



PUBLIC NOTICE

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COMMISSION ANNOUNCES ENTITIES CERTIFIED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE NATIONAL DEAF-BLIND EQUIPMENT DISTRIBUTION PROGRAM

Washington, D.C. – The Federal Communications Commission’s (Commission) Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau (CGB) has selected entities in 50 states plus the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands for certification to participate in the National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program (NDBEDP).

The NDBEDP is a program mandated by Section 105 of the Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act (CVAA) that provides funding of up to \$10 million annually for the distribution of communications equipment to low-income individuals who are deaf-blind.¹ On April 4, 2011, the Commission adopted the *NDBEDP Pilot Order*, establishing the framework for a pilot program to fulfill this CVAA mandate.² In that *Order*, the Commission determined that it would certify one entity per state as eligible to receive support for the local distribution of equipment to low-income individuals who are deaf-blind.³ Each certified entity will have primary oversight and responsibility for compliance with program requirements for its state, but certified entities may fulfill their responsibilities either directly or through collaboration, partnership, or contract with other individuals or entities in-state or out-of-state, including other NDBEDP certified programs.⁴ Participation in the NDBEDP also entails the provision of related services, including local outreach, individual assessments and training, as well as equipment installation and maintenance, that may be needed to effectively provide a person who is deaf-blind with the equipment that he or she needs to access the communications services covered by the CVAA.⁵

On September 22, 2011, CGB issued a Public Notice, inviting any public program or private entity to apply to the Commission for certification to become the sole authorized entity for a state to

¹ Pub. L. 111-260, 124 Stat. 2751 (2010); *see also* Pub. L. 111-265, 124 Stat. 2795 (2010) (technical corrections to the CVAA). Section 105 of the CVAA adds Section 719 to the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, and is codified at 47 U.S.C. § 620. The CVAA allows the Commission to allocate these funds from the Interstate Telecommunications Relay Service Fund (TRS Fund).

² *See Implementation of the Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act of 2010, Section 105, Relay Services for Deaf-Blind Individuals*, CG Docket No. 10-210, Report and Order, 26 FCC Rcd 5640 (2011) (*NDBEDP Pilot Order*). The NDBEDP pilot will run for two years, with an option for the Commission to extend the program for another year. *Id.*, 26 FCC Rcd at 5649, ¶ 22.

³ *NDBEDP Pilot Order*, 26 FCC Rcd at 5646, ¶ 12.

⁴ *Id.*, 26 FCC Rcd at 5647, ¶ 13.

⁵ *NDBEDP Pilot Order*, 26 FCC Rcd at 5667-5676, ¶¶ 63-79. The NDBEDP pilot will cover the reasonable costs of such related services. *See* 47 C.F.R. § 64.610(f)(2).

participate in the NDBEDP and receive reimbursement for NDBEDP activities from the TRS Fund.⁶ In response to this invitation, the Commission received applications from and supported by a wide range of public programs, including state equipment distribution programs, vocational rehabilitation programs, assistive technology programs, and schools for the deaf, blind, and deaf-blind, as well as from private entities, such as organizational affiliates, independent living centers, and private educational facilities. The Commission received a total of 58 applications from entities representing each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands.

In accordance with the *NDBEDP Pilot Order*, CGB reviewed each program's application for its ability to meet the following qualifications, either directly or in coordination with other programs or entities, as evidenced in the application and any supplemental materials, including letters of recommendation:⁷

- expertise in the field of deaf-blindness, including familiarity with the culture and etiquette of people who are deaf-blind, to ensure that equipment distribution and the provision of related services occurs in a manner that is relevant and useful to consumers who are deaf-blind;
- ability to communicate effectively with people who are deaf-blind (for training and other purposes), by among other things, using sign language, providing materials in Braille, ensuring that information made available online is accessible, and using other assistive technologies and methods to achieve effective communication;
- staffing and facilities sufficient to administer the program, including the ability to distribute equipment and provide related services to eligible individuals throughout the state, including those in remote areas;
- experience with the distribution of specialized customer premises equipment, especially to people who are deaf-blind;
- experience in training users on how to use the equipment and how to set up the equipment for its effective use; and
- familiarity with the telecommunications, Internet access, and advanced communications services that will be used with the distributed equipment.

The Commission received a single application for each of 48 of the jurisdictions covered by the NDBEDP.⁸ The Commission received two applications for each of the five remaining jurisdictions covered by the NDBEDP, specifically: Arizona, the District of Columbia, Florida, Louisiana, and Ohio. Following its review of these applications, CGB is satisfied that each of the single applicants for the 48 jurisdictions is qualified to become certified for this pilot program. CGB also has selected one of the two

⁶ *FCC Announces 60-day Period to Apply for Certification to Participate in the National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program*, Public Notice, DA 11-1591, 26 FCC Rcd 13118 (Sept. 22, 2011). *See generally*, 47 C.F.R. § 64.610(b) (NDBEDP certification process).

⁷ *See* 47 C.F.R. § 64.610(b)(3).

