

# Title VI E-Report



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## SETDD Title VI Training Held

Recently, the Southeast Tennessee Development District (SETDD) invited the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) Civil Rights Office to provide Title VI training to its transit and workforce development employees. Over seventy-five employees attended the training in Chattanooga.



The Southeast Tennessee Development District/Chattanooga Regional Council of Governments (SETDD/CARCOG) is a voluntary association of municipal and county governments located within the Southeast Tennessee region.

SETDD provides planning and development services including utility development, regional planning, housing development, tourism; and such programs as, the Small Business Resource, Lending Program, Workforce Development, and the Southeast Tennessee Area Agency on Aging and Disability.

Many of the attendees felt that the training was very informative and they were impressed by the knowledge and expertise of the Title VI Specialist, Kelsey Finch. The time and effort set aside in preparing for the specialized training was greatly appreciated.



### Title VI Non-discrimination Statement

It is the policy of the Tennessee Department of Transportation to ensure compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; 49 CFR, Part 21; related statutes and regulations to the end that no person shall be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Transportation on the grounds of race, color, sex, age, disability or national origin.

# STCREC Training Symposium

"Emerging Issues in Critical Times" was the theme of this year's Civil Rights Training Symposium that was cosponsored by the Federal Highway Administration Resource Center and the Southern Transportation Civil Rights Executive Council (STCREC).

Cammie Davenport Woodle, Executive Director of TDOT's Civil Rights Office and Chair of the STCREC, set the tone of the symposium during her opening remarks to over 150 practitioners. "The new mantra of transparency requires a fresh and sustained approach to the monitoring of federally funded projects and activities for civil rights compliance; the full utilization of small businesses; and the opportunity for real public participation," said Woodle.

The three day event was filled with workshops designed to promote sharing, deliver guidance, provide remedies and provoke discussions evolving around civil rights challenges faced in the transportation industry. The National Title VI Forum, "Public Funds for Public Benefits," was held on the second day of the symposium in recognition of the 45th anniversary of the passing of the Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

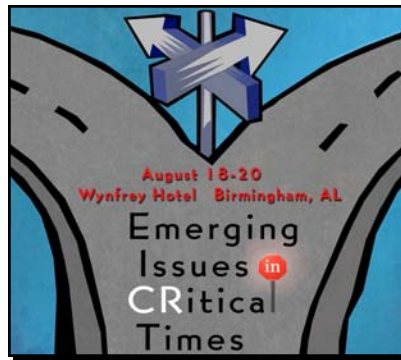
Mr. Allen Masuda, FHWA Associate Administrator for Civil Rights, served as the keynote speaker for the forum. Masuda delivered an ardent speech, encouraging listeners to implement programs that advance equal opportunity and nondiscrimination; to improve community outreach; and, focusing heavily on local programs, to develop programs that are inclusive and encourage public participation.

The workshops of the National Title VI Forum, although different in scope, all placed emphasizes on Title VI responsibilities, strengthening enforcement, and the fact that there would be more oversight and monitoring forthcoming.

One important point stressed was that because State Transportation Agencies (STAs) cannot investigate themselves, all complaints against STAs will be forwarded by FHWA to the Department of Justice's investigative division, a division that is staffed and poised to receive and investigate Title VI complaints. Other issues highlighted during the forum were the administration of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and the civil right obligations of, specifically, local program entities.

On the last night of the symposium all of the civil right superlatives were recognized in an awards ceremony. Most notable of the honorees were TDOT's Civil Rights Offices' Affirmative Action Program and SRS, Inc. The Affirmative Action Program was the recipient of *The Best Practice Award* for developing and implementing the Diversity Brown Bag Lunches. This initiative, an effort to recognize and embrace diversity, elicits TDOT employees from different countries of origin to give presentations on their native country's history, culture, etc. SRS, Inc. was recognized as *The Outstanding Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) of the Year*. SRS, Inc. is located in Gallatin, TN and was established in 2001. They became certified as a TDOT DBE in 2003.

In the end, the participants, who had come from all across the United States with a common interest and goal, packed up their binders and drove off wearily heading back to their workstations. But one could sense by their wide-eyed gazes that they had been reinvigorated and inspired by the speakers and moderators who had set them on a familiar course that was now equipped with more challenges.



# Title VI Staff receives Service Awards recognition

## Sylvia Odum—20 Year Service Award



Sylvia Odum

Ms. Sylvia Odum, Title VI Coordinator in the Civil Rights Office, was recognized this month for 20 years of dedicated service to the State of Tennessee. During her tenure with the state, Ms. Odum has served with Employment Security from February 1985 to August 1999 and the Tennessee Department of Transportation from August 1999 to present date.

