



PUBLIC NOTICE

Federal Communications Commission
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**THE OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES
AND THE MEDIA BUREAU ANNOUNCE THE RELEASE OF
A REQUEST FOR QUOTATION FOR STUDY EXAMINING THE CRITICAL
INFORMATION NEEDS OF THE AMERICAN PUBLIC**

BO Docket No. 12-30

Comment Date: February 27, 2012

Today, the Office of Communications Business Opportunities (OCBO) and the Media Bureau (Bureau) issued a Request for Quotation (RFQ) for a study to examine the critical information needs of the American public so that the Commission can more effectively meet its statutory and judicially mandated obligations. A copy of the RFQ will be available at the Federal Business Opportunities website, located at <http://www.fedbizopps.gov>. A copy of the RFQ, including the Statement of Work, will also be posted at <http://www.fcc.gov/office-communications-business-opportunities>.¹ Separately, OCBO and the Bureau also are soliciting suggestions for additional studies, such suggestions to be submitted not later than February 27, 2012.

Section 257 of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, mandates that the Commission review and report to Congress on (1) efforts to identify and eliminate regulatory barriers to market entry in the provision and ownership of telecommunications services and information services, or in the provision of parts or services to providers of telecommunications services and information services by entrepreneurs and other small businesses and (2) proposals to eliminate statutory barriers to market entry by those entities, consistent with the public interest, convenience, and necessity.²

¹ In the event of a conflict between this notice and the RFQ, the RFQ shall take precedence. In addition, for purposes of government procurements, www.fedbizopps.gov should be used as the official source for all documents regarding this procurement, not the FCC's website.

² 47 U.S.C. § 257 (c). Subsection (c) requires periodic review and reporting by the Commission every three years. The Commission's last report covered years 2006 through 2009, and was adopted and released in March, 2011. See *Section 257 Triennial Report to Congress, Identifying and Eliminating Market Entry Barriers for Entrepreneurs and Other Small Businesses*, 26 FCC Rcd 2909 (2011).

Upon this backdrop, OCBO and the Bureau are now commissioning a study to examine:

- how Americans meet their critical information needs;
- how the media ecosystem operates to address critical information needs; and
- what barriers exist in providing content and services to address critical information needs.

In order to assess whether government action is needed to ensure that the information needs of all Americans, including women and minorities, are being addressed, to determine the relationship, if any, between meeting critical information needs, and the available opportunities for all Americans to participate in the communications industries, it is first necessary to examine what prior research has been conducted with regard to how the public acquires critical information, how the media ecosystem operates to provide critical information, and what barriers exist to participation.

The report, to be delivered at the conclusion of the study, will be a literature review, summarizing and discussing the published research, analysis, and information on how Americans meet their critical information needs. It will also examine how the media ecosystem operates to address critical information needs and what barriers exist in providing content and services to address those needs. Finally, the study will provide an analysis of the relevant published materials and will include recommendations for definitions and performance metrics, including an explicit definition for “critical information needs.”

Additional Guidance on Preparing Responses to the RFQ. The reference number for this procurement is FCC12Q0009. The solicitation documents posted at www.fedbizopps.gov have instructions regarding proposal submission, other guidance and contact information.

Solicitation of Suggestions for Additional Studies. By this Public Notice, OCBO and the Bureau also solicit suggestions for additional studies in the 257 proceeding. We invite parties to submit specific descriptions of proposed studies, including well-defined performance metrics that relate to one or more of the following: (1) how Americans meet their critical information needs; (2) how the media ecosystem operates to address critical information needs; and (3) what barriers exist in providing content and services to address critical information needs. The deadline to file suggestions for studies is February 27, 2012. The Commission will not be awarding any contracts on the basis of any suggestions received. Instead, after evaluating responses to this Public Notice, the Commission may or may not choose to issue additional RFQs.

Pursuant to sections 1.415 and 1.419 of the Commission’s rules, 47 CFR §§ 1.415, 1.419, interested parties may file comments and reply comments on or before the dates indicated on the first page of this document. Comments may be filed using the Commission’s Electronic Comment Filing System (ECFS). *See Electronic Filing of Documents in Rulemaking Proceedings*, 63 FR 24121 (1998).

- Electronic Filers: Comments may be filed electronically using the Internet by accessing the ECFS: <http://fjallfoss.fcc.gov/ecfs2/>.
- Paper Filers: Parties who choose to file by paper must file an original and one copy of each filing. If more than one docket or rulemaking number appears in the caption of this proceeding, filers must submit two additional copies for each additional docket or rulemaking number.

Filings can be sent by hand or messenger delivery, by commercial overnight courier, or by first-class or overnight U.S. Postal Service mail. All filings must be addressed to the Commission's Secretary, Office of the Secretary, Federal Communications Commission.

- All hand-delivered or messenger-delivered paper filings for the Commission's Secretary must be delivered to FCC Headquarters at 445 12th St., SW, Room TW-A325, Washington, DC 20554. The filing hours are 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. All hand deliveries must be held together with rubber bands or fasteners. Any envelopes and boxes must be disposed of before entering the building.
- Commercial overnight mail (other than U.S. Postal Service Express Mail and Priority Mail) must be sent to 9300 East Hampton Drive, Capitol Heights, MD 20743.
- U.S. Postal Service first-class, Express, and Priority mail must be addressed to 445 12th Street, SW, Washington DC 20554.

People with Disabilities: 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 & Governmental Affairs Bureau at 202-418-0530 (voice), 202-418-0432 (tty).

Ex Parte Status The proceeding this Notice initiates shall be treated as a “permit-but-disclose” proceeding in accordance with the Commission's *ex parte* rules.³ Persons making *ex parte* presentations must file a copy of any written presentation or a memorandum summarizing any oral presentation within two business days after the presentation (unless a different deadline applicable to the Sunshine period applies). Persons making oral *ex parte* presentations are reminded that memoranda summarizing the presentation must (1) list all persons attending or otherwise participating in the meeting at which the *ex parte* presentation was made, and (2) summarize all data presented and arguments made during the presentation. If the presentation consisted in whole or in part of the presentation of data or arguments already reflected in the presenter's written comments, memoranda or other filings in the proceeding, the presenter may provide citations to such data or arguments in his or her prior comments, memoranda, or other filings (specifying the relevant page and/or paragraph numbers where such data or arguments can be found) in lieu of summarizing them in the memorandum. Documents shown or given to Commission staff during *ex parte* meetings are deemed to be written *ex parte* presentations and

³ 47 C.F.R. §§ 1.1200 *et seq.*

must be filed consistent with rule 1.1206(b). In proceedings governed by rule 1.49(f) or for which the Commission has made available a method of electronic filing, written *ex parte* presentations and memoranda summarizing oral *ex parte* presentations, and all attachments thereto, must be filed through the electronic comment filing system available for that proceeding, and must be filed in their native format (*e.g.*, .doc, .xml, .ppt, searchable .pdf). Participants in this proceeding should familiarize themselves with the Commission's *ex parte* rules.

Documents will be available for public inspection and copying during business hours at the FCC Reference Information Center, Portals II, Room CY-A257, 445 12th Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20554. The documents may also be purchased from BCPI, telephone (202) 488-5300, facsimile (202) 488-5563, TTY (202) 488-5562, e-mail fcc@bcpiweb.com.

Press inquiries should be directed to Janice Wise, at (202) 418-8165 or via email at Janice.Wise@fcc.gov.

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