

Montgomery County Department of Transportation Recognized with Three National Association of Counties Awards



The Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) received three achievement [awards](#) for 2023 from the [National Association of Counties \(NACo\)](#) in the categories of Transportation, Community and Economic Development, and Personnel Management, Employment and Training.

[NACo Awards](#) are an annual recognition program that honors outstanding county government programs and services. The NACo Awards' committee has been sharing best practices between counties since 1970.

“The Montgomery County Department of Transportation continues to develop forward-thinking programs that prioritize equitable, climate-friendly transportation, strengthen our business partnerships, and champion our employees,” said MCDOT Director Chris Conklin. “I am pleased that NACo recognizes MCDOT as a national leader in solving some of the most critical issues facing local communities today.”

MCDOT received the following awards from NACo:

- **Dedicated Bus Lanes Project** – Transportation: The [University Boulevard dedicated bus lane project](#) added more than two miles of dedicated bus lanes along one of the area’s busiest and most congested corridors. The dedicated bus lanes will improve the daily commute for thousands of workers, students and residents along this corridor who depend on public transportation. The dedicated lane initiative is part of MCDOT’s Bus Priority Project, which aims to prioritize transportation options that are equitable and climate friendly.
- **Maximizing Underutilized Public Parking by Partnering with Long-Term Lease Customers** – Community and Economic Development: Changes in the economic landscape in the Bethesda Parking Lot District (PLD) resulted in underutilized parking facilities. MCDOT was able to enter into a long-term parking lease agreement that allowed the [Woodmont Corner Public Parking Garage 11](#) to be available during business hours for lease customers while remaining publicly available after business hours. The agreement has allowed the County to generate additional revenue while lowering development costs for businesses.
- **Problem Solving Committees** – Personnel Management, Employment, and Training: [MCDOT Transit Services'](#) high staff turnover, particularly among bus operators, was attributed to low morale in addition to wage disparities. To address this, Montgomery County Transit Services, along with the County's Innovation Team, established problem-solving committees. These committees aimed to decentralize decision-making and empower staff by giving them a voice in leadership choices. Each committee, facilitated by Depot and Central Communication Chiefs, focused on a specific challenge identified by staff consensus, such as policy changes, teamwork, communication, or employee recognition. Through these committees, staff were enabled to collectively address the challenges affecting their work environment.

Montgomery County earned a total [of 34 NACo Achievement Awards for 2023](#).

The list of all national winners can be seen at the [National Association of Counties NACo Achievement Award Winners](#) website.

Ride On Provides Cooling Buses at Transit Centers to Beat the Heat



On June 22nd and 23rd, Montgomery County's Ride On transit system demonstrated its commitment to rider comfort and safety by providing cooling buses at multiple transit centers. As temperatures soared, these air-conditioned buses offered a much-needed respite for commuters waiting in the sweltering heat.

The decision to deploy cooling buses was a proactive measure to ensure the well-being of passengers, particularly during the peak hours when the heat can be most oppressive. These buses were strategically placed at some of the busiest transit centers, allowing riders to escape the intense temperatures and wait for their connecting buses in a comfortable, climate-controlled environment. Ride On's initiative was met with widespread appreciation from the community. Commuters who would otherwise be subjected to the high temperatures expressed their gratitude for the cooling buses. The transit system's staff ensured that these buses were easily accessible, with clear signage directing passengers to the cooling zones.

This initiative is part of Ride On's broader commitment to enhancing rider experience and safety. By providing cooling buses, Ride On not only addressed immediate comfort needs but also underscored the importance of public health during extreme weather conditions. In addition to the cooling buses, Ride On has also made free water bottles available on buses during high temperatures, while supplies last.

As climate change continues to result in more frequent and intense heat waves, such measures are increasingly vital. The successful implementation of cooling buses and complimentary water bottles sets a positive precedent for future heat waves. It demonstrates Ride On's readiness to adapt and respond to the needs of its riders, ensuring that public transit remains a viable and safe option, even in challenging weather conditions.

