



# Title VI Program Community Participation Plan



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**Introduction**

The Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (DHSMV) is a recipient of federal funds from various agencies including but not limited to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the U.S. Department of Transportation, Motor Carrier Safety Assistance Program (MCSAP) and the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA). All recipients of federal funding must comply with the requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and other nondiscrimination statutes, regulations and authorities.

DHSMV complies with all federal and state authorities requiring nondiscrimination, including but not limited to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 and Executive Order 12898 (Environmental Justice) and 13166 (Limited English Proficiency). The department does not and will not exclude from participation in; deny the benefits of; or subject anyone to discrimination based on race, color, national origin (including limited English proficiency), sex, age, disability or income. In addition, the department complies with the Florida Civil Rights Act and does not permit discrimination based on religion or family status in its programs, services or activities.

To ensure DHSMV’s compliance with federal guidelines, this community participation plan is being developed to promote public involvement in the agency’s planning and decision-making activities. This plan describes DHSMV’s proactive public outreach strategies and procedures.

Community participation is the process through which stakeholders’ concerns, desires, and values are incorporated into decision-making at DHSMV. Community participation refers to processes that enable stakeholders to directly affect and/or influence a decision-making process.

**Community Participation Process**

The purpose of the Community Participation Plan is to establish public participation policies and procedures for information dissemination and public input when contracting or expanding motor vehicle registration/driver license related services carried out by DHSMV and their agents.

While the trend in recent years has been downsizing operations within DHSMV and outsourcing services from within DHSMV to various third-party vendors and the elected tax collectors, the number of service facilities actually available to the public have increased. DHSMV maintains responsibility for the administration of the motor vehicle registration and driver licensing

programs throughout the state. As such, it is beneficial to seek input from the public when developing plans to contract or expand motorist licensure/motor vehicle registration service that directly impact the residents of the state of Florida.

County Tax Collectors have long served as agents of the state for motor vehicle related services. During the 2010 legislative session, HB 5501 was passed which mandated that all driver license services be transitioned to the elected county tax collectors, no later than June 30, 2015. At this time, all driver license and motor vehicle services in counties with elected tax collectors, either directly, or through inter-local agreements between the counties, are responsible for driver license issuance. There are only two counties in Florida, Broward and Miami-Dade that do not have elected tax collectors and the department provides these services to the public. It should be noted that the current trend in Florida has been an expansion of motor vehicle registration/driver license services rather than a contraction of these services.

### **Goals and Objectives**

The Community Participation Plan intends to provide meaningful outreach and engagement opportunities for the public, including low-income, minority, and Limited English Proficiency (LEP) populations. In support of this process, the following goals have been established as the basis for public participation with DHSMV:

- ✓ **Involve stakeholders early and throughout the process** – Early engagement and regular communication with the community has a significant impact on the quality of the input and the communities buy-in to the proposed project, action or statutory change.
- ✓ **Increase the participation of under-represented populations** – DHSMV understands that the primary objective of the community participation process is to involve participants with a range of socioeconomic, ethnic, and cultural perspectives including those identified as being low-income, minority, or LEP populations.
- ✓ **Use public participation to improve outcomes** – DHSMV recognizes the importance of community participation as an input to successful decision making for projects, proposed policy and procedure changes and statutory changes.
- ✓ **Provide continuous public education** – Both to inform and engage the public in the short term, while maintaining a longer-term perspective to increase the public's capacity to understand the issues and restraints on DHSMV.
- ✓ **Make public participation accessible** – DHSMV seeks to address physical, geographical, linguistic, and cultural barriers to allow the full participation by all potentially affected members of the public in the motor vehicle registration and driver licensing process.

- ✓ **Make public participation relevant** – Public participation is most effective when geared to the specific concerns, interests, and values of affected communities and stakeholders.
- ✓ **Maintain and create new partnerships** – DHSMV has a long-standing commitment to being a valued partner with community-based organizations and other non-governmental organizations in building trust with the community and reaching low-income, minority, and LEP populations.
- ✓ **Function as a “living document”** – The Community Participation Plan intends to continue to evolve to meet the changing needs of communities.
- ✓ **Maximize input opportunities** – DHSMV seeks to maximize participation in the Community Participation Plan by using existing public participation techniques as well as seeking new methods and technologies to enhance these efforts.