⁸ After submitting their original applications, entities from the following jurisdictions supplemented their applications with additional information about their ability to meet the certification criteria: Alaska, Kentucky, Michigan, and Oregon.

competing applications received from Arizona, the District of Columbia, Florida, Louisiana, and Ohio based on the following considerations:

Arizona: Two entities applied for NDBEDP certification, one a non-profit organization and the second a state government entity that also operates an existing equipment distribution program. Although CGB has determined that both applicants meet the Commission's qualifications for certification, the non-profit organization has closer ties with the deaf-blind community that the NDBEDP seeks to serve. CGB also concluded that the state government entity may be less well suited to meet the needs of all eligible consumers because it has expressed an interest in serving primarily individuals who are age 21 or older, at least initially, which is only a segment of the population eligible to participate in the NDBEDP. Therefore, CGB selected the non-profit organization in this jurisdiction for NDBEDP certification.

In each of the other four jurisdictions, two non-profit organizations applied for NDBEDP certification. For each, CGB has determined that one applicant is better situated than the other for the following reasons:

District of Columbia: The organization selected is collaborating and partnering with other entities, both locally and nationally, which support its certification and evidence its ability to fulfill program requirements. In addition, the organization selected has demonstrated greater support from deaf, blind, and deaf-blind related community organizations than the entity not selected.

Florida: The organization selected has more experience distributing communications equipment; it has demonstrated greater support from deaf, blind, and deaf-blind related community organizations; it has the staffing, facilities, and a well-established network to conduct the program statewide; and it has demonstrated greater familiarity with telecommunications, Internet access, and advanced communications services and equipment.

Louisiana: The organization selected has demonstrated greater support from deaf, blind, and deaf-blind related community organizations; it has the staffing, facilities, and a well-established network to conduct the program statewide; and it has demonstrated greater familiarity with telecommunications, Internet access, and advanced communications services and equipment.

Ohio: The organization selected is collaborating and partnering with other entities, both locally and nationally, that support its certification and evidence its ability to fulfill program requirements.

Accordingly, CGB has selected the entities listed below for certification to participate in the NDBEDP.⁹ Certification is granted to each of these entities for the duration of the NDBEDP pilot, subject to compliance with program requirements.¹⁰ The NDBEDP Administrator is responsible for overseeing the NDBEDP pilot¹¹ and will work in collaboration with the TRS Fund Administrator, which,

⁹ Contact information for each of these certified programs, such as the program's mailing address, phone, TTY, videophone, fax numbers, and website address will be made available through the Commission's website after the NDBEDP pilot is launched.

¹⁰ *NDBEDP Pilot Order*, 26 FCC Rcd at 5647, ¶ 14. *See generally*, 47 C.F.R. §§ 64.610(a) – (k).

¹¹ The Commission delegated authority to CGB to take the administrative actions necessary to implement and administer the NDBEDP, including designating a Commission official as the NDBEDP Administrator. *See NDBEDP Pilot Order*, 26 FCC Rcd at 5685-86, ¶ 105. The NDBEDP Administrator is responsible for certifying programs to participate in the NDBEDP; allocating funding and reviewing reimbursement claims with the TRS Fund Administrator; establishing an NDBEDP website and overseeing other outreach efforts; assessing the pilot program;

as directed by the NDBEDP Administrator, will review cost submissions and release funds for the reasonable costs of equipment and related services provided to low-income individuals who are deaf-blind.¹² The TRS Fund Administrator will also collect and provide related data for the effective and efficient administration of the program to the NDBEDP Administrator.¹³

Initially, \$9.5 million of annual funding will be used to reimburse NDBEDP certified programs for the reasonable costs of operating their programs in compliance with the Commission’s NDBEDP rules.¹⁴ The Commission has set aside the remaining \$500,000 of the \$10 million (annually allocated for the NDBEDP) for national outreach efforts during each TRS Fund year of the pilot program.¹⁵ Funding allocations for 2012-2013, also listed below, are calculated by allocating a minimum base amount of \$50,000 for each jurisdiction plus an amount available to each jurisdiction proportionate to its population.¹⁶

| State | NDBEDP Certified Program | Funding Allocation for 2012-2013 |
|--------------|--|---|
| Alabama | Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind | \$154,278 |
| Alaska | Assistive Technology of Alaska | \$65,692 |
| Arizona | Perkins School for the Blind | \$190,750 |
| Arkansas | Perkins School for the Blind | \$113,790 |
| California | Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired | \$868,376 |
| Colorado | Colorado Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing | \$161,097 |
| Connecticut | Connecticut Tech Act Project | \$127,745 |
| Delaware | University of Delaware – Center For Disabilities Studies | \$69,696 |
| Florida | Florida Telecommunications Relay, Inc. | \$463,782 |
| Georgia | Georgia Council for the Hearing Impaired | \$263,110 |
| Hawaii | Island Skill Gathering | \$79,850 |
| Idaho | University of Idaho – Idaho Assistive Technology Project | \$84,414 |

conferring with stakeholders; working with Commission staff to adopt permanent rules for the NDBEDP; and serving as the Commission’s point of contact for the NDBEDP. See 47 C.F.R. § 64.610(h)(1).

