



PUBLIC NOTICE

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

Washington, D.C. – The Federal Communications Commission (FCC or Commission) will accept nominations for the Chairman's Awards for Advancement in Accessibility (Chairman's AAA) beginning January 5, 2015 through March 5, 2015 for products, services, technologies or practices introduced to the public between January 1, 2014 and December 31, 2014. The Chairman's AAA is an FCC project coordinated by the Commission's Accessibility and Innovation Initiative (A&I Initiative) that grants awards to outstanding private and public sector ventures designed to advance accessibility for people with disabilities. The Awards were initially launched at the 20th ADA Celebration in 2010.

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 may be submitted, for example, for the development of mainstream or assistive technologies introduced into the marketplace, the development of standards, or the implementation of best practices that foster accessibility. Nominations will be accepted in the following eight categories:

- CAPTCHA Alternatives
- Internet of Things
- Wearable Devices
- Real-time Text
- Teleconferencing
- Video Description
- Augmented Reality
- Miscellaneous

Description of Chairman's AAA Categories

CAPTCHA Alternatives – A CAPTCHA (Completely Automated Test to Tell Computers and Humans Apart) is a means of confirming that an on-line user is actually a human being. It protects websites against bots by generating tests that only humans, and not computer programs, can pass. However, many CAPTCHA mechanisms present accessibility barriers. For example, a CAPTCHA requiring a user to type characters shown in an image tends to exclude users with visual or cognitive disabilities. This category invites nominations on alternatives to CAPTCHA that are accessible to people with disabilities.

Internet of Things – The Internet of Things refers to objects that are not primarily used for computing, but that have their capabilities extended via Internet connectivity, *e.g.*, home appliances that may be controlled through mobile apps. This category invites nominations on the use of Internet connectivity and smart controls to improve accessibility of appliances and items that have historically been inaccessible, as well as accessibility improvements to Internet-connected devices already in existence.

Wearable Devices – Wearable devices or “wearables” are wireless technologies that attach to a person, such as smart watches or glasses, providing a novel function or alternative access to an existing device function in a convenient manner. This category invites nominations on applications of wearables that provide innovative accessible input options, simplify human computer interaction for people with disabilities, or simplify self-care and telemedicine for people with disabilities or chronic conditions.

Real-time text – Real-time text is the ability to send and receive text messages as they are being typed, such that characters may be read before the message is complete. Real-time text is especially useful for people with hearing and speech disabilities in emergencies, when time is of the essence. This category invites nominations on real-time text applications that could be integrated into our communications infrastructure as we migrate to new digital and wireless technologies.

Teleconferencing/Direct Communication – At present, people who are deaf, deaf-blind, hard of hearing, or have speech disabilities largely rely on telecommunications relay services (TRS) to communicate over distances with members of the general public. Innovative ways of communicating via a combination of video, text, and audio (*e.g.*, HD audio) can revolutionize the ability of these individuals to communicate directly with others. This category invites nominations on novel ways to achieve interoperable teleconferencing to improve direct communication by such individuals, especially individuals who rely on sign language, to reduce reliance on TRS.

Video Description – Video description refers to narrative statements inserted within the natural pauses in a video program’s dialogue, to enable people who are blind or visually impaired to understand key program elements that are only conveyed visually. This category invites nominations on technologies designed to facilitate access to video description, including (1) accessible video devices, such as set top boxes or remote controls; or (2) apps that contribute to automating the provision of video description and synchronizing the output of textual descriptions (*e.g.*, from a script) with synthetic speech or refreshable Braille.

Augmented Reality – Augmented reality provides a live view of a physical environment whose elements are supplemented by computer-generated output such as sound, video, graphics, text, or GPS data. For example, a mobile app might automatically display a restaurant menu as one travels by it. This category invites nominations on innovations using augmented reality in communication systems to facilitate access by people with disabilities in their daily lives.

Miscellaneous – In this category, we invite other accessible communication or video programming solutions that do not fit into one of the above categories.

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 January 1, 2014 and December 31, 2014;
- 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.

The winners will be recognized at a ceremony to be held in June 2015. A subsequent announcement will be made of the exact time and location of the Chairman's AAA ceremony.

Individuals may submit nominations on their own or may be nominated by a third party. Each 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 January 5, 2015 and 11:59 PM March 5, 2015.

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 Jamal Mazrui, Deputy Director, Accessibility and Innovation Initiative, via phone (202) 418-0069 or via email at Jamal.Mazrui@fcc.gov or Kelly Jones, (202) 418-7078 or email, Kelly.Jones@fcc.gov, or call the ASL Consumer Support Line, at 1-844-432-2275 via videophone. Inquiries may also be sent to ChairmansAAA@fcc.gov.

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