Metro Fares Increased on June 30

Fare changes

 Metrorail \$2.25 - \$6.75 The current \$2 flat fare after 9:30 p.m. on weekdays and all day on weekends will be replaced by a distance-based fare ranging from \$2.25 to \$2.50.	 Metrobus \$2.25 (regular) \$4.80 (express)
	 Metro Access Up to \$4.50

Save money with reduced fares.
Pay half the applicable Metro fare if you use a Senior SmarTrip card, use a Reduced Fare SmarTrip Photo ID Card, or receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits and are enrolled in Metro Lift. For details, visit wmata.com/reducedfares or wmata.com/metrolift.



Metro fare increases went into effect systemwide on June 30, 2024. The slight changes will help keep fares in line with cost-of-living adjustments and allow Metro to maintain their current service levels. Metro's last general fare increase was in 2017. There are no planned cuts to rail, bus or MetroAccess services as part of the changes being introduced.

This year, most fares are increasing by 12.5%. This means that Metrobus fares will be \$2.25, express bus fares will be \$4.80, and Metrorail fares will range from \$2.25 to \$6.75 on weekdays depending on distance traveled. Metrorail fares during late night (after 9:30 p.m.) and weekend service will range from \$2.25 to \$2.50 depending on distance traveled.

The best way to find the new cost of a trip is to use the Trip Planner on wmata.com.

Metro has several reduced fare options to help customers save money.

A few reduced fare options with 50% off fares:

- Senior SmarTrip card[®] for those aged 65 years and older
- Metro Lift for those who receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits. To enroll in Metro Lift, visit wmata.com/metrolift. Enrollment is free and takes as little as five minutes!

Please visit wmata.com/reducedfares for more information on all the options.

Passengers can also use the Ride On Trip Planner app, available in both desktop and mobile versions, to plan their trips around the DC Metro area. The app allows passengers to plan trips via Ride On buses, Metrobuses, Metrorail, bikeshare and scooter, as well as transit providers in neighboring counties. To try the app, visit <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/dot-transit/trip-planner/>.

Join Us at the Montgomery County Agricultural Fair: A Fun-Filled Event for All! (August 9-17, 2024)



Get ready for some down-home fun at the 75th Annual Montgomery County Agricultural Fair! This exciting event takes place from August 9 - 17, 2024, and promises nine days of entertainment, education, and delicious food for the whole family.

There's something for everyone at the fair. Known as the best nine days of summer, this fair promises an exciting lineup of events and activities for all ages. Attendees can expect classic fair attractions such as thrilling rides, livestock shows, and delicious food vendors, along with unique experiences that highlight the county's rich agricultural heritage. The fair provides a wonderful opportunity for 4-H'ers to showcase their knowledge, skills, and products, fostering a sense of community and pride among participants and visitors alike.

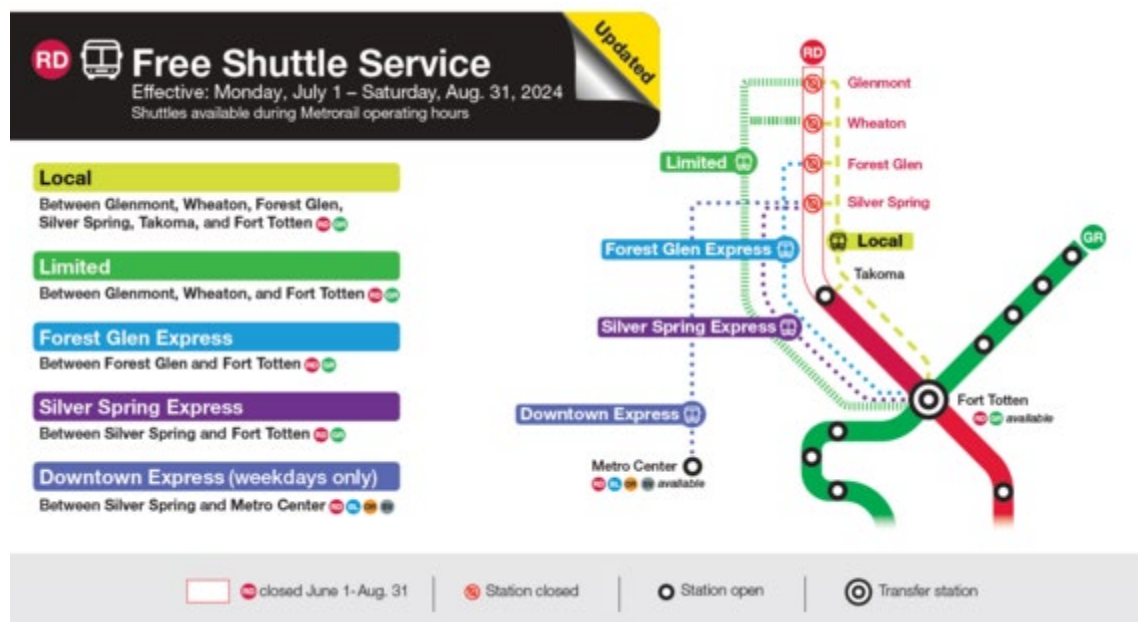
One of the highlights is the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) booth, which Ride On will share with Pedestrian Safety and the Flash bus. The booth, staffed daily from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., will offer visitors a chance to meet Ride On bus operators and learn more about the county's transit services. This includes the convenient and efficient Flash service and coming Great Seneca Ride On extRa service, which will ensure that a bus is only a few minutes away at any given bus stop, making travel within the county more accessible and stress-free.