### **Community Participation When Expansion or Contraction of Services Occur**

With the vast majority of retail licensure and motor vehicle registration services being handled by DHSMV’s agents, DHSMV will define a plan of how it will accomplish community participation when service levels change or offices are opened or closed.

In 65 of Florida’s 67 counties, licensure services are required by Florida Statute to be administered by the elected tax collectors in their respective counties. The tax collectors are responsible for motorist/motor vehicle services in all 67 counties. As a result, impacts involving service delivery or office closures and openings would impact only the localized or regional area and not have a statewide impact. Statewide impact would only occur from changes in state or federal law, from agency policy and procedure changes, system failures or outages or if there is a natural disaster.

It is of note that the majority, if not all, of our driver licensure/motor vehicle registration service agents have Community Participation outreach processes already in place. When the driver licensure/motor vehicle registration service agents have an existing Community Participation outreach approach, our agents will review their existing approach and will revise their existing approach to address any of the requirements not presently included.

## Phase I: Evaluation

- The driver license/motor vehicle registration service agents and/or DHSMV will assess the impact that the expansion or contraction of services will have on the surrounding area, counties, region or state.
  - If services are being reduced, are there alternative sources within the service area where the public can obtain the needed motor vehicle registration or driver license services?
  - Where offices are closing, review past service data to determine what geographical areas the customers were coming from.
- If there is material impact, i.e. having an adverse impact on the population affected by the change resulting from the expansion or contraction of services, the department will determine who will be impacted by the proposed change in service delivery and move to Phase II (see below).
- If there is no material impact resulting from the expansion or contraction of services, no additional action is required. This evaluation will be documented and maintained by the Division Coordinators, i.e. Bureau Chiefs, in the Division of Motorist Services. Once documented it will be sent to the Deputy Director of Motorist Services for approval.
- Consideration will be given to the demographics of those impacted looking at, but not limited to, socio-economic factors, LEP, race, color and national origin.

## Phase II: Outreach Efforts

- The driver license/motor vehicle registration service agents and/or DHSMV will implement public outreach techniques best suited to the target audience.
- Publicize the change for 60 days using methods to reach the greatest number of customers. This news should be communicated in an accessible and inclusive manner (including foreign language translations, if necessary) that promotes effective public participation and is free of linguistic, cultural, economic or historical barriers. (See the Publicizing Proposed Changes Section below.) When public meetings are conducted, ensure that reasonable time is provided for attendees to provide comments regarding the proposed change(s). See the Planning and Conducting Public Meetings Section outlined below.
- Within 60 days of the conclusion of the outreach effort, the driver license/motor vehicle registration service agents or division coordinators will review the comments and analyze the impacts to all customers, regardless of a customer's race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, income-level, or LEP, regarding their ability to access the facilities/services both prior to the proposed change and following the proposed

change. This analysis is required to be sufficiently detailed so that the ultimate conclusion as to how the proposed change will impact customers is well-documented.

- A summary report will be completed and posted on a publicly accessible site detailing all aspects of the outreach effort such as the comments received, how the comments were addressed, and information obtained through the outreach efforts. This report will be completed within 90 days following the conclusion of the outreach efforts.
- Adjust the change(s) as appropriate dependent upon the actual impact to customers.
- Submit a detailed written report to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA).
- Implement the change(s) as appropriate.
- Monitor customer communications for a period of six months for reactions to the change.
- Re-evaluate the actual impact to customers and be prepared to adjust the change as appropriate.

Note: Changes involving state owned facilities or equipment generally need a budget request submission and approval through the Florida Legislature prior to being able to implement the change.

## **Identification of Stakeholders**

Stakeholders are those who are either directly or indirectly affected by a plan, project or program based on decisions related to recommendations or implementation actions. Those who may be adversely affected or who may be denied benefits due to a contraction or expansion of motor vehicle registration/driver license services are of particular interest in the identification of specific stakeholders.

