

## **Program-Specific Recovery Act Plan for the FCC's Efforts on the Digital TV Transition (Education and Outreach)**

### **Program Purpose**

Under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA or Recovery Act) (P.L. 111-5), the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) of the Department of Commerce may use up to \$90 million for consumer education and outreach related to the transition from analog to digital television broadcasts, and may transfer this amount to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC or Commission) if deemed necessary and appropriate by the Secretary of Commerce, in order to aid a smooth transition to digital broadcasts by increasing awareness. Funded activities will include contracts to organizations for programs to educate groups most at risk for losing television service. Such groups include senior citizens, minority communities, people with disabilities, low-income individuals, and people living in tribal and rural areas. Program funds will also provide one-on-one assistance to vulnerable populations, including help with converter box installation.

### **Funding**

After sending the appropriate notification to Congress as required by the ARRA, NTIA transferred \$65,705,000 in funding to the FCC for education and outreach efforts to support the Digital-To-Analog Converter Box Program NTIA. In addition to funding the initiatives discussed below under Characteristics of Financial Awards (media buys, community walk-in assistance centers, in-home converter box assistance, and call center support services), the funds transferred from NTIA will be used for web site upgrades to improve the Commission's DTV website, printing DTV publications and for translating those publications to benefit non-English speaking communities, and for travel expenditures for Commission staff who are serving as the "boots on the ground". Staff members are providing local support and information to communities across the country, particularly in markets where there is a significant percentage of the population receiving television signals over-the-air.

### **Objectives**

The Commission's Strategic Plan identifies in its Media strategic goal the mandate to "facilitate the transition to digital modes of delivery." In keeping with this vision, the Commission developed the following objective for the program:

Conduct an outreach campaign to educate and inform consumers about the transition to digital television. The Commission will leverage its experiences with early transition efforts to

- partner with local, state, and tribal governments and community-based organizations for outreach and consumer assistance
- establish full-service walk-in help centers in local communities where consumers will receive answers to their transition questions, apply for converter box coupons, learn how to install and operate their converter box, and get assistance with respect to antenna and reception issues
- identify and train organizations that will provide in-home assistance services as trusted sources for consumers in communities throughout the country
- ensure the development and revision of timely consumer information based on consumer needs
- continue to provide Commission staff as “boots on the ground” for consumer education, action, and assistance.

### **Planned Activities**

1. The Commission is using a variety of contracting mechanisms to establish walk-in help centers and provide in-home installation assistance.
2. The Commission is continuing to support both in-house and outsourced call center resources, providing the flexibility to target resources toward higher call volume which are likely around the June 12, 2009 digital transition deadline as well as for those markets where station transitions will occur prior to June 12th.
3. The Commission is continuing to provide “boots-on-the-ground” – Commission staff members traveling to every area of the country to work with local organizations and provide live demonstrations on how to prepare for the transition.
4. Media outreach and distribution efforts are being conducted in order to achieve widespread coverage of the transition and what consumers need to do to prepare.
5. Printed educational materials are being developed, produced and distributed, including materials in languages other than English, regarding the new DTV transition date and coupon program information.
6. The Commission’s DTV.gov website is being upgraded to make it more consumer-friendly. Information technology tools are being developed for the website as well as for use by DTV call center representatives.
7. Engineering and technical support will be provided for post-transition modifications to broadcast station licenses.

### **Characteristics of Financial Awards**

The Commission will award contracts for several different types of services with funding from the Digital-to-Analog Converter Box Program:

**Media Buys:** Media outreach and distribution efforts are being conducted in order to achieve widespread coverage of the new DTV transition date. Earned media opportunities on print, television, and radio outlets will continue to be pursued in

order to maximize consumer exposure to information about the transition through multiple media outlets. Media outreach will also include purchase of advertisements in local, regional, and national print publications with heavily concentrated readership in the populations that are most at risk. In particular, funds would be used for development of art work and messages to publicize the availability of the walk-in centers, FCC call-in number, and other available assistance and for placement of such ads in newspapers and magazines, including ethnic media. Funding for ad placement would focus on maximizing public knowledge of the transition date and the assistance that is available and would focus on the top at-risk DMAs and Puerto Rico.

Community Walk-In Assistance Centers – The Commission is seeking proposals for community walk-in assistance centers to provide services to the public including demonstrations of digital-to-analog converter box installation and operation, distribution of DTV transition consumer literature, and on-line access for converter box coupon applications. The scope of the solicitations are for defined geographic areas throughout the country with a focus on providing assistance on areas with a demonstrated need for DTV preparedness. The solicitations request that proposals focus on providing assistance to low-income consumers, minority communities, non-English speaking consumers, senior citizens, consumers living in rural areas or on tribal lands, and consumers with disabilities. Awards will be made on a competitive basis first to responsible certified HUBZone small business concerns. Additional awards will be made on a competitive basis to responsible eligible small business concerns. If these contract awards do not meet the Commission’s needs across all geographic areas, additional awards will be made on a full and open competition basis.

