

(An/Several) apparent violation(s) of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, including those mentioned in your letter (was/were) identified. Efforts are underway to correct these deficiencies.

Thank you for calling this important matter to our attention. You were extremely helpful during our review of the program. ***(If a hearing is requested, the following sentence may be appropriate.)*** You may be hearing from this office, or from federal authorities, if your services should be needed during the administrative hearing process.

Sincerely,

Pioneer Resources Title VI Coordinator

**Appendix F**
**Letter Notifying Complainant that the Complaint Is Not Substantiated**

Today's Date

Ms. Jo Doe
1234 Main St.
Clarksville, Tennessee 37040

Dear Ms. Doe:

The matter referenced in your complaint of _____ (date) against the Pioneer Resources alleging _____ has been investigated.

The results of the investigation did not indicate that the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, had in fact been violated. As you know, Title VI prohibits discrimination based on race, color, or national origin in any program receiving federal financial assistance.

Pioneer Resources has analyzed the materials and facts pertaining to your case for evidence of the agencies failure to comply with any of the civil rights laws. There was no evidence found that any of these laws have been violated.

I therefore advise you that your complaint has not been substantiated, and that I am closing this matter in our files.

You have the right to 1) appeal within seven calendar days of receipt of this final written decision from Pioneer Resources, and/or 2) file a complaint externally with the U.S. Department of Transportation and/or the Federal Transit Administration at

Federal Transit Administration Office of Civil Rights
Attention: Title VI Program Coordinator
East Building, 5th Floor - TCR
1200 New Jersey Ave., SE
Washington, DC 20590

Thank you for taking the time to contact us. If I can be of assistance to you in the future, do not hesitate to call me.

Sincerely,

Pioneer Resources Title VI Coordinator

**Appendix G**

**Samples of Narrative to be included in Posters at the Facilities**

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in programs and activities receiving Federal financial assistance. Specifically, Title VI provides that "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" (42 U.S.C. Section 2000d).

Pioneer Resources is committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from participation in, or denied the benefits of its transit services on the basis of race, color, or national origin, as protected by Title VI in Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Circular 4702.1B. **If you feel you are being denied participation in or being denied benefits of the transit services provided by Pioneer Resources, or for more information, you may contact our office at:**

Pioneer Resources

Attention: Title VI Coordinator
1145 Wesley Ave, Muskegon, MI 49442

231-773-5355

www.pioneerresources.org

**Appendix H Pioneer**

**Resources Language**

**Assistance Plan Four**

**Factor Analysis Revised**

**November 2013**

Pioneer Resources is a fifty-eight-year-old non-profit organization whose mission is "Opening doors of opportunity for individuals with disabilities." The agency provides a number of services within the community including; housing, transportation, a summer camp for children and adults with disabilities, and employment opportunities.

The transportation program is located in Muskegon and Ottawa Counties. Pioneer Resources has formed partnerships with numerous agencies to provide transportation services. Some of the agencies that are collaborating with Pioneer Resources to provide transportation services include:

Ottawa County

Ottawa County Community Mental Health-transportation for adults with disabilities to work and support services

Specialized Services-MDOT funding for transportation to work for individuals with disabilities

Muskegon County

Muskegon Area Intermediate School District - Head Start Program

Muskegon County HealthWest - transportation for adults with disabilities to work

Muskegon Area Intermediate School District-transportation for students with disabilities to community sites.

Pioneer Resources has completed the four-step analysis required for the Limited English Proficiency Plan. The results of this study and decisions on how to provide the most meaningful access to transportation to the individuals served through are outlined below. This plan was updated in November 2013.

**Step One: Determine the number of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely to be encountered by a program, activity, or service.**

Over 95% of the population served through Pioneer Resources transportation program, in relation to the state and federal funding received, are adults with disabilities. Since the agency does provide Head Start transportation that is contracted through the Muskegon Area Intermediate School District, and this program is governed by Department of Education regulations, it will not be factored into this current plan. The Head Start program regulations

require that Pioneer Resources provide assistance for students that may have LEP. The Head Start program is funded solely by MAISD.

*How LEP persons interact*: Pioneer Resources transportation for adults with disabilities is established through a referral based system where passengers begin the transportation program after receiving an assessment from the Community Mental Health System or other such agencies. If no agency is involved in the referral of a new passenger than a screening is done by Pioneer Resources. Since Pioneer Resources is not a public transit agency the general public is not typically utilizing the transportation system.

*Identification of LEP communities*: The service area for Pioneer Resources includes countywide coverage of both Muskegon and Ottawa County. According to the data from Census 2020, 3.5% of households in Muskegon County spoke a language other than English. In Ottawa County this percentage was 5.9%. In both counties, when English was not the native language, the other language was predominantly Spanish.

*Literacy Skills:* The percentage of individuals who spoke English "less than very well" was small at 2.3%.