It should be noted that not all of DHSMV's stakeholders would be impacted by an expansion or contraction of services. The impact on stakeholder will differ from area to area when contraction or expansion occurs. Stakeholders for DHSMV include, but are not limited to:

- Residents of the state of Florida including minority, LEP, seniors and individuals with disabilities
- County Tax Collectors
- Third Party Administrators who have agreements with DHSMV to perform services
- Cities and municipalities throughout the state of Florida
- County governments throughout Florida
- Major employers
- Major hospitals and medical facilities including facilities for veterans
- Motor vehicle dealers

- Manufactured housing builders and dealerships
- Motor vehicle manufacturers
- Educational institutions including high schools that offer Driver's Education Licensing Assistance Programs (DELAP)
- Driver improvement course providers
- Florida Rider Training Programs (Motorcycle training classes)
- Commercial Driver License Schools
- Non-Profit and Business Communities
- Regional and municipal transit providers
- Commercial trucking companies
- Government and governmental organizations
- Various branches of the military
- County Property Appraisers
- Florida Department of Children and Families
- Florida Department of State
- Parking enforcement agencies
- Red light camera vendors
- Toll authorities
- Insurance companies
- Law enforcement agencies
- Clerk of Courts and the Court System as a whole
- State Attorney's
- Ignition Interlock Providers
- Electronic Lien, Electronic Temporary Registration, and Electronic Filing System Providers
- Requesting Parties who obtain data based upon a Memorandum of Understanding with DHSMV
- Other state and federal Agencies such as, but not limited to the Florida Department of Revenue, Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation, Federal Department of Transportation, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, Federal Highway Administration, Social Security Administration, American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, etc.
- American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators (AAMVA)
- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)

## **Publicizing Proposed Changes**

In order for any Public Participation Plan to work effectively, there should be methods in place to inform the general public and the affected stakeholders of the proposed changes. Some items to be considered, on a case by case situation, when advising the public of proposed changes are:

- Notices should be concise & engaging; incorporate images of people, vehicles and driver related items as much as possible.
- Consider using ethnic media outlets: community TV & radio, newspapers
- Where possible, consider posting notices at non-traditional locations: places of worship, ethnic stores, English as a second language classes, community based organization newsletters, home owners associations & neighborhood newsletters, etc., when DHSMV or their agents participate in events.
- Handout notices in issuance offices
- Gain public ownership by using phrases like: “We Need Your Opinions or Your Voice Matters.”
- If more than 1 meeting is on a notice, indicate if it is the same meeting in different locations or a series of meetings.
- Consider using customized mailings using county and city mailing lists.
- Consider using pictograms, photos, etc., as much as possible, limit text.
- Press releases should be considered to reach impacted residents
- Consider public service announcements
- Blast e-mails can be considered to target specific customer bases
- Notices on the FLDHSMV website
- Surveys may be utilized
- Telephone notices may be used on the automated system when customers call our Customer Service Center
- Direct mail to interested parties and organizations
- Consider paid advertising

## **Planning and Conducting Public Meetings**

There is a wide array of techniques which DHSMV will utilize to include public participation in their decision-making processes.

One example that we currently use is active participation in events and meetings held by our various stakeholders. Stakeholders, such as the Florida County Tax Collectors, have several meetings throughout the year to include meetings with coalition groups as well as their annual Florida Tax Collector’s Conference. By participating in the regularly scheduled meetings and



events of our stakeholders, we have the opportunity to solicit their input on our proposed policies, procedures, process changes, statutory changes, and facility and equipment changes that directly impact the stakeholder.

The following includes techniques currently used by DHSMV as well as methods used by other agencies throughout the country to ensure public participation. While all of these would probably never be used for a single expansion or contraction of services, the methods used should be selected based on who is impacted by the change in service level.