In-Home Digital-to-Analog Converter Box Assistance – The Commission is seeking proposals for two types of in-home digital-to-analog converter box assistance. Basic analog-to-digital assistance will consist of installing the digital-to-analog converter box, providing a minimal level of assistance in connecting and orienting an existing, in-home antenna, and scanning for digital channels. Expert, complex in-home digital-to-analog converter box installation assistance will consist of installing every type of digital-to-analog converter box, making significant physical adjustments to antennas - including the possibility of suggesting the need for new antennas and mounting antennas in varied locations throughout the inside of a housing unit, scanning and rescanning to locate the maximum number of digital channels, integrating VCR’s, DVD players, and other multi-media equipment into the converter box installation, and helping identify and troubleshoot loss of signal issues not resolved by antenna and scanning adjustments. The scope of the solicitations are for defined geographic areas throughout the country with a focus on providing assistance on areas that are most in need of converter box installation assistance. The Commission is seeking proposals that focus on providing converter box installation to low-income consumers, minority communities, non-English speaking consumers, senior citizens, consumers living in rural areas or on tribal lands, and consumers with disabilities. The method for awarding these contracts will be cascading set-asides. Awards will be made on a competitive basis first to responsible certified HUBZone small business

concerns. Additional awards will be made on a competitive basis to responsible eligible small business concerns. If these contract awards do not meet the Commission's needs across all geographic areas, additional awards will be made on a full and open competition basis. Contractors will be reimbursed for installations based on a per unit installation price. The price will be a fully loaded rate and include all costs associated with support and overhead.

Call Center Support Services – The Commission is augmenting support of its Consumer Center operation of a DTV Hotline through its existing toll free number, 1-888-CALLFCC (1-888-225-5322). The contractor will provide and maintain turnkey service of trained telephone representatives, email services and telecom equipment and network services, including call processing equipment, and facilities and network services for responding to incoming English and Spanish calls regarding the transition to digital television. Offers are assessed against evaluation factors tailored for the solicitation with the award based on a best value continuum. The evaluation factors are technical capability, past performance, and price.

### **Major Program Milestones**

Week of March 23 – Release solicitations for basic in-home installations and call center assistance contracts.

Week of April 6 – Release solicitations for expert in-home installations, DTV walk-in help centers, and media services contracts.

Week of April 13 through early May – Award Contracts; Task media services vendor with audio and video production; Begin vendor live support of 1-888-CALLFCC.

Week of May 4 through mid-May – Vendors open Walk-In Centers and begin providing In-Home installation assistance.

May 21 – Conduct a series of Satellite Media Tours to coincide with broadcasters' national "soft test" simulating the termination of full-power analog broadcasting.

June 12, 2009 – Nationwide deadline for the end of full-power analog broadcasting.

June 30, 2009 – End of vendor support of 1-888-CALLFCC.

### **Environmental Review Compliance**

There are no environmental compliance issues involved in this program.

## **Performance Measures**

The following performance measures will be used to assess progress in the DTV Education and Outreach Program (types of measures shown in parentheses):

- Number of households unprepared for DTV (outcome)
  - Number of successful basic converter box installations (output)
  - Number of successful expert converter box installations (output)
- Number of persons provided with personal assistance and information to prepare them for the DTV transition (outcome)
  - Number of calls received by in-house and out-sourced call centers (output)
  - Number of visitors assisted at walk-in centers (output)
  - Number of DTV publications distributed (output)

Several different measures are used by the Commission to determine the level of consumer preparation throughout the nation, and to gauge which areas of the country have a greater need for assistance in preparing for the transition. The Nielsen Company publishes the results of DTV transition readiness surveys. The Commission examines data from NTIA regarding orders for digital-to-analog converter box coupons. The Commission also analyses FCC Call Center data to determine the subjects creating consumer concern as well as the areas generating the calls. Using this data, the Commission will direct resources to any problem areas. Based upon the Commission's experience in markets that have completed their digital transition early, it can be expected that despite the best efforts of the Commission and other parties affected by the transition, such as broadcasters, to inform the public, a small percentage of consumers will delay until analog broadcasts are terminated before they prepare for the digital transition.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

In response to Office of Management and Budget guidance for implementing the Recovery Act, the Commission's Senior Management Council (SMC) began the risk review and mitigation process at its February 24, 2009 meeting. A three-pronged approach to meeting risk review and mitigation requirements was proposed. This approach, adopted by the SMC at its March 12 meeting, called for:

1. Reviews:
  - a. Review OMB's risk framework
  - b. Review common government-wide accountability measures
  - c. Identify agency-specific risks
2. Prioritizing risk areas

### 3. Mitigating priority risks

At the March 12 SMC meeting, various reviews were conducted, risk areas prioritized, and mitigation activities determined. Mitigation activities are underway.