*Whether LEP persons are underserved by the recipient due to language barriers:* This is a difficult analysis to perform. Most referrals for transportation come via a mental health authority. Community Mental Health reports that language rarely poses a barrier to someone being referred for transportation. When language barriers are encountered, this is handled prior to the referral to Pioneer Resources via the person-centered- planning process and CMH's access to translation services. Similarly, the Arc Muskegon, an advocacy organization for persons with disabilities was questioned concerning language as a barrier to services. The Arc reported that they do not receive complaints about language posing a barrier. When the issue did arise, it was dealt with by appropriate referrals.

**Factor two: The frequency with which LEP individuals come into contact with the programs, activities, and services.**

According to informal conversations with administrative staff such as phone support, dispatch, schedulers, and drivers, our staff report extremely limited contact with LEP persons. In 2009 two instances were reported where staff reported contact with someone who was unable to communicate with them in English. In both of the instances the passengers were utilizing Spanish as their primary language. In updating this plan, no additional instances were identified.

Staff continue to report that there is a high frequency of individuals who have difficulty communicating due to a disability. Instances of a language barrier included individuals with speech impairments, use of sign language, or the inability to speak as a result of more severe disabilities. In the case of deaf and hard of hearing obstacles, Pioneer Resources has access to

sign language interpreters through Michigan Rehabilitation Services, as well as a range of staff with varying degrees of proficiency in sign language.

**Factor three: The importance to LEP person of programs, activities and services.**

Pioneer Resources provides vital transportation services to the individuals served. The most frequent destinations for the transportation program are work centers, community based skill building centers, and day programs and clinics. Transportation is also provided through Pioneer Resource's Leisure and Recreational Program (LARC) and Summer Camp. Transportation and access to such sites contributed significantly to the quality of life for persons with disabilities and senior citizens. Without transportation the number of individuals having to reside in more restrictive settings and not in the community would skyrocket.

**Factor four: The resources available to the recipient and costs.**

Passengers who are referred to the transportation program through the Muskegon Co. or Ottawa Co. Community Mental Health are required to participate in Person Centered Planning (PCP). The PCP process uses an interdisciplinary approach with Social Workers, Psychologists, Support Staff, Caregivers and the individual all coming together to discuss a specific plan for supportive services. This process determines if an individual needs any assistance in areas such as language, mobility, psychological services, or any other areas that might impact their activities of daily living.

If it is determined that a person needs assistance during transportation then that information is shared with Pioneer Resources. Examples of assistance might include transfers on and off the vehicle, or behavior plans for challenging behaviors. Pioneer Resources has not had PCP referrals due to LEP limiting access to transportation. Numerous referrals were provided to the agency for the other language needs such as utilizing sign language, language charts for non-verbal participants, or augmentative technology for communication such as talking computers. The drivers are then trained on those needs so that they can provide functional communication with the passenger.

Both the Ottawa County and the Muskegon County Community Mental Health programs are required to provide interpreter services as needed for all of their participants. Since Pioneer Resource is contracted to provide transportation services to CMH participants those interpreter services can be utilized by this agency as well. The Community Mental Health boards with which Pioneer Resources contracts utilize the services of either Cyracom or Voices for Health (www.cyracom.com or www.voicesforhealth.com)

It should be noted that in the past these services have not been needed due to the limited contact of LEP persons in the transportation program, although there have been a small number of passengers who are LEP adults accessing transportation. If an LEP person is identified through the initial referral process then an appropriate interpreter is determined to

assist with communication. With the two passengers that were identified by staff as having LEP in the interpreter was a family member with English proficiency.

The cost associated with providing the services above is minimal to non-existent. As part of the mental health network, Pioneer Resources has access to interpreting services via the mental health authorities referenced above. If material must be translated into Spanish, Pioneer Resources has access to reliable, affordable translation services through local colleges. Since each individual is already screened for barriers that might include LEP, when a need such as LEP is identified, staffs are trained to utilize the appropriate techniques that are identified during the referral process to assist with communication. No additional costs are incurred due to the fact that those processes are built into the transit system.

**Language Assistance Plan**

As noted above, Pioneer Resources provides personalized transportation services for the individuals served. All of the transportation provided is on-demand or routed with door to door service. The agency is committed to making sure access to transportation is assured, and that language barriers such as LEP do not limit transportation.

Pioneer Resources does not feel that a formal LEP plan is needed at this time. Some of the reasons an LEP plan are not needed include:

- Extremely limited number of individuals with LEP served.
- A referral process that includes a screening of each passenger for special needs such as LEP.
- A current training program for staff on communication techniques for specific passengers.
- Identification of an appropriate interpreter for a passenger that is determined as having LEP.
- Support at no cost from Community Mental Health boards that make interpreter services available if needed.

Pioneer Resources will continue to provide the safe and supportive transportation services for our community. If needs change, and or LEP passengers levels increase, the plan will be re-assessed.

Any questions or comments regarding this analysis of a Limited English Proficiency Plan for passengers in Pioneer Resources transportation service should be directed to:

Pioneer Resources, Inc.
Director of Business
1145 Wesley Ave, Muskegon, MI 49442
231-773-8060, extension 1113