

TITLE VI COMPLAINT PROCESS

1. **Statement of 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 otherwise subjected to discrimination under any Woods Hole, Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket Steamship Authority program or activity, as provided by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and as amended, and the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 (P.L. 100.259). Woods Hole, Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket Steamship Authority operates its programs without regard to race, color, or national origin.
2. **Notices:** Notices of Title VI rights are posted on the Policies, Forms and Information page of the Authority's website at www.steamshipauthority.com/about/forms and the Reservation and Community Relations Office, and at the Administration Office.
3. **How to file a Complaint:** Any person or entity may make a complaint for discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin, by submitting a complaint within 180 days of the alleged discriminatory act as follows:

- a. All complaints must be in writing.
- b. A complaint may be made on the Authority's Title VI Complaint Form or by email or letter with the following information:

Woods Hole, Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket Steamship Authority
Attention: Title VI Complaint Officer
228 Palmer Avenue
Falmouth, MA 02540

1. If submitting a complaint by letter, and not using the Authority's form, all complaints must include:
 - I. Name, address, and telephone number of complaining party;
 - II. Name, address of the person, agency, institute, or office alleged to have engaged in a discriminatory act;
 - III. A description on how, why and when the discrimination occurred, including as much background as possible about the allegations; and
2. A copy of the Authority's Title VI Complaint Form may be obtained as follows:
 - I. Website at www.steamshipauthority.com-title-vi-complaint_form
 - II. Email request for a form to titlevi@steamshipauthority.com.
 - III. Call: (508) 548-5011 and ask for the Title VI Complaint Officer who will email or mail you a copy of the Form.
- c. A Title VI complaint may also be filed with an external entity such as the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), other federal or state agency, or a federal or state court. Information on how to file a complaint with the FTA may be found at: www.transit.dot.gov/regulations-and-guidance/civil-rights-

[ada/file-complaint-fta](#). Should a complaint be filed with the Authority and an external entity simultaneously, the external complaint will supersede the Authority complaint and the Authority's complaint procedures will be suspended pending the external entity's findings.

4. **How Woods Hole, Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket Steamship Authority Will Respond to Complaints:**

Once a Title VI Complaint is received by the Authority, the Title VI Complaint Officer will review the complaint and within fifteen (15) working days, send a letter to the complainant acknowledging their complaint and either commencing an investigation or closing the matter.

The Authority will investigate any written Title VI complaint filed within 180 days of the alleged discriminatory act alleging discrimination because of race, color, or national origin. The Authority will make every effort to investigate a complaint within sixty (60) days. If a complaint is not brought within this time frame or does not allege discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin, The Authority will advise the complaining party that the Authority will close the complaint.

In investigating or attempting to resolve the complaint, the Title VI Complaint Officer may contact the complainant for a meeting, interview or additional information. Please note that a complainant's failure to provide the requested information or participate in a meeting or interview (or failure to provide contact information) will result in the administrative closure of the complaint. The complainant has ten (10) business days from the date of any request by the Title VI Complaint Officer to provide the requested information or to participate in the investigation. If the requested information is not received within that time frame, the case will be closed.

After the investigation is completed, the Title VI Complaint Officer will issue a written report summarizing the investigation and will make findings and recommendations for corrective action, if any and as appropriate. Issuance of this report will also close the complaint and investigation.

Anyone wishing to appeal the findings, conclusions, or recommendations in the Title VI Complaint Officers' report may do so by submitting a letter explaining the complainant's position and requesting an independent review by the Authority's General Manager within fifteen (15) days of receipt of the report. The General Manager will issue a letter either confirming the Title VI Complaint Officer's findings or notifying the complainant of further investigation within thirty (30) business days of receipt of the appeal. The General Manager's review is final and binding.

5. **Complaint Records:** Records of all Title VI complaints and associated investigations are retained by the Authority Legal department subject to applicable retention policies and public disclosure requirements and/or exemptions.
6. **Non-Retaliation:** No person or entity will suffer retaliation or reprisal by the Authority as a result of filing a Title VI discrimination complaint or as a result of participating in an investigation of a complaint. Any person who believes that they have suffered retaliation as a result of making a Title VI complaint or participating in any such investigation may make a complaint in accord with this process.