#### Public Meetings/Workshops

- Offer customized presentations to existing groups and organizations
- Co-host workshops with community groups, business associations, etc.
- Contract with community-based organizations in low-income and minority communities for targeted outreach
- Sponsor a forum or summit with partner agencies, with the media or other community organizations
- Encourage opportunities for public input directly to DHSMV

#### Techniques for Public Meetings/Workshops

- Open houses
- Facilitated discussions
- Question-and-answer sessions with DHSMV staff directly involved with the proposed changes
- Break-out sessions for smaller group discussions on multiple topics
- Interactive exercises
- Customized presentations
- Vary time of day for workshops (day/evening)
- Conduct meetings entirely in alternative languages (i.e. Spanish, Creole)
- Webcasts

#### Visualization Techniques

- Charts, illustrations, photographs
- Table-top displays and samples
- Web content and interactive games
- Electronic voting
- PowerPoint slide shows

#### Polls/Surveys

- For major planning efforts, conduct statistically valid telephone polls in English as well as additional languages
- Electronic surveys via the web

- Conduct interviews where people congregate, such as office waiting areas
- Printed surveys distributed at meetings, offices, etc.

#### Focus Groups

- Participants recruited randomly from telephone polls or surveys
- Participants recruited by interest area
- Participants recruited from stakeholder groups

#### Printed Materials

- User-friendly documents
- Post cards
- Charts, photographs, and other visual means of displaying information

#### Targeted Mailings/Flyers

- Work with community-based organizations to distribute flyers
- Mail to targeted database lists
- Distribute flyers to key community organizations
- Place notices in issuance offices and on Florida Licensing on Wheels (FLOW) units

#### Utilize Local Media

- News releases
- Purchase display ads
- Negotiate inserts into local printed media
- Visit minority media outlets to encourage use of DHSMV news releases
- Public Service Announcements on radio and TV
- Develop content for public access/cable television programming
- Civic journalism and nonprofit partnerships

#### Use of the Internet/Electronic Access to Information

- Website with updated content
- Use social media to reach a larger audience
- Audio-cast of past public meetings/workshops
- Electronic duplication of open house/workshop materials
- Interactive web with surveys, comment line
- Use the web to provide interaction among participants
- Access to planning data (such as charts, background on proposed changes, forecasts, census data, research reports)
- Provide information and details on upcoming public meetings in advance

#### Notify Public

- Blast e-mails

- Notice widely disseminated through new partnerships with community-based and interest organizations
- Newsletters
- Printed materials
- Electronic access to information
- Local Media
- Notices placed in issuance offices and on Florida Licensing on Wheels (FLOW) units
- DHSMV newsletters *Expressways* and *News Wheel*
- Submit articles for publication in community/corporate newsletters

#### Techniques for Involving Low Income Communities and Minority Populations

Assistance to community-based organizations to tailor meetings, customize presentation materials, provide incentives and support services to remove barriers that prohibit participation

- Flyers in issuance offices and on Florida Licensing on Wheels (FLOW) units
- Outreach in the community
- Personal interviews or use of audio recording devices to obtain oral comments
- Translate materials; have translators available at meetings as requested
- Include information on meeting notices on how to request translation assistance
- Robust use of “visualization” techniques, including graphics to illustrate trends, choices being debated, etc.
- Use of community and minority media outlets to announce participation opportunities

#### Techniques for Reporting on Impact of Public Comments

- Summarize key themes of public comments in staff reports within DHSMV
- Direct mail and email to participants from meetings, surveys, etc. to report final outcomes
- Newsletter articles
- Updated and interactive web content

#### Techniques for Involving Limited-English Proficient Populations

- Personal interviews or use of audio recording devices to obtain oral comments
- Translated documents and web content on key initiatives
- On-call translators for meetings
- Translated news releases and outreach to alternative language media, such as radio, television, newspapers and social media.
- Include information on meeting notices on how to request translation assistance
- Robust use of “visualization” techniques, including maps and graphics to illustrate trends, choices being debated, etc.
- Train staff to be alert to and anticipate the need of low-literacy participants in meetings, and workshops

### Other Outreach

- Information/comment tables or booths at community events and public gathering spaces
- Comment Cards/Take-One Cards on Florida Licensing on Wheels (FLOW) units
- DHSMV provides educational materials such as brochures, DVDs and/or presentations to schools, related to Driver License, Title/Registration, Buyer Beware and Dealer Licensing requirements.