AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT PLAN

Including policies regarding General ADA Requirements, Reasonable Modifications, No Shows, and a Suspension Appeals Process

for

Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley

Approved by:

Northern County Advisory Council

Date Approved:

August 16, 2023

ADA Contact Information

Mobility Manager 100 S Main Ave, Ste 101 Sidney, Ohio 45365 833.289.0227 rideconnect@cssmv-sidney.org

<u>Reasonable Modification Contact Information</u>

Clients Rights Officer

I. Introduction and Purpose

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) requires that individuals with disabilities receive the same level of service as non-disabled individuals. Services that are "separate but equal" are not acceptable. Section 504 prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

This ADA policy is written to establish operating and service guidelines and procedures for the implementation of the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the U.S. Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT) regulations for implementing ADA (49 CFR Parts 27, 37 and 38), and any applicable state laws and regulations. Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley operates a demand-response service and complies with ADA requirements with respect to such services.

ADA Policy Statement

It is the policy of Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley to comply with all the legal requirements of federal and state laws and regulations as they pertain to individuals with disabilities. If state laws and federal regulations are contradictory, the federal ADA regulations prevail. The transit system provides quality transportation services without discrimination to all persons including individuals with disabilities. Discrimination on the basis of disability against any person by transit system employees will not be condoned or tolerated.

Goals: Service is provided in a manner that meets the following goals:

- 1. Provides safe, accessible, and dignified services to all persons, including individuals with disabilities.
- 2. Expedites the safe and efficient boarding, securing, transporting, and alighting of all passengers, regardless of mobility status.
- Accommodates a wide range of mobility aids within the confines of available vehicles and commercial standard equipment.

Applicability: This policy applies to all transit system employees, services, facilities, and vehicles. It applies equally to all persons needing and/or using the services provided by the system.

Definitions:

Disability: With respect to an individual, a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of such individual; a record of such an impairment; or being regarded as having such an impairment.

Fixed Route Service: Operates along a prescribed route according to a fixed (regular) schedule.

Mobility Device: A device that is designed to assist an individual with disabilities with locomotion. Examples include wheelchairs, canes, crutches, and walkers. Also called mobility aid.

Securement Area or Station: A designated location for riders using wheelchairs, equipped with a securement system.

Securement Device, Equipment or System: Equipment used for securing wheelchairs against uncontrolled movement during transport.

Service Animal: Any guide dog, signal dog, or other animal that has been individually trained to work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability, including, but not limited to, guiding individuals with impaired vision, alerting individuals with impaired hearing to intruders or sounds, providing minimal protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, or fetching dropped items.

Wheelchair: A mobility aid belonging to any class of three- or more- wheeled devices, usable indoors, designed or modified for and used by individuals with mobility impairments, whether operated manually or powered.

II. General Guidance and Procedures for Implementing Policy

Recruitment and Employment

As stated in the transit system's personnel policies, the agency is an Equal Opportunity Employer (EOE) and fully complies with ADA in its recruitment, hiring, and continued employment practices.

Facility and Vehicle Accessibility

The transit system administrative facility, passenger facilities and vehicles shall meet or exceed the requirements of 49 CFR Parts 27, 37 and 38 and requirements of the State of Ohio. If state requirements do not meet federal requirements, the federal ADA regulations prevail. All vehicles purchased for fixed route and route deviation service will be accessible. Vehicles purchased for demand response service will only be non-accessible to the extent that the demand response system, when viewed in its entirety, provides the same level of service for individuals with disabilities as for individuals without disabilities. The transit system will conduct an analysis of service equivalency prior to the acquisition of any inaccessible vehicles for demand-responsive service.

Vehicle and Route Assignment – N/A Volunteer Program – trips are assigned according to driver availability

Maintenance of Accessible Features – N/A Volunteer Program – volunteers use their own vehicles

Inoperative Lifts and Ramps - N/A Volunteer Program - volunteers use their own vehicles

Wheelchair Accommodation - N/A Volunteer Program - volunteers use their own vehicles

Boarding

Drivers and scheduling practices will provide adequate time for a passenger with a disability to board and/or disembark the vehicle, which includes adjusting the schedule if necessary and waiting for passengers to be seated before moving the vehicle.

Wheelchair Securement - N/A Volunteer Program - volunteers use their own vehicles

Seat Belt Usage

When riding in a Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley vehicle, seat belts and shoulder harnesses:

☐ are recommended but not required for passengers riding in their secured wheelchair.

 \boxtimes are required for ALL passengers.

