

Title VI Program Policies

I. Purpose of the Policy

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Circular 4702.1 B, "Title VI Requirements and Guidelines for Federal Transit Administration Recipients" effective October 1, 2012) requires that all FTA recipients who operate 50 or more fixed route vehicles in peak service and serve a population of 200,000 or greater, evaluate any fare change or any major service change, during the planning and programming stages.

When planning fare changes or major services changes, the Central New York Regional Transportation Authority (CNYRTA) shall consider if any adverse effect would occur because of the change. CNYRTA shall consider the degree of adverse effects (if any), analyze those effects, and identify any mitigating factors that need to be considered because of the proposed fare change or major service change.

This document contains CNYRTA's definitions and related plans and procedures pertinent to the Major Service Change Policy, Fare Change Policy, Disparate Impact Policy, and Disproportionate Burden Policy.

II. Policy Statement

It is the policy of CNYRTA to solicit and consider public feedback prior to implementing major service changes and/or fare changes. In addition, CNYRTA's Title VI Program objectives are as follows:

- To ensure that transit services are equitably distributed without regard to race, color, or national origin.
- To ensure that the level and quality of transit services are sufficient to provide equal access and mobility for any person.
- To ensure that opportunities to participate in the transit planning and decision-making processes are provided to persons.
- To ensure that decisions on the location of transit services and facilities are made without regard to race, color, or national origin.
- To ensure that corrective and remedial action is taken to prevent discriminatory treatment.

III. Applicability & Participation Eligibility

These standards apply to all properties within the CNYRTA service area, as required by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and are consistent with criteria required by the FTA.

IV. Resources & Related Procedures

- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
- FTA circular 4702.1B Title VI Requirements and Guidelines for Federal Transit Administration dated October 1, 2012
- Centro's Language Accessibility Plan for Limited English Proficient Persons (June 2025)
- Centro's Public Participation Plan (June 2025)

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V. Definitions

- **Adverse Effect** refers to a geographical or time-based change in transit service which includes but is not limited to span of service changes, frequency changes, route segment elimination, re-routing, or route elimination. An adverse effect is measured by the changes between the existing and proposed service levels that are deemed significant.
- **American Community Survey (ACS)** is an ongoing statistical survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau to collect and provide annually updated information about the nation's population, demographics, housing, and social and economic characteristics. The ACS is conducted annually, providing continuous updates on population and housing characteristics. ACS 5-year estimates are produced by aggregating data over a five-year period, making them more reliable for smaller areas and are the preferred data source for minority and low-income demographic data.
- **Disparate Impact** refers to a facially neutral policy or practice that disproportionately affects members of a group identified by race, color, or national origin, where the recipient's policy or practice lacks a substantial legitimate justification and where there exists one or more alternatives that would serve the same legitimate objectives but with less disproportionate effect on the basis of race, color, or national origin.
- **Disproportionate Burden** refers to a neutral policy or practice that disproportionately affects low-income populations more than non-low-income populations. A finding of disproportionate burden requires the recipient to evaluate alternatives and mitigate burdens where practicable.
- **Fare Changes** are defined as either an increase or decrease in the price of any CNYRTA fare or fare product.
- **Low-Income Person** refers to an individual whose income is at or below 150 percent of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) poverty guidelines.
- **Low-Income Population** refers to any readily identifiable group of low-income persons who live in geographic proximity, and, if circumstances warrant, geographically dispersed/transient persons (such as migrant workers or Native Americans) who will be similarly affected by a proposed CNYRTA program, policy, or activity.
- **Major Service Changes** are defined as an increase or decrease in service on a fixed route that either changes the number of revenue hours operated on any individual route or combination of routes, by 25% or more; changes the number of revenue miles on any individual route or combination of routes, by 25% or more; or the implementation of a new transit route that provides at least 50% of its route miles without duplicating other routes.
- **Minority Person** refers to an individual who identifies as being part of any racial or ethnic groups aside from white, non-Hispanic.
- **Minority Population** refers to any readily identifiable group of minority persons who live in geographic proximity, and, if circumstances warrant, geographically dispersed/transient persons (such as migrant workers or Native Americans) who will be similarly affected by a proposed CNYRTA program, policy, or activity.
- **Service Area** refers to the geographic area in which CNYRTA is authorized by its charter to provide service to the public. As of March 31, 2025, the following counties are included in the CNYRTA service area: Cayuga, Cortland, Oneida, Onondaga, and Oswego.