The Commission's Senior Management Council identified the following government-wide accountability requirements as common and reviewed these requirements:

- Government Performance and Results Act (Planning and Performance)
- Chief Financial Officers Act (Federal Accounting Standards Advisory Board)
- IG Act (Independent auditing)
- FISMA (Information Security)
- FMFIA (Financial Management)
- Government Auditing Standards (GSA's Yellow Book)
- Office of Management and Budget Circulars
  - A-50; Audit Follow-up
  - A-123; Internal Controls
  - A-127; Financial Systems
  - A-130; Management of Information Resources
  - A-134; Financial Accounting Principles
  - A-136; Financial Reporting Requirements
- Privacy Act

As required by OMB guidance, the Commission's Senior Management Council also reviewed whether there are any additional agency-specific risks. The following agency-specific risks were identified:

- Governance risks:
  - Plans need to be developed before action. Plans must have:
    - Clear assignments of responsibilities
    - Timelines for accomplishment
    - Meaningful performance measures
  - Regular tracking of performance
    - Need a system and executive agreement to routinely receive and utilize performance information so that performance information will be used in routine decision making and performance information will be the basis for ongoing modifications to the Recovery Act plans.
  - Independent monitoring
    - Should there be independent monitoring to assure meeting OMB's requirement for Recovery Act focused audits and investigation?
- Resource risks:
  - Will short-term deadlines for Recovery Act projects move staff, energy, and attention focus away from other ongoing improvement and compliance efforts?
  - Does the Commission have the staffing resources necessary to sustain intense levels of activity under the deadlines for the DTV transition?
- Inefficiency risks:

- Given the way in which the Recovery Act assigned responsibilities for the DTV program to NTIA and FCC, will the agencies be able to effectively coordinate their efforts to minimize or eliminate duplications of effort and/or confusion for the impacted industries and consumers?
- Will the compressed time frames of the Recovery Act cause activities to be undertaken and money to be spent in less than optimal ways?
- Compliance risks:
  - Contracting controls – does the Commission have the staff (both CO’s and COTRs) to carry out OMB requirements for:
    - Competitive awards
    - Timely awards
    - Timely expenditures
  - Financial controls – does the Commission have the staff to carry out OMB requirements for:
    - Minimizing cost overruns
    - Minimizing Improper payments

Combining the results from each of these reviews, the SMC prioritized its risk mitigation actions as shown below.

- Compliance risks:
  - Contracting controls – lack sufficient staff to implement
    - Identify hiring needs
    - Identify effective tactics for meeting needs in a timely manner
- Governance risks:
  - Get executive agreement to routinely receive and utilize performance information
  - Identify, develop, and implement a system that regularly puts performance information before key executives
  - Determine whether there should be independent monitoring to assure meeting OMB requirements for Recovery Act targeted audits and investigations
- Inefficiency risks:
  - Identify mechanisms to ensure full and open cooperation with NTIA to minimize or eliminate duplications of effort and/or confusion for the impacted industries and consumers

The chart on the next page identifies the mitigation activities, and the status of those activities, for each priority risk identified by the SMC:

<b>Risk to be Mitigated</b>	<b>Mitigation Activity</b>	<b>Status of Activity</b>
Identify contract hiring needs	Identify needs	Ongoing
Identify effective tactics for meeting contract hiring needs in a timely manner	Identify approaches and consult with senior executives, OPM, and OMB about implementation	Ongoing
Get executive agreement to routinely receive and utilize performance information	Inform and train executives about Recovery Act obligations	Discussed at Bureau Chief meetings, daily DTV planning meetings, multiple-time a week planning meetings, in collaborative preparation of required Recovery Act plans. Key staff members attended Recovery Act training on March 26
Identify, develop, and implement a system that regularly puts performance information before key executives	Developing a new performance tracking system to supplement existing financial and contracting reporting tools.	Ongoing
Determine whether there should be independent monitoring to assure meeting OMB requirements for Recovery Act targeted audits and investigations	Question was answered in the affirmative - assigned for implementation	Ongoing
Identify mechanisms to ensure full and open cooperation with NTIA to minimize or eliminate duplications of effort and/or confusion for the impacted industries and consumers	Daily meetings, information exchanges, and coordination efforts	Ongoing

### **Transparency**

Recipients of contracts awarded under this program will be identified and along with the amount of funds awarded to each and how those funds are spent. Contract recipients will report performance information, such as the number of customers served or installations completed. This information will be posted to the FCC's Recovery Act web site.

### **Accountability**

Program managers at the FCC will be held accountable for achieving program goals through the Commission's performance evaluation systems. Reports of program progress and performance in meeting identified milestones will be posted on the FCC Recovery Act web site.

### **Long-Term Savings or Costs**

There are no long term savings or costs associated with this Recovery Act funding. Any additional workload created at the Commission due to the receipt of funding will be absorbed within existing Commission staffing resources. After the additional activity prior to and immediately after the DTV transition deadline, there will be no further costs not covered within the Commission's normal budget appropriation.

### **Barriers to Effective Implementation**

A lesson learned by the Commission from markets which have already completed their transition is that a small number of households will choose not to prepare for the transition until analog broadcasting is terminated, even though they are aware that the transition date is approaching. The percentage of the viewers falling into this category is a small number that is difficult to quantify. The Commission has engaged in an effort to identify trouble spots and will focus its efforts on those areas. The additional outreach efforts funded through this program by the Recovery Act, such as Community Walk-In Centers and In-Home Assistance, will help to address this issue.

### **Federal Infrastructure Investments**

No funds in this program involve expenditures for energy efficiency or green building requirements.