¹² 47 C.F.R. §§ 64.610(h)(2)(i); (ii).

¹³ 47 C.F.R. § 64.610(h)(2)(iii).

¹⁴ *NDBEDP Pilot Order*, 26 FCC Rcd at 5677, ¶ 85.

¹⁵ See *NDBEDP Pilot Order*, 26 FCC Rcd at 5675-76, ¶ 80. Recently, the Commission announced the selection of the Perkins School for the Blind to conduct national outreach efforts to promote the NDBEDP pilot. See *Perkins School for the Blind to Conduct National Outreach for the National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program*, Public Notice, DA 12-910 (June 8, 2012). For this effort, the Perkins School for the Blind is partnering with the Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults, FableVision, Inc., and other national and local consumer groups, parent groups, agencies, and associations. *Id.*

¹⁶ *NDBEDP Pilot Order*, 26 FCC Rcd at 5677, ¶ 84. The Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau may adjust these initial allocations, as needed and appropriate, for subsequent years of the NDBEDP pilot. *Id.*, 26 FCC Rcd at 5677, ¶¶ 85, 90. Population figures for these calculations are derived from U.S. Census data. See Table 1. Annual Estimates of the Population for the United States, Regions, States, and Puerto Rico: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2011 (NST-EST2011-01), available at <http://www.census.gov/popest/data/state/totals/2011/tables/NST-EST2011-01.xls> (viewed May 1, 2012). See also U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 for the U.S. Virgin Islands and the 2010 Census for the U.S. Virgin Islands available at http://2010.census.gov/news/xls/cb11cn180_vi.xls (viewed May 1, 2012).

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| Illinois | The Chicago Lighthouse for People Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired | \$329,420 |
| Indiana | Indiana State University | \$191,497 |
| Iowa | Iowa Utilities Board | \$116,490 |
| Kansas | Assistive Technology for Kansans | \$112,341 |
| Kentucky | Eastern Kentucky University Center on Deafness and Hearing Loss | \$144,869 |
| Louisiana | Affiliated Blind of Louisiana Training Center | \$149,330 |
| Maine | Maine Center on Deafness | \$78,838 |
| Maryland | Perkins School for the Blind | \$176,545 |
| Massachusetts | Perkins School for the Blind | \$193,030 |
| Michigan | Michigan Commission for the Blind | \$264,434 |
| Minnesota | Minnesota Department of Human Services Deaf and Hard of Hearing Service Division | \$166,049 |
| Mississippi | The Arc of Mississippi | \$114,670 |
| Missouri | Missouri Assistive Technology | \$180,506 |
| Montana | Perkins School for the Blind | \$71,673 |
| Nebraska | Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing | \$90,008 |
| Nevada | Deaf and Hard of Hearing Advocacy Resource Center | \$109,129 |
| New Hampshire | Northeast Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services, Inc. | \$78,621 |
| New Jersey | New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired | \$241,527 |
| New Mexico | Perkins School for the Blind | \$95,210 |
| New York | Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youth and Adults | \$472,633 |
| North Carolina | North Carolina Division of Services for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing | \$259,662 |
| North Dakota | Interagency Program for Assistive Technology | \$64,850 |
| Ohio | Ohio Deaf-Blind Outreach Program | \$300,667 |
| Oklahoma | Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services | \$132,322 |
| Oregon | Access Technologies, Inc. | \$134,067 |
| Pennsylvania | Institute on Disabilities – Temple University | \$326,677 |
| Rhode Island | Perkins School for the Blind | \$72,826 |
| South Carolina | Perkins School for the Blind | \$151,597 |
| South Dakota | South Dakota Department of Human Services | \$67,893 |
| Tennessee | Tennessee Regulatory Authority | \$189,031 |
| Texas | Perkins School for the Blind | \$607,455 |
| Utah | Utah Public Service Commission | \$111,168 |
| Vermont | Vermont Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing | \$63,601 |
| Virginia | Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing | \$225,795 |
| Washington | Department of Social and Health Services – Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing | \$198,295 |
| West Virginia | Perkins School for the Blind | \$90,284 |
| Wisconsin | Public Service Commission of Wisconsin | \$174,015 |
| Wyoming | Wyoming Institute for Disabilities – University of Wyoming | \$62,336 |
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| Washington, DC | Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind | \$63,418 |

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| Puerto Rico | Perkins School for the Blind | \$132,331 |
| U.S. Virgin Islands | Perkins School for the Blind | \$52,310 |

The Commission is releasing a separate Public Notice to announce the exact starting date of the NDBEDP pilot.

ACCESSIBLE FORMATS: To request materials in accessible formats for people with disabilities (Braille, large print, electronic files, audio format), send an e-mail to fcc504@fcc.gov or call the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau at 202-418-0530 (voice), 202-418-0432 (TTY).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jackie Ellington, Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau, 202-418-1153, e-mail Jackie.Ellington@fcc.gov; or Rosaline Crawford, Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau, 202-418-2075, e-mail Rosaline.Crawford@fcc.gov.

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