Fair attendees visiting the MCDOT booth can look forward to a variety of giveaways and informative materials about the county's transportation services. This is an excellent opportunity to gain insights into the Ride On Trip Planner app, which helps plan trips efficiently, and to understand more about pedestrian safety measures being implemented

in the county. The booth aims to enhance public awareness and encourage safer, more informed commuting choices.

Overall, the Montgomery County Agricultural Fair is more than just an event; it's a cherished tradition that brings together the community for days filled with joy, learning, and connection. Whether you're there for the entertainment, the educational exhibits, or the transportation information, the fair offers something for everyone. Don't miss out on this annual celebration that perfectly blends fun and community spirit.

Metro Announces Improvements to Red Line Shuttle Service During Partial Summer Red Line Closure



Starting Monday, July 1, Metro adjusted its shuttle bus service to improve travel times and reduce bus congestion at the Silver Spring Transit Center (SSTC). Due to Purple Line construction, work continues at the SSTC through Saturday, Aug. 31. Metro Red Line stations at Glenmont, Wheaton, Forest Glen and Silver Spring are closed during the construction. Currently, the Red Line Limited 2 shuttle loop travels from Forest Glen to Silver Spring to Fort Totten and those travel times have taken longer than originally estimated. The Limited 2 service, as originally operated, was replaced by two new, more efficient express shuttle loops. The **Forest Glen Express** operates between Forest Glen and Fort Totten. The **Silver Spring Express** operates between Silver Spring and Fort Totten. The implementation of the new express loops allow shuttle operation and normal bus service to operate more efficiently, allowing customers to reach their destinations

faster. Metro has also updated the estimated travel times for all its routes as traffic and [Metropolitan Branch Trail Construction on Blair Road](#) made travel times longer than expected. Monday, July 1, to Saturday, Aug. 31

- **Local:** Local service approximately every 8-12 minutes between Glenmont, Wheaton, Forest Glen, Takoma and Fort Totten.
- **Limited:** Limited-stop service approximately every 8-12 minutes between Glenmont, Wheaton and Fort Totten.
- **Forest Glen Express:** Express service approximately every 8-12 minutes between Forest Glen and Fort Totten.
- **Silver Spring Express:** Express service approximately every 8–12 minutes between Silver Spring and Fort Totten.
- **Downtown Express (weekdays only):** Express service approximately every 8-12 minutes between Silver Spring and Metro Center (12th and G St., Northwest entrance).

Free local, limited-stop and express shuttles are available during Metrorail operating hours. During rush hours, customers may experience longer wait times and should add extra time to their commutes. For more information on the project visit wmata.com/majorconstruction.

A Ride On Guide to Montgomery County Splash Pads



Summer is here, and the weather is HOT! Keep cool this season and visit one of the county's many splash pads and interactive fountains! Let the kids run free through the jets or let out the kid in yourself and cool down in the fountains. Many of the splash pads are free to the public, making them a cheap and easy alternative to pool days.

