



PUBLIC NOTICE

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MEDIA BUREAU REMINDS BROADCASTERS OF THE OBLIGATION TO FILE BIENNIAL OWNERSHIP REPORTS

By this Public Notice, the Media Bureau (Bureau) of the Federal Communications Commission (Commission or FCC) reminds broadcast licensees of the importance of filing their biennial ownership reports on FCC Form 323 or 323-E, as required by the Commission's rules.

Pursuant to the Commission's rules, licensees of commercial and non-commercial full power television, Class A television, low power television, AM radio, and FM radio stations must file biennial ownership reports with the Commission in odd-numbered years.¹ Accordingly, the next filing window for biennial ownership reports currently is scheduled to open October 1st of this year. Reporting such information has long been a fundamental obligation of broadcast licensees.² The accurate, and timely, filing of ownership information is critical to ensuring that the public knows who owns, operates, and controls broadcast stations. Additionally, accurate and timely ownership information is crucial to an understanding of the broadcast industry as a whole, including an understanding of the diversity and multiplicity of owners.

Currently, television and radio stations are in the midst of the periodic license renewal process by which they seek Commission approval to continue broadcasting and serving their local communities for another license term. The Commission's broadcast license renewal application, FCC Form 2100, Schedule 303-S, requires broadcast licensees to certify compliance with the biennial ownership reporting requirement.³ We remind licensees that, as part of its review of license renewal applications, Bureau staff will be reviewing whether licensees have filed their 2019 and 2021 biennial ownership information and whether they have certified

¹ See 47 C.F.R. §§ 73.3615(a), (d); 73.6026; 74.797. Biennial ownership reports must contain information that is current as of October 1 of the filing year. *Id.* §§ 73.3615(a), (d); 74.797. In addition, reports must provide all information required by, and comply with all requirements set forth in, the current version of the relevant broadcast ownership report form (FCC Form 323 or 323-E). *Id.* §§ 73.3615(a), (d); 74.797.

² We note further that a licensee must maintain its current ownership report in the station's Online Public Inspection File, which is intended to "encourage a continuing dialogue between broadcasters and the public to ensure stations meet their obligations and remain responsive to the needs of the local community." Media Bureau, FCC, *The Public and Broadcasting* 27 (2019).

³ See FCC Form 2100, Schedule 303-S, Certifications, Biennial Ownership Report (requiring licensees to certify that the renewing station has filed its biennial ownership reports on FCC Form 323 or 323-E with the Commission as required by Section 73.3615 of the Commission's rules).

truthfully concerning compliance with the filing requirement. Commission staff may pursue actions against licensees that fail to file their biennial ownership reports, including enforcement actions against any that make a false certification on FCC Form 2100, Schedule 303-S regarding the filing of such reports.

Given the importance of the biennial ownership reporting requirement, both to inform the Commission and the public as to the station's current ownership, and to support the Commission's policy-making efforts with comprehensive, reliable data reflecting the race, gender, and ethnicity of attributable interest holders in broadcast stations, we encourage licensees to prepare in advance for the upcoming October 1, 2021 biennial filing window and to review carefully their compliance with the filing requirement as they prepare and file their license renewal applications.

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