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VI. Policy Detail

a. Major Service Change Policy

A Major Service Change is defined as an increase or decrease in service on a fixed route meeting at least one of the following criteria:

- 1) Changes the number of revenue hours operated on any individual route or combination of routes, by 25% or more.
- 2) Changes the number of revenue miles on any individual route or combination of routes, by 25% or more.
- 3) The implementation of a new transit route that provides at least 50% of its route miles without duplicating other routes.

Exceptions to these criteria include:

- School trippers
- Contracted service
- Seasonal service
- Route detours due to circumstances beyond CNYRTA'S control, including but not limited to road and/or lane closures, construction, emergency service roadblocks, fiscal crisis, civil demonstrations, lack of winter maintenance including plowing, salting, and sanding that may lead to unsafe driving conditions, or any other uncontrollable circumstance.
- Route detours due to natural disasters such as tornados, flooding, earthquakes, wildfires, or other natural disasters or human-caused catastrophic disasters that may force the suspension of transit service for public safety.
- When a segment of one route is moved to another route, but the revenue hours or miles do not change by 25%.

Temporary service changes (experimental, demonstration, or emergency service changes) may be operated for twelve months or less without a Title VI Service Equity Analysis being completed. If a temporary service change lasts longer than twelve months, then FTA considers the change permanent, and a service equity analysis must be completed if the service otherwise qualifies as a major service change.

All Major Service Changes will be subject to a service equity analysis to evaluate the effects of the service changes on minority and low-income populations. This includes an analysis of adverse effects relating to possible disparate impacts and disproportionate burden.

A public hearing is required for all Major Service Changes. For details regarding public participation practices related to Major Service Changes, refer to Centro's Public Participation Plan dated June 2025.

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b. Fare Change Policy

A fare change is defined as either an increase or decrease in the price of any CNYRTA fare or fare product.

Exceptions:

- “Spare the air days” or other instances when CNYRTA has declared that all passengers ride free to mitigate air pollution.
- Temporary fare reductions for service changes due to events outside of CNYRTA control. The reduction is used as a mitigating measure for altering the customer’s travel patterns.
- Promotional fare reductions lasting less than six months.

Promotional fare changes that last longer than six months are considered a permanent change by FTA, and a fare equity analysis must be completed.

All Fare Changes will be subject to a fare equity analysis to evaluate the effects of the fare change on minority and low-income populations. This includes an analysis of adverse effects relating to possible disparate impacts and disproportionate burden.

A public hearing is required for all Fare Changes. For details regarding public participation practices related to Fare Changes, refer to Centro’s Public Participation Plan dated June 2025.

c. Disparate Impact Policy

The purpose of this policy is to establish a threshold which identifies when adverse effects of a major service or any fare change are borne disproportionately by minority populations.

Centro defines a disparate impact as occurring when the absolute difference between the percentage of minority and non-minority persons affected is at least 30%. A minority person refers to an individual who identifies as being part of any racial or ethnic groups aside from white, non-Hispanic.

The threshold was determined by calculating 1.5 times the systemwide minority average from ACS 5-year 2019-2023 data (20.3%). For simplicity, the calculated value of 30.45% was standardized to 30%.

When a disparate impact is identified, Centro will consider modification of the proposal in order to avoid, minimize, or mitigate the impacts. This Disparate Impact Policy will be applied to all major service, and fare changes.

d. Disproportionate Burden Policy

The purpose of this policy is to establish a threshold which identifies when the adverse effects of a major service change or any fare change are borne disproportionately by low-income populations.

Centro defines a disproportionate burden as occurring when the absolute difference between the percentage of low-income and non-low-income persons affected is at least 34%. A low-income

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person refers to an individual whose household income is at or below 150 percent of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) poverty guidelines.

The threshold was determined by calculating 1.5 times the systemwide low-income average from ACS 5-year 2019-2023 data (22.6%). For simplicity, the calculated value of 33.90% was standardized to 34%.

U.S. Census Bureau ACS tables, including, but not limited to, Ratio of Income to Poverty in the last 12 months, will be used to determine low-income status for the general population. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Poverty Guidelines table will be used to determine low-income status based on ridership survey responses for number of persons in household and income.

When a disproportionate burden is identified, Centro will consider modification of the proposal to avoid, minimize, or mitigate the impacts. This Disproportionate Burden Policy will be applied to all major service and fare changes.