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Media Bureau Reminds Television Broadcasters of Phase in of Audio Description Rules to DMAs 81 Through 90 as of January 1, 2023

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On October 27, 2020, the Commission adopted the 2020 Audio Description Order, which expanded the Commission’s audio description rules. Audio description makes video programming more accessible to individuals who are blind or visually impaired through “[t]he insertion of audio narrated descriptions of a television program’s key visual elements into natural pauses between the program’s dialogue.” The Commission’s audio description rules require certain television broadcast stations and multichannel video programming distributors (MVPDs) to provide audio description for a portion of the video programming they televise to consumers. The 2020 Audio Description Order expanded the availability of audio description by phasing the requirements in for an additional 10 designated market areas (DMAs) each year for four years. As a result, the Commission’s audio description rules extended to DMAs 61 through 70 as of January 1, 2021, and to DMAs 71 through 80 on January 1, 2022. We remind television broadcasters that the audio description rules next will extend to DMAs 81 through 90 on January 1, 2023.

As set forth in the 2020 Audio Description Order, the expansion of the audio description rules applies to the relevant DMAs as determined by The Nielsen Company as of January 1, 2020. Accordingly, the audio description rules will extend to the following DMAs on January 1, 2023:

1. Madison
2. Waco-Temple-Bryan
3. Harlingen-Weslaco-Brownsville-McAllen
4. Paducah-Cape Girardeau-Harrisburg
5. Colorado Springs-Pueblo
6. Shreveport
7. Syracuse

2 See 47 CFR § 79.3(a)(3).
3 See id. § 79.3(b).
4 See 2020 Audio Description Order, 35 FCC Rcd at 12577, para. 1.
5 47 CFR § 79.3(b)(1).
6 Id. The requirements will extend to DMAs 91 through 100 on January 1, 2024. Id.
7 2020 Audio Description Order, 35 FCC Rcd at 12583, para. 11.
8. Champaign and Springfield-Decatur
9. Savannah
10. Cedar Rapids-Waterloo-Iowa City and Dubuque

Accessible Materials. 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).

For general information about audio description, visit www.fcc.gov/audio-description. For further information regarding this proceeding, contact Diana Sokolow, Policy Division, Media Bureau, 202-418-2120.

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