



PUBLIC NOTICE

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FCC SEEKING NOMINATIONS FOR THE SECOND ANNUAL CHAIRMAN'S AWARDS FOR ADVANCEMENT IN ACCESSIBILITY (CHAIRMAN'S AAA) Recognizing Innovations in the Field of Accessibility and Technology

NOTICE TO PUBLIC ABOUT FCC EXHIBITION ON ACCESSIBLE TECHNOLOGY

Washington, D.C. – On May 23, 2012, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC or Commission) announced that it will accept nominations for the Chairman's Awards for Advancement in Accessibility (Chairman's AAA) from May 31, 2012 through July 31, 2012 for products, services, technologies or practices introduced to the public between July 31, 2011 and July 31, 2012. The Chairman's AAA is an FCC project coordinated by the Commission's Accessibility and Innovation Initiative (A&I Initiative) that recognizes outstanding private and public sector ventures designed to advance accessibility for people with disabilities. These outstanding ventures include, for example, the development of individual mainstream or assistive technologies introduced into the marketplace, the development of standards, and the implementation of best practices that foster accessibility. The Chairman's AAA is designed to recognize the efforts of individuals, organizations, academics, companies and government agencies to make communication tools easier to use and more accessible to people with disabilities, and to encourage technological innovation and accessibility in communications-related areas. Nominations will be accepted in the following seven categories:

- Education: College/University
- Deaf-Blind Solutions
- Video Programming Device Solutions
- Geo-location Solutions
- Mobile Apps
- Consumer Empowerment Information
- Civic Participation Solutions

In conjunction with the Chairman's AAA, the FCC will display new accessible communications technologies in its Technology Experience Center (TEC) throughout October 2012. We invite all nominees and others who are interested in displaying their accessible innovations at the TEC to contact us at: ChairmansAAA@fcc.gov no later than August 1, 2012.

Description of Chairman's AAA Categories

Education: College/University – This category focuses on educational initiatives designed to teach students about universal design (designing for the broadest possible audience, regardless of disability) and how to incorporate accessibility into technology. Nominations will be accepted on model educational curricula focused on universal design or innovations designed by individuals or teams of students.

Deaf-Blind Solutions – The Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act of 2010 (CVAA), established a National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program, which will launch in the summer 2012, to distribute communications equipment to low-income individuals who are deaf-blind. This category will accept nominations on accessible and affordable communications technologies built to explicitly address the needs of the deaf-blind community.

Video Programming Device Solutions – The CVAA contains various new requirements for video programming devices to (1) pass through or render closed captions and video description;¹ and (2) make available emergency information that is accessible to people who are blind or visually impaired.² In addition, the CVAA adopted certain mandates pertaining to the accessibility (by people who are blind or visually impaired) of user interfaces, on-screen menus and navigational programming guides on video devices, along with requirements for a button, key, icon, or comparable mechanism designated for easily activating closed captioning and video description.³ Finally, the CVAA requires that interconnection mechanisms used with video devices be able to render closed captions.⁴ This AAA category seeks nominations on innovative solutions for these new capabilities.⁵

Geo-location Solutions – In July 2010, the FCC, White House and Department of Commerce convened a brainstorming session between technologists and advocates that identified the use of geo-data to advance travel accessibility as a pressing technological need of persons who are blind or visually impaired. This category invites solutions to meet this access need.

Mobile Apps – Mobile phone apps offer new ways of achieving accessibility that were not considered possible just a few years ago. Consumers are increasingly downloading apps for their news, entertainment, education and other daily purposes. This AAA category seeks nominations on innovative, affordable and accessible mobile apps for people with disabilities.

Consumer Empowerment Information – This category invites innovations to help consumers navigate technology choices and options, teach them how to operate and effectively use new technologies, and help expand the digital literacy of persons with disabilities.

¹ See Pub. L. No. 111-260, § 203 (a) (2010), 47 U.S.C. § 303(u).

² *Id.*

³ *Id.* at §§ 204, 205; 47 U.S.C. §§ 303(aa); (bb).

⁴ *Id.* at §203 (b); 47 U.S.C. §303(z).

⁵ On April 9, the Commission’s Video Programming Accessibility Advisory Committee (“VPAAC”) submitted a Report containing recommendations on how the Commission should implement these various device accessibility mandates. This VPAAC Report is available at <http://vpaac.wikispaces.com>. On April 24, 2012, the FCC released Public Notices seeking comments on this Report. See *Media Bureau and Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau Seek Comment on Second VPAAC Report: Video Description and Access to Emergency Information*, Public Notice, DA-12-636 (April 24, 2012) (seeking comment on the Report’s recommendations addressing the capability of video devices to provide video description and accessible emergency information); *Media Bureau and Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau Seek Comment on Second VPAAC Report: User Interfaces, and Video Programming Guides and Menus*, Public Notice, DA 12-635 (April 24, 2012) (seeking comment on the Report’s recommendations addressing the capability of video devices to provide accessible user interfaces, on-screen menus and navigational guides).

Civil Participation Solutions – This category seeks nominations on communications solutions to facilitate participation by people with disabilities as active members in civic affairs, such as volunteering and registering to vote.

The Chairman's AAA is open to any individual or entity in the public or private sector, or a combination thereof. The following considerations will assist in determining the winners and honorable mentions:

- Whether the nominated effort advancing accessibility was introduced between July 31, 2011 and July 31, 2012;
- Whether the innovation is unique and inventive;
- The disability needs addressed by the innovation;
- The number of people likely to benefit from the innovation;
- How affordable and available the innovation is for its intended users; and
- Whether recognition by the FCC Chairman is likely to foster additional innovation and accessibility.

FCC Chairman Julius Genachowski will recognize winners and honorable mentions at a ceremony held in October 2012 at the FCC's headquarters, Commission Meeting Room (TW-C305) at 445 12th Street, SW, Washington, DC, 20554 (closest metro: Smithsonian).⁶ October is the anniversary of the enactment of the CVAA and National Disability Employment Awareness Month. The ceremony also will be webcast at www.fcc.gov/live. The event will be followed by demonstrations of the winning technologies at the Commission's Technology Experience Center.

Nominations may be self-nominated or made by a third party. The nomination should include a brief description of the innovation, identification of the category of innovation, the date the innovation was introduced, and why the innovation qualifies for the Chairman's Award.

Please send all nominations to: ChairmansAAA@fcc.gov, between 12:01 AM May 31, 2012 and 11:59 PM July 31, 2012.

Reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities are available upon request. The request should include a detailed description of the accommodation needed and the requestor's contact information. Requests for accommodations should be made as soon as possible. To request an accommodation, send an email to fcc504@fcc.gov or call the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau at 202-418-0530 (voice), 202-418-0432 (TTY).

For questions or inquiries about the Chairman's AAA ceremony please contact Pam Gregory, Director, Accessibility and Innovation Initiative, (202) 418-2498 voice, (202) 418-1169 TTY, or (845) 474-0054 video, or E-mail, Pam.Gregory@fcc.gov or Kelly Jones, (202) 418-7078 voice, or E-mail, Kelly.Jones@fcc.gov. Inquiries may also be sent to ChairmansAAA@fcc.gov.

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⁶ A subsequent announcement will be made of the exact date and time of the Chairman's AAA ceremony.