- **[Rockville Town Square Splash Pad](#)**: Located in the center of Rockville Town Square, this splash pad is free and open to the public from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Saturday and 12-8 p.m. Sunday. Take Ride On Route [45](#) to Rockville Town Square to visit this splash pad.
- **[Silver Spring Interactive Fountain](#)**: This splash pad is also a work of art! Entitled "Silver Creek" by Deirdre Saunder, this Italian mosaic glass tile fountain is a 26' diameter installation that also acts as a free splash pad in the summer. The fountain is open for play from sunrise to dusk. To get to this downtown Silver Spring splash fountain, take Ride On routes [12](#), [13](#), [14](#), [15](#), [16](#), [17](#), [19](#), [20](#), or [28](#).
- **[South Germantown Splash Playground](#)**: The SplashPark is one of the most popular features of South Germantown Recreational Park. Kids will have an excellent time and stay cool playing in the one-of-a-kind 280-jet water maze, cave with a waterfall, water bucket drops, slide, and spraying animals. Admission is \$6.50 per person, ages two & up. Discounts for batch ticket purchases and family passes are also available. Take Ride On Route [98](#) to get to the SplashPark.
- **[SprayGround at Good Hope Neighborhood Recreation Center](#)**: This small spray ground area outside the Good Hope Recreation Center got a glow up over the winter and now has a new look and enhanced safety. This splash pad is free and open Monday - Friday: 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; Saturday: Noon-6 p.m. Ride On Route [39](#) has a stop just outside the Good Hope Neighborhood Recreation Center.
- **[Fair Hill Shopping Center](#)**: This Olney shopping center also has a free splash fountain to beat the heat in the summer months! The fountain is open on Saturdays and Sundays from 10:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. Take Ride On Route [52](#) to get to the Fair Hill Shopping Center.
- **[Maryvale Park Splash Pad](#)**: The Maryvale Park Splash Pad offers an opportunity to cool off from the summer heat. The splash pad is open daily from Saturday, May 25 until Monday, Sept. 2, 2024 (Labor Day), and features an interactive water spray and staff onsite during hours of operation. Open Daily from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Ride On routes [49](#) and [52](#) will get you close to this Rockville oasis.

Interview with Transit Advisory Group Member Evelyn Johns



How long have you been riding with Ride On and what year did you begin?

I started riding the Ride On buses in 2022 and have been using them frequently for 2 years.

Why did you start riding Ride On?

I am in high school and I cannot drive yet, so the only way for me to get around was through the buses. I also believe that public transit is important for combatting climate change.

What routes do you ride the most and for what reasons?

I ride routes 42, 47, and 29 the most because I use them to get from school to my internship at Glen Echo.

What do you like the most about riding with Ride On?

I am very grateful that Ride On is free for students and that there is a wide network of buses that can allow me to travel to places I wouldn't be able to go otherwise.

How do you view your role as a Ride On Transit Advisory Group (TAG) member?

I believe that my role as a TAG member is to advocate how Ride On can be more accessible and improved for everyone as well as offering the perspective and insight of a student/young person.

How likely are you to recommend Ride On to someone else?

Somewhat likely depending on the person and where they want to go. I would be very likely to recommend Ride On to a person who cannot drive or wants to be more environmentally conscious.

The Transit Advisory Group is actively recruiting new members! If you or someone you know is interested, especially those who are disabled, high school students or bilingual, please visit our TAG webpage [here](#) to apply to be a member. Your membership is free, and you will have a chance to make a difference within Montgomery County. Let your voice be heard!!

Shuttles to Serve Second Avenue for Duration of Detours Caused by Spring Street Bridge Rebuilding



Due to the closure and rebuilding of the Spring Street bridge in Silver Spring, Ride On routes [1](#), [5](#), [11](#), [18](#), and [28](#) have experienced detours beginning Friday, June 7, and lasting until January 2025. To assist those impacted by the bridge closure, a shuttle is serving Second Avenue, operating every 30 minutes in 2 shifts: midday (10:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.) and evening (7:30 p.m. - 11:30 p.m.).

Information about the detours for routes [1](#), [5](#), [11](#), [18](#), and [28](#) can be found below.