Driver Assistance - N/A Volunteer Program - curb to curb service

Use of Lift or Ramp by Individuals with Disabilities Not Using a Mobility Device – N/A Volunteer Program – Drivers use their own vehicles

Accommodation of Other Mobility Devices

Mobility devices that are not wheelchairs, but which are primarily designed to for use by individuals with mobility impairments, will be accommodated to the extent that the ADA-compliant lift or ramp and securement areas can safely do so. However, these devices are the responsibility of the individual passenger, and must be secured in a manner that does not interfere with the safe operation of the vehicles and the transport of other passengers.

Transfer to Fixed Seating – N/A Volunteer Program – volunteers use their own vehicles

Accommodation of Portable Oxygen

Individuals are allowed to travel with respirators and portable oxygen supplies on board, consistent with applicable U.S. DOT rules on the transportation of hazardous materials in 49 CFR Subtitle B, Chapter 1, Subchapter C.

Priority Seating

With the exception of the wheelchair securement stations, Catholic Social Services does not require any passenger to sit in designated seating.

Priority seating for seniors and individuals with disabilities is to be designated by permanent signage in each vehicle. In cases where an individual with a disability requests use of priority seating that is currently occupied by another passenger, the driver will ask that passenger to move so as to allow the individual with a disability use of the priority seating. In cases where a wheelchair user requires the use of a securement location, the driver will ask any passenger (including other passengers with disabilities) to vacate the securement location.

Service Animals

In compliance with 49 CFR Part 37, the transit system allows trained service animals to accompany passengers with disabilities. The driver will not ask for proof of the qualifications of the animal but may ask what tasks the animal has been trained to perform. Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley does not impose species or breed restrictions. However, any animal which is not under the passenger's control, or which becomes a direct threat to the health or safety of other passengers may be restricted from riding. Emotional support animals or "comfort animals" are not service animals within the context of the US DOT ADA regulations.

Alighting – N/A Volunteer Program

Staff Training

All drivers are trained to proficiency in use of accessibility equipment, the operating policies related to each of the service requirements described, and in properly and respectfully assisting and treating individuals with disabilities with sensitivity.

Rider Information

All printed informational materials are made available in accessible formats upon request, for example, large print for individuals with low vision or audio for blind individuals, as well as accessible electronic formats.

Personal Care Attendants

Under the ADA, an agency cannot require a passenger to have a personal care attendant (PCA). If a PCA accompanies a passenger, the PCA will ride free of charge. A family member or friend is not considered a PCA, unless that individual is acting in that capacity.

Stop Announcements – N/A Volunteer Program

Complaint Procedure

All complaints of discrimination on the basis of disability will be promptly and objectively investigated and forwarded to the Clients Rights Officer and promptly and objectively investigated. Complaints are also be submitted to the ODOT Civil Rights Office.

Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley will promptly communicate its response to the complaint allegations, including its reasons for the response, to the complainant. The response will be documented. Corrective or disciplinary action will be taken for behavior prohibited by this policy, up to and including termination of employment.

Documentation of each complaint will be kept on file for a minimum of one year, and a summary of all complaints will be kept for at least five years. This meets DOT regulations that require FTA grantees to maintain all complaints of noncompliance with 49 CFR Part 27 for one year, and a record of all such complaints, which is permitted to be in summary form, for five years.

Reasonable Modification Policy

The purpose of the reasonable modification policy is to ensure that Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley offers equal and effective opportunities and access to public transportation services for persons with disabilities and full compliance with the provisions of the Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

This policy applies to all safety-sensitive transportation vehicle operators including full, part time and those staff that may be required to operate the vehicle. For the purposes of this section, the term reasonable accommodation shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with the term "reasonable modifications" as set forth in the Americans with Disabilities Act Title II regulations at 28 CFR 35.130(b)(7), and not as it is defined or interpreted for the purposes of employment discrimination under Title I of the ADA (42 U.S.C. 12111–12112) and its implementing regulations at 29 CFR part 1630.

Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley is committed to providing equal access and opportunity to individuals with disabilities in all programs, services and activities. Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley recognizes that in order to have equally effective opportunities and benefits, individuals with disabilities may need reasonable modifications to policies and procedures. Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley will adhere to all applicable federal and state laws, regulations and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable modifications, as necessary, to afford equal access to programs for persons with disabilities. Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley does not discriminate on the basis of disability in admission to, participation in, or receipt of services and benefits under any transit program or activity. Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley will take appropriate steps to ensure that persons with disabilities have an equal opportunity to participate.