As a member of the Civil Rights Office team, Ms. Odum is the Title VI Program Coordinator whose responsibilities include, and are not limited to, conducting onsite reviews of various TDOT's sub-recipients of federal aid, monitoring for Title VI compliance, maintaining community outreach and public participation, providing technical assistance to TDOT's sub-recipients and advice in Title

VI matters, attending public meetings, and coordinating Title VI training activities on all matters involving training. Additionally, Ms. Odum oversees Tennessee State University's National Summer Transportation Institute Program, a federally funded program designed to introduce high school students to careers in transportation.

Ms. Odum earned her Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration from Tennessee State University in June of 1971. She later went on to achieve a Master of Science in Public Management (May 2004) from Cumberland University in Lebanon, TN. Most recently, she began working towards a Masters of Public Administration from Tennessee State University. "When asked about her secret of longevity, she smiles and says, "I take it one day at a time."

## Kelsey Finch—10 Year Service Award

Kelsey Finch, Title VI Specialist in the Civil Rights office and 10 year veteran of the State of Tennessee, was recognized this month for his devoted service to the state. TDOT is where he began his career, and of course, he still remains dedicated to the agency and his position in the Civil Rights Office.

Finch received a Bachelor of Science in Busin-

ess Marketing from the University of Tennessee in 1980. He earned his Master of Education form Lincoln Memorial University in 2002.

Finch serves on 3 boards: Pellissippi State Community College Foundation, Knox Housing Partnership, and the Board of Trustees Mount Zion Baptist Church.

# DOJ Celebrates 45th Anniversary of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act

by Mann, Bonnie [Nation's Cities Weekly](#) • August 3, 2009 • Department of Justice

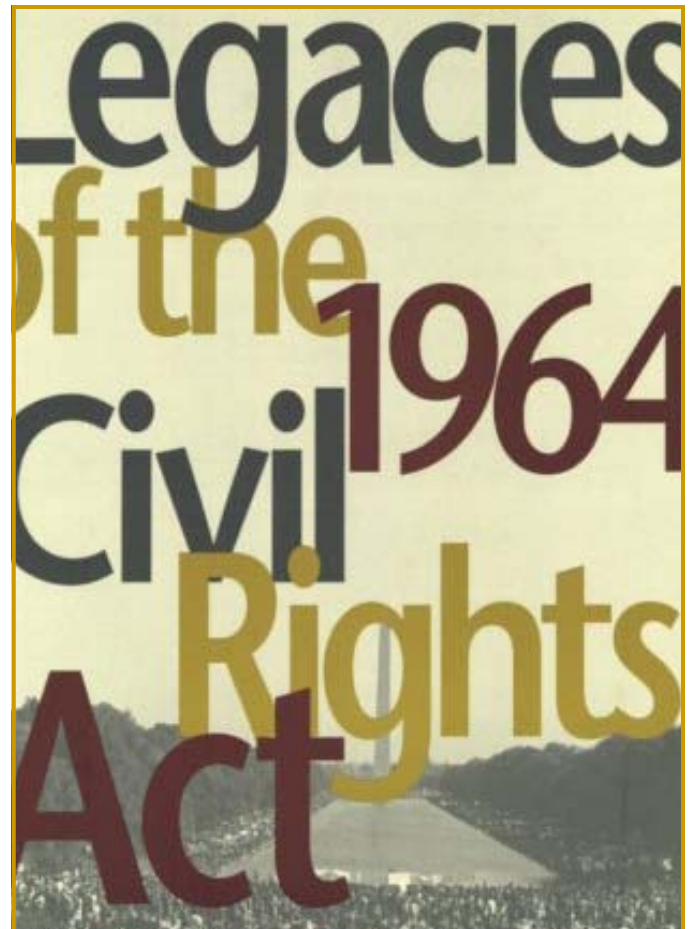
"Simple justice requires that public funds, to which all taxpayers of all races contribute, not be spent in any fashion which encourages, entrenches, subsidizes or results in racial discrimination," said President John F. Kennedy on June 11, 1963.

In the spirit of this ideal, the U.S. Department of Justice recently held a conference to celebrate the passage of the Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which was signed into law by President Lyndon Johnson on July 2, 1964. Title VI is part of the landmark legislation that prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color and national origin in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance.

The conference, with attendance of nearly 500 participants, offered an opportunity for representatives from federal agencies and the recipients of federal assistance, which included community advocates, state and local agencies, non-profit organizations, NLC and others committed to ensuring nondiscrimination, to learn from and share information with each other.

Loretta King, acting assistant attorney general, remarked that while the nation has made incredible progress since 1964, the enforcement of federal civil rights laws, including Title VI, continues to play a critical role in protecting and advancing a national commitment to equality.

She noted that the conference was only the beginning of an ongoing conversation between agencies and those in the community. She urged each agency of the federal government to focus on community outreach as it reviews and enhances its Title VI compliance program. Further, she stated the Department of Justice would exercise its clearance authority in a renewed effort to ensure the consistent and effective enforcement of Title VI.



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