Route 1:



Stop 25848 & 25850 Alternate Routes:

- Ride On [Route 4](#) - serves these stops
- Metrobus [Q](#) & [Y](#) - nearby stops 2000204 & 2001247 on Georgia Avenue

Stop 25852 Alternate Routes:

- All bus and rail routes at [Silver Spring Transit Center](#)

Route 5:



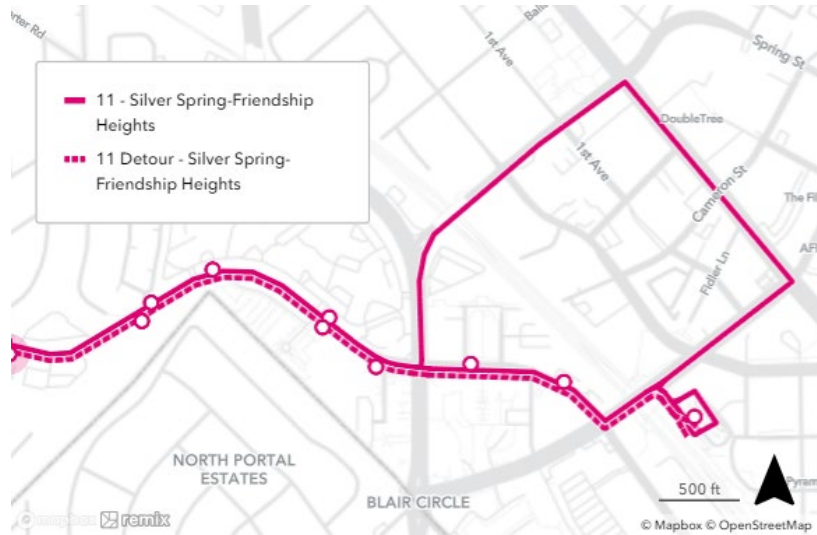
Stop 25848, 25850, 25816, 25817, and 14791 Alternate Routes:

- Ride On [Route 4](#) - serves these stops
- Metrobus [Q](#) & [Y](#) - nearby stops 2000204 & 2001247 on Georgia Avenue

Stop 25852 and 25814 Alternate Routes:

- All bus and rail routes at [Silver Spring Transit Center](#)

Route 11:



Note: Route 11 detour does not miss any regularly scheduled stops or make any additional stops along the detour route.

Route 18:



Stop 17213 & 17214 Alternate Routes

- Ride On [Route 4](#) - serves 2nd Avenue
- Metrobus [Q](#) & [Y](#) - nearby stops 2000204 & 2001247 on Georgia Avenue

Route 28:



Note: Route 28 detour does not miss any regularly scheduled stops or make any additional stops along the detour route.

Interview With Ride On Planning Specialist Andy Wexler



Tell us how long you have been with MCDOT and describe your experience working in transit.

I've been in my current position for about five months, but before that I interned for MCDOT in graduate school and spent nine years serving on the Silver Spring Transportation Management District Advisory Committee. I also worked for nearly seven years at Arlington Transit (ART) in Virginia, and more than two years managing employee transportation at the Pentagon.

Please describe the day-to-day activities pertaining to your work.

They vary widely from day to day. But the highlights include analyzing ridership data and producing reports, creating route side changes and detours, creating maps, responding to customer questions, reviewing proposed developments and master plans to see how they

will affect transit service, helping manage projects intended to improve transit service, and coordinating with partner agencies and consultants.

Please provide some examples of your role's direct impact on Ride On operations.

Currently I'm heavily involved with designing detours for bus routes affected by Purple Line construction.

What are the most challenging parts of your job?

As with most jobs, balancing tight deadlines and competing priorities is a constant. And it's hard knowing that we can't help everyone, and that sometimes our decisions can make things harder for some of our riders.

What do you enjoy most about working in transit? What keeps you motivated?

Many people who live or work in Montgomery County can't drive or prefer not to. I enjoy helping them get around safely and conveniently, and helping them reach as many destinations as possible without a car.

I've lived in Montgomery County for over 20 years and care deeply about my community. Seeing Ride On buses on the road everyday makes me feel proud and connected, both to my work and the community as a whole.

What inspired you to pursue a career in transit planning?

I've loved transit for most of my life. For a few years in middle school, I was fortunate to live within walking distance of a transit station. Being able to get myself around town gave me independence not available to many kids that age. Over time that experience grew into an interest in urban planning, and especially transportation.