No individual with a disability shall, by reason of such disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, or activities of Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley, or be subject to discrimination by Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley.

A reasonable modification is a change or exception to a policy, practice, or procedure that allows persons with disabilities to have equal access to programs, services, and activities. Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley will make reasonable modifications to policies, practices, and procedures when necessary to ensure access to transit services for individuals with disabilities, unless:

- Making the accommodation would fundamentally alter the nature of the public transportation service.
- Making the accommodation would create a direct threat to the health or safety of other passengers.

- ♦ The individual with a disability is able to fully use Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley's service without the accommodation being made.
- Making the accommodation creates an undue financial burden on the transit system.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

An individual is eligible to be considered to receive a reasonable modification if that individual has:

- A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of such individual
- ♦ A record of such impairment
- ♦ Or has been regarded as having such impairment.

REQUESTS FOR REASONABLE MODIFICATION

Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley shall make information about how to contact Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley to make requests for reasonable modifications readily available to the public through its website, brochures, and other rider policy guidelines. Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley shall follow these procedures in taking requests:

- a. Individuals requesting modifications shall describe the modification to service needed in order to use the service.
- b. Individuals requesting modifications are not required to use the term "reasonable modification" when making a request. Personnel at Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley will determine if the request represents a reasonable modification and proceed in accommodating the request accordingly.
- c. Whenever feasible, Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley requests that individuals make such requests for modifications before Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley is expected to provide the modified service.
- d. Where a request for modification cannot practicably be made and determined in advance (e.g., because of a condition or barrier at the destination of a paratransit, demand response, or fixed route trip of which the individual with a disability was unaware until arriving), operating personnel shall make a determination of whether the modification should be provided at the time of the request. Operating personnel may consult with Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley's management before making a determination to grant or deny the request.

Requests for accommodation may be made either orally or in writing. The reasonable accommodation process begins as soon as the request for accommodation is made. The request can be submitted in any written format. Alternative means of filing a request, such as personal interviews, phone calls, or taped requests, will be made available for persons with disabilities if unable to communicate their request in writing or upon request.

INTERACTIVE PROCESS

When a request for accommodation is made, Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley and the individual requesting an accommodation must engage in a good faith interactive process to determine what, if any accommodation shall be provided. The individual and the Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley must communicate with each other about the request, the process for determining whether an accommodation will be provided, and the potential accommodations. Communication is a priority throughout the entire process.

TIME FRAME FOR PROCESSING REQUESTS TO PROVIDE REASONABLE MODIFICATION Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley will process requests for reasonable accommodation and then provide accommodations, where appropriate, in as short a time frame as reasonably possible. Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley recognizes, however, that the time necessary to process a request will depend on the nature of the accommodation(s) requested and whether it is necessary to obtain supporting information.

GRANTING A REASONABLE MODIFICATION REQUEST

As soon as Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley determines that a reasonable accommodation will be provided, that decision shall be immediately communicated to the individual. This notice must be in writing in order to maintain the required information for reporting purposes. Upon request, alternative means of response will be provided.

In choosing among alternatives for meeting nondiscrimination and accessibility requirements with respect to new, altered, or existing facilities, or designated or specified transportation services, Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley shall give priority to those methods that offer services, programs, and activities to qualified individuals with disabilities in the most integrated setting appropriate to the needs of individuals with disabilities.

DENIAL OF REASONABLE MODIFICATION REQUEST

As soon as Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley determines that a request for reasonable accommodation will be denied, Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley will communicate the basis for the decision in writing to the individual requesting the modification. The explanation for the denial will clearly state:

The specific reasons for the denial;

- ♦ Any alternative accommodation that may create the same access to transit services as requested by the individual; and
- ◆ The opportunity to file a complaint relative to the Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley's decision on the request.

COMPLAINT PROCESS

Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley has a process for investigating and tracking complaints from qualified individuals. These procedures shall be posted on the Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley's website and will be provided to any individual where the Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley has denied a request for accommodation. The process and any forms necessary to file a complaint are readily available from the web. Alternative means of filing complaints, such as personal interviews, phone calls, or taped requests, will be made available for persons with disabilities if unable to communicate their request in writing or upon request.

Any person who believes she or he has been discriminated against in obtaining a reasonable modification may file a complaint by completing and submitting a Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley's Reasonable Modification Complaint Form. Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley investigates complaints received no more than 30 days after receipt. Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley will process complaints that are complete. Once the complaint is received, the complainant will receive an acknowledgement of receipt. If more information is needed to resolve the complaint, Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley may contact the complainant. The complainant has 30 business days from the date of the letter to send requested information to Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley.

If Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley is not contacted by the complainant or does not receive the additional information within 30 business days, the Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley may administratively close the complaint. In addition, a complaint may be administratively closed if the complainant no longer wishes to pursue their case.

After Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley investigates the complaint, a decision will be rendered in writing to the complainant. Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley will issue either a Letter of Closure or Letter of Finding.

- Letter of Finding This letter will summarize the complaint, any interviews conducted regarding the complaint, and explains what actions will be taken by Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley to address the complaint.
- ◆ Letter of Closure This letter will explain why Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley has determined that the complaint does not merit

accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act and that the complaint will be closed.

If the complainant disagrees with the decision of Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley, an opportunity to appeal the decision may be pursued provided the complaint files notice of appeal within 21 days of the initial decision of Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley.

In the event of appeal, the complainant will be granted all due process, including the ability to be present additional evidence, present the case in person during an appeal hearing, and to be represented by counsel.

DESIGNATED EMPLOYEE

Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley shall designate one official within the organization responsible for processing reasonable modification requests and handling complaints. This individual is:

Clients Rights Officer Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley 100 S Main Ave, Ste 101 Sidney, Ohio 45365 833.289.0227

RECORD RETENTION

Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley will maintain all records related to reasonable modification requests and denials for at least three (3) years.

No Show Policy

This policy is intended to address the actions by habitual abusers of service scheduling and provide clear protocols for addressing passengers who fail to show for their scheduled trip without properly canceling the trip. This policy is intended to address those repeat offenders, and not the occasional incident that may occur with some passengers.

DEFINITIONS

No-show – Any passenger who is unavailable for pick-up of a scheduled trip that has not notified Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley to cancel that trip. Trips in which passengers will not be picked up due to circumstances related to service will not be considered a no-show.

No-Show Procedure

The transit operator will wait for passengers for 5 minutes beyond the early arrival pick-up time window. The transit operator will make reasonable attempts to locate the passenger. If the passenger cannot be located within the established 5 minutes, the transit operator must contact the Dispatcher with the no-show. Passengers who do not make themselves available within that window will be considered a no-show. The Dispatcher has the responsibility to determine if the transit operator is to continue without the passenger.

Upon permission to continue without the passenger, the transit operator is to record the arrival time, departure time, and vehicle mileage on the Daily Manifest.

Scheduled trips are to be cancelled at least one (1) hour prior to the time of the trip request. Any scheduled trip not cancelled within that window will be considered a no-show and will be logged as such. A no-show designation for a trip will be monitored to determine the habitual nature of no-shows associated with a passenger.

Exceptions may be made for passengers who are unduly delayed due to medical appointments or procedures and other circumstances beyond their control. The passenger will be required to contact Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley as soon as practicable following the missed trip and a new driver will be dispatched as soon as possible if applicable.

Habitual No-Show Procedure

Passengers who have no-shows equal to or greater than 25% of the scheduled trips in a thirty (30) day period will be provided a written warning. In order to be subject to a warning or suspension, a passenger must have booked a minimum of three (3) trips or more in a calendar month. Example: If a passenger books five (5) trips and no-shows 25% of the time, they will be in violation of the no-show policy and subject to the progressive corrective action plan.

A passenger will be subject to the progressive corrective action plan only if both the minimum number of trips booked and the minimum number of no-shows are reached during a calendar month. All suspension periods will begin on a Monday.

The length of a passenger's suspension will adhere to the progressive corrective action plan described as followed:

- First violation in a rolling 12-month period: Verbal Warning
- Second violation in a rolling 12-month period: Final Warning Letter
- Third violation in a rolling 12-month period: 7 days
- Fourth violation in a rolling 12-month period: 14 days
- Fifth violation in a rolling 12-month period: 21 days
- Sixth and subsequent violations in a rolling 12-month period: 30 days

All penalties imposed under this policy are first subject to an appeals process (see Suspension Appeals Process). Before any suspension, the potentially affected individual will receive written notice that transportation service will be suspended beginning fourteen (14) days from the date of notice. The individual will receive a copy of the appeals process that details passenger rights in this situation. The written notice of suspension will contain instructions and materials necessary to challenge or appeal the suspension decision.

Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley will continue to serve passengers appealing pending suspensions until all appeals have been settled. For passengers who do not choose to appeal, suspensions will commence on the date specified in the written notice.

Subscription/Standing Order reservations may be denied upon a second suspension in any consecutive 12-month period. Privileges may be reinstated without guarantee of the original subscription/standing order.

Suspension Appeals Process

A suspension may result from violations of passenger behavior rules, violation of the noshow policy, or for other inappropriate or disruptive behavior. Regardless of the reason for suspension, each passenger has a right to appeal the decision through an appeals process.

Appeals must be submitted in writing to Mobility Manager, by mail at 100 S Main Ave, Ste 101 Sidney, Ohio 45365, or by email at rideconnect@cssmv-sidney.org within 14 days of notification of suspension. All passengers will be permitted to continue using service during the appeals process. Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley management will inform all schedulers/dispatchers that the suspension is pending an appeal and to allow service to continue for the affected passenger.

An Appeals Committee will review all applicable information from Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley and the involved passenger. All passengers will be offered the opportunity to speak directly with Committee members and/or the Transit Manager regarding the submitted appeal and/or circumstances that led the suspension and subsequent appeal.

After a thorough review of all available information and testimony, the Appeals Committee will have 72 hours in which to issue a recommendation to sustain or reverse the suspension. The Committee recommendation will be forwarded to the Transit Manager for final review and implementation.

The Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley administration will have three (3) days to issue a final suspension decision in writing to the passenger involved. All final decisions will be implemented within seven (7) days of passenger notification.

All communications will be made available in alternate format upon request.

ADA/Title VI Complaint Form

Background

This form is used for both Title VI and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) complaints.

The Civil Rights of 1964 (Title VI) identifies the three classes protected by Title VI—race, color, and national origin—and allow the complainant to select one or more of those protected classes as the basis/bases for discrimination. If any of the Limited English Proficient (LEP) populations in our service area meet the Safe Harbor threshold, then the procedure will be provided in English and in any other language(s) spoken by LEP populations that meet the Safe Harbor Threshold.

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), provides protection that no individual with a disability shall on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any federally funded program, service, or activity.

Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley is committed to providing non-discriminatory service to ensure that no person is excluded from participation in, or denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination in the receipt of its services on the basis of race, color, or national origin as protected by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI) as well as providing protection that no individual with a disability shall on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination as stated in the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA).

If you feel that you have been discriminated against, please provide the following necessary information to facilitate the processing of your complaint. If assistance is required to complete the form, or if you have questions, please do not hesitate to call the ADA/Title VI Coordinator at 833.289.0227. Once completed, return a signed and dated copy to:

Mobility Manager 100 S Main Ave, Ste 101 Sidney, Ohio 45365

Note: The following information is necessary to assist us in processing your complaint. Should you require any assistance in completing this form, please call 833.289.0227.

Please check one of the following below:

	ADA Complaint or Title VI Complaint
Part I.	
Name:	
	
	
Email Address:	
Additional Forma	ts Needed:
☐ None	
☐ Large Print	☐ Audio Tape
☐ Other	
Part II.	
Are you filing this	complaint on your own behalf?
\square Yes – Proceed	to Part III
☐ No – Please pr	ovide the name of and your relationship with this person:
Name of I	ndividual:
Your Relat	cionship:
•	ny you have filed for a third party:
Confirm:	
\square I have obtaine	d permission of the aggrieved party to file this form on his or her behalf.
☐ I have not con	firmed permission to file this form on behalf of the aggrieved party.
Part III.	
I believe the discr	imination I experienced was based on:
☐ Race	
☐ Color	
☐ National Origin	า
\square My Disability	

Date of the alleged of	iscrimination:
against. Describe all	possible what happened and why you believe you were discriminated persons who were involved. Include the name and contact information of scriminated against you (if known) as well as names and contact itnesses.
Do at IV	
Part IV. Have you previously ☐ Yes ☐ No	filed an ADA and/or Title VI complaint with this agency?
Part V. Have you filed this coor State court? ☐ Yes ☐ No	omplaint with any other Federal, State, or local agency, or with any Federal
If yes, check all that a ☐ Federal Agency ☐ State Agency ☐ Local Agency	☐ Federal Court
was filed: Name: Title: Agency: Address:	ontact information for a person at the agency or court where the complain
Telephone:	

Part VI.	
Name of agency complaint is against:	
Contact person:	
Title:	
Telephone number:	
<u>Important Notice</u> : To protect your rights, your complair	nt must be filed within <u>180</u> days
following the date of the alleged discrimination. Failure	
dismissal of the complaint. You may attach any addition	
information that you think is relevant to your complain	t to this form.
Signature and date required below.	
Signature of Person Filing Complaint Dat	