Please share a memorable or rewarding experience you've had while working in transit.

Several years ago a friend told me about the complexity of his daily commute. Transit was already part of it, but I was able to suggest a more efficient and pleasant route for him. He tried it and was thrilled by how much time it saved him. I was glad that sharing my knowledge helped make things easier for him.

What advice would you give to someone interested in pursuing a career in transit?

Get involved! Learn about proposed plans and service changes, sign up for newsletters (not just this one!), attend public meetings and hearings, or join an advisory group. The number of ways to engage is endless. And read as much as you can about transportation – there's no better way to learn.

Of Note

Transit Advisory Group is Recruiting!

The Transit Advisory Group is actively recruiting new members! If you or someone you know is interested, especially those who are disabled, high school students or bilingual, please visit our TAG webpage [here](#) to apply to be a member. Your membership is free, and you will have a chance to make a difference within Montgomery County. Let your voice be heard!!

Connect With Ride On

Are you following Ride On's social media accounts yet? Ride On communicates and connects to our riders using [Instagram](#), [X](#), [Facebook](#), [YouTube](#), and [Threads](#). Our social media presence allows us to share exciting news and new programs as well as keep riders up to date on any detours, stop changes, or construction impacting our routes. On our Instagram account you can find interviews with riders and operators, featured trips to locations on Ride On routes, and regular service updates. Find us at @RideOnMCT on your favorite social media platform.

We also communicate with customers directly through our email and text subscription service. Subscribing to these alerts means you'll get the latest Ride On service and program information sent straight to your inbox. To subscribe, visit www.montgomerycountymd.gov/govdelivery, or text MONTGOMERY RIDEON to 468311 to receive text alerts.

VanGo & Bethesda Free Circulators and Free Shuttles

Did you know that Montgomery County has two free circulators? The VanGo Circulator, or Ride On [Route 28](#), makes traveling through Downtown Silver Spring easy and convenient. Buses run every 30 minutes and serve Silver Spring's art district as well as community and health centers, lodging, shopping, and transportation connections. Visit [here](#) for more details.

The Bethesda Circulator connects riders to 8 public parking garages, the Bethesda Metro Station and 20 convenient stops along the way that get you to and from your favorite Bethesda destination - all for free! Three circulators on route arrive at each stop every 10-15 minutes. Visit [here](#) for more details.

MCDOT also provides free shuttles to recreation centers, shopping, and medical appointments for some senior populations. Shuttles provide point to point service while circulators travel a specific route with multiple bus stops.

Discounts Offered for Downtown Silver Spring Businesses

Bus riders in downtown Silver Spring can take advantage of special discounts at various shops and eateries during the summer Metro Red Line shutdown. By simply presenting

their SmarTrip cards or the SmarTrip app, riders gain access to these exclusive offers. This discount program is a great way to explore and support the local community while benefiting from savings. For a detailed list of participating locations and the available deals, please visit <https://www.downtownsilverspring.com/smartrip-deals/>.

Transit Trivia!

Test your familiarity with Ride On's routes, services, and more with our transit trivia! The answer will be in next month's edition of our newsletter so make sure you tune in next month to see if you answered correctly!

Question:

What environmentally friendly initiative has Ride On committed to achieving by 2035?

1. Solar powered bus stops
2. Zero emissions fleet
3. Increasing routes
4. Hybrid buses

Last month's question:

Question:

What is the name of the Ride On tool that allows passengers to track bus arrivals in real time?

1. Ride On Track
2. Ride On Real Time
3. Ride On Trip Planner
4. Answers 2 and 3

Answer: (4) Answers 2 and 3

For the most up-to-date service information, riders should follow @RideOnMCT on [X](#), [Facebook](#), [YouTube](#), and [Instagram](#). In addition, information is available at RideOnBus.com, by subscribing to receive email alerts at www.montgomerycountymd.gov/govdelivery, or texting MONTGOMERY RIDEON to 468311 to receive text alerts.

For information on MCDOT programs and services visit montgomerycountymd.gov/mcdot, follow @MCDOTNow on [X](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) and [subscribe](#) to MCDOT's "Go Montgomery!" newsletter.

Title VI: Montgomery County assures that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, as provided by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Civil Rights Act of 1987, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity.