



PUBLIC NOTICE

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CONSUMER AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS BUREAU SEEKS COMMENT ON TENTATIVE FINDINGS FOR THE 2026 TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY COMMUNICATIONS AND VIDEO ACCESSIBILITY ACT BIENNIAL REPORT

Pleading Cycle Established

CG Docket No. 10-213

Comments Due: August 10, 2026

I. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1. The Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau (CGB or Bureau) of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC or Commission) seeks comment on tentative findings on the accessibility and usability of telecommunications and advanced communications services (ACS) and equipment in connection with the Biennial Report to Congress (Biennial Report) required by section 717(b)(1) of the Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act of 2010 (CVAA).¹ The FCC must submit final findings to Congress in its Biennial Report by October 8, 2026.²

2. The 2026 CVAA Biennial Report will provide an assessment of industry compliance with sections 255, 716, and 718 of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended (the Act), which require that telecommunications and advanced communications services and equipment be accessible and usable by people with disabilities, and that mobile phone browsers be accessible and usable by people who are blind or visually impaired.³ The Biennial Report will also address the extent to which accessibility barriers still exist with respect to new communications technologies,⁴ and the effect of the accessibility-related

¹ Pub. L. No. 111-260, 124 Stat. 2751 (2010) (as codified in various sections of 47 U.S.C.); Pub. L. No. 111-265, 124 Stat. 2795 (2010) (technical corrections to the CVAA). Section 717(b)(2) requires the Commission to seek public comment on its tentative findings on the above-mentioned issues prior to submission of each biennial report to Congress. 47 U.S.C. § 618(b)(2).

² The FCC must submit its Biennial Reports to the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation and the House Committee on Energy and Commerce. *Id.* The Commission submitted CVAA biennial reports in 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018, 2020, 2022 and 2024. *See, e.g., Implementation of Sections 716 and 717 of the Communications Act of 1934, as Enacted by the Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act of 2010, Biennial Report to Congress as Required by the Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act of 2010*, 37 FCC Rcd 11360 (2022) (2022 CVAA Biennial Report). All CVAA Biennial Reports are located at www.fcc.gov/cvaa.

³ *See* 47 U.S.C. § 618(b)(1)(A); S. Rep. No. 111-386 at 9 (2010) (Senate Report); H.R. Rep. No. 111-563 at 27 (2010) (House Report). Sections 255, 716, and 718 are codified in Title 47 of the United States Code. *See* 47 U.S.C. §§ 255, 617, and 619. These sections are implemented in parts 6, 7, and 14 of the Commission's rules. *See* 47 CFR Part 6, Part 7, and Part 14.

⁴ *See* 47 U.S.C. § 618(b)(1)(B).

recordkeeping and enforcement provisions of section 717 on the development and deployment of such new technologies.⁵ The Biennial Report will provide information about the number of, nature of, and actions taken to resolve complaints alleging violations of sections 255, 716, or 718 for the period January 1, 2024, through December 31, 2025 — including the length of time that the Commission took to resolve such complaints, and the number, status, nature, and outcome of any actions for mandamus filed, and of any appeals filed pertaining to such complaints.⁶

3. On February 26, 2026, the Bureau issued a Public Notice inviting comment on these matters.⁷ Comments were received from Accessibility Advocacy Organizations (AAO),⁸ the American Council of the Blind (ACB), the American Foundation for the Blind (AFB), the Consumer Technology Association (CTA), CTIA – The Wireless Association (CTIA), Disability Belongs, Wired Broadband, Inc. (WBI), and one individual commenter.⁹

4. In this *Public Notice*, we provide our tentative findings on the accessibility of services and equipment under sections 255, 716, and 718 based on those comments filed in response to the *2026 CVAA Assessment Public Notice*.¹⁰ We also present our tentative findings regarding any accessibility barriers to new communications technologies,¹¹ complaints received pursuant to section 717,¹² and the effect of the accessibility-related recordkeeping and enforcement provisions of section 717 on the development and deployment of such new technologies.¹³ In preparation for the 2026 CVAA Biennial Report to Congress, we invite further comment on whether these tentative findings accurately represent the current state of accessibility and usability of telecommunications and advanced communications services and equipment, and the accessibility and usability of Internet browsers on mobile phones for people who are blind or low vision.

⁵ See 47 U.S.C. § 618(b)(1)(G). Section 717(a) requires covered entities to keep records of their efforts to implement sections 255, 716, and 718, including information about their efforts to consult with people with disabilities, descriptions of the accessibility features of their products and services, and information about the compatibility of these products and services with peripheral devices or specialized customer premises equipment commonly used by people with disabilities to achieve access. 47 U.S.C. § 618(a)(5)(A). Covered entities must certify annually to the Commission that they have kept records in accordance with this requirement. See 47 U.S.C. § 618(a)(5)(B); 47 CFR § 14.31. Section 717(a) also contains procedures for complaints alleging violations of sections 255, 716, or 718. 47 U.S.C. § 618(a)(1)-(4); 47 CFR §§ 14.30-14.52. In response to an informal complaint, the manufacturer or service provider “must produce documents demonstrating its due diligence in exploring accessibility and achievability . . . throughout the design, development, testing, and deployment stages of a product or service.” 47 CFR § 14.36(a).

⁶ See 47 U.S.C. § 618(b)(1)(C)-(F).

⁷ *Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau Seeks Comment on the Accessibility of Communications Technologies for the 2026 Biennial Report Required by the Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act*, CG Docket No. 10-213, Public Notice, DA 26-193 (CGB Feb. 26, 2026) (*2024 CVAA Assessment Public Notice*).

⁸ Comments by AAO were filed on behalf of TDIForAccess, Inc., Deaf Equality, Communication Service for the Deaf, Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center on Technology for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, National Association for the Deaf, and Perkins School for the Blind.

⁹ The tentative findings do not address comments on accessibility matters that are outside the scope of sections 255, 716, 717, and 718.

¹⁰ See generally *2026 CVAA Assessment Public Notice*. See also *infra* Section III.

¹¹ See 47 U.S.C. § 618(b)(1)(B); *infra* Section IV.

¹² See 47 U.S.C. § 618(b)(1)(C)-(F); *infra* Section V.

¹³ See 47 U.S.C. § 618(b)(1)(G); *infra* Section VI.

II. APPLICABLE STATUTORY PROVISIONS

5. The purpose of the CVAA is “to help ensure that individuals with disabilities are able to fully utilize communications services and equipment and better access video programming.”¹⁴ To that end, the CVAA requires that the Commission report on industry compliance with the following accessibility-related provisions of the Act.¹⁵

6. *Section 255.* Section 255 requires providers of telecommunications services and manufacturers of telecommunications equipment or customer premises equipment (CPE) to ensure that their services and equipment are accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities, if readily achievable.¹⁶ When these requirements are not readily achievable, covered entities must ensure that their services and equipment are compatible with existing peripheral devices or specialized CPE commonly used by individuals with disabilities to achieve access, if readily achievable.¹⁷ Pursuant to the Commission’s rules, section 255’s accessibility obligations extend to interconnected Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) service providers and equipment manufacturers.¹⁸

7. *Section 716.* Section 716 requires providers of ACS and manufacturers of equipment used for ACS to ensure that their services and equipment are accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities, unless doing so is not achievable (defined as “with reasonable effort or expense”).¹⁹ “Advanced communications services” include: (1) interconnected VoIP service; (2) non-interconnected VoIP service; (3) electronic messaging service; (4) interoperable video conferencing service; and (5) any audio or video communications services used by inmates for the purposes of communicating with individuals outside the correctional institution where the inmate is held.²⁰ In contrast to interconnected

¹⁴ Senate Report at 1; House Report at 19 (both noting that the communications marketplace had undergone a “fundamental transformation” since Congress adopted section 255 in 1996 and that, in the past, people with disabilities often did not share in the benefits of this rapid technological advancement).

¹⁵ See 47 U.S.C. § 618(b)(1). See also *infra* Sections III-VI.

¹⁶ 47 U.S.C. § 255(b), (c); *Implementation of Sections 255 and 251(a)(2) of the Communications Act of 1934, as Enacted by the Telecommunications Act of 1996: Access to Telecommunications Service, Telecommunications Equipment and Customer Premises Equipment by Persons with Disabilities*, Report and Order and Further Notice of Inquiry, 16 FCC Rcd 6417, 6449, para. 77 (1999) (*Section 255 Order*). “Readily achievable” is defined as “easily accomplishable and able to be carried out without much difficulty or expense.” 42 U.S.C. § 12181(9). The Act defines telecommunications equipment as “equipment, other than customer premises equipment, used by a carrier to provide telecommunications services, and includes software integral to such equipment (including upgrades).” 47 U.S.C. § 153(52). It defines “customer premises equipment” as “equipment employed on the premises of a person (other than a carrier) to originate, route or terminate telecommunications.” 47 U.S.C. § 153(16). Equipment covered under section 255 includes, but is not limited to, telecommunications equipment and CPE, such as wireline, cordless, and wireless telephones, fax machines, and answering machines. The *Section 255 Order* adopted rules requiring that phone features such as telephone calls, call waiting, speed dialing, call forwarding, computer-provided directory assistance, call monitoring, caller identification, call tracing, and repeat dialing be accessible. *Section 255 Order*, 16 FCC Rcd at 6449 para. 77; 47 CFR Part 6. In addition, the rules implementing section 255 cover voicemail and interactive voice response systems (phone systems that provide callers with menus of choices). 47 CFR Part 7.

¹⁷ 47 U.S.C. § 255(d).

¹⁸ See *Implementation of Sections 255 and 251(a)(2) of the Communications Act of 1934, as Enacted by the Telecommunications Act of 1996: Access to Telecommunications Service, Telecommunications Equipment and Customer Premises Equipment by Persons with Disabilities; Telecommunications Relay Services and Speech-to-Speech Services for Individuals with Hearing and Speech Disabilities*, Report and Order, 22 FCC Rcd 11275 (2007).

¹⁹ 47 U.S.C. § 617(a)(1), (b)(1), (g); 47 CFR §§ 14.20(a)(1)-(2), 14.10(b).

²⁰ 47 U.S.C. § 153(1); see also 47 CFR § 14.10(c). Section 716 does not apply to services or equipment, including

(continued....)

VoIP services, which enable people to make and receive calls to and from the public switched telephone network (PSTN), non-interconnected VoIP includes services that enable real-time voice communications either to or from the PSTN (but not both) or which neither begin nor end on the PSTN.²¹ Electronic messaging services include services such as e-mail, short message service (SMS) text messaging, and instant messaging, which enable real-time or near real-time text messages between individuals over communications networks.²² Interoperable video conferencing services provide real-time video communications, including audio, to enable users to share information.²³

8. The accessibility requirements for section 716 may be satisfied by: (1) building accessibility into the service or equipment²⁴ or (2) using third-party applications, peripheral devices, software, hardware, or CPE that is available to consumers at nominal cost and that individuals with disabilities can access.²⁵ When ensuring accessibility through either of those options is not achievable, covered entities must ensure that their services and equipment are compatible with existing peripheral devices or specialized CPE commonly used by individuals with disabilities to achieve access, unless that is not achievable.²⁶

9. *Section 718.* Section 718 requires mobile phone service providers and manufacturers to make Internet browsers built into mobile phones accessible to and usable by people who are blind or have a visual impairment, unless doing so is not achievable.²⁷ This requirement may be satisfied with or without the use of third-party applications, peripheral devices, software, hardware, or CPE that is available to consumers at nominal cost and that individuals with disabilities can access.²⁸

III. COMPLIANCE WITH SECTIONS 255, 716, AND 718

A. Accessibility

10. During the two years since the Commission's last Biennial Report, we tentatively find that accessibility of telecommunications and advanced communications services and equipment continues to improve;²⁹ however, some accessibility gaps persist due in part to technological and market barriers.³⁰ The Commission remains committed to ensuring that relevant technologies are accessible to and usable by people with disabilities, and that people with disabilities are "able to fully utilize communications services and equipment and better access video programming."³¹ We discuss below the current state of

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interconnected VoIP services and equipment, that were subject to section 255 on October 7, 2010. 47 U.S.C. § 617(f). Those services and equipment remain subject to the requirements of section 255. *Id.*

²¹ See 47 U.S.C. § 153(25), 153(36); 47 CFR § 9.3.

²² 47 U.S.C. § 153(19).

²³ 47 U.S.C. § 153(27).

²⁴ 47 U.S.C. § 617(a)(2)(A), (b)(2)(A).

²⁵ 47 U.S.C. § 617(a)(2)(B), (b)(2)(B).

²⁶ 47 U.S.C. § 617(c).

²⁷ 47 U.S.C. § 619(a); 47 CFR § 14.61(a).

²⁸ 47 U.S.C. § 619(b); 47 CFR § 14.61(b).

²⁹ CTA states, for instance, that "positive developments in the accessibility of communications services and equipment have continued over the past two years and that the overall trajectory of accessibility innovation remains strong." CTA Comments at 2.

³⁰ See AAO Comments at 2; Disability Belongs Comments at 1 (citing "persistent accessibility and usability gaps in communications technologies..."); ACB Comments at 1 ("accessibility barriers still exist for communication technologies"; AFB Comments at 1-5.

³¹ See S. Rep. No. 111-386, 111th Cong., at 1 (2010) (the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation Report on the CVAA).

accessibility of telecommunications and advanced communications services and equipment as presented by parties responding to the *2026 CVAA Assessment Public Notice*.³²

11. The comments received continue to reflect the proliferation of new and enhanced features that make more devices and features accessible to a wider community of people with disabilities, while affordability and innovation continue to advance. Indeed, CTA underscores that “the overall trajectory of accessibility innovation remains strong.”³³

12. CTIA highlights advances in voice commands, AI-driven assistive technologies, visual capabilities, and other accessibility features built into smartphones, as well as initiatives like “bring your own device” programs, which enable a consumer with disabilities to choose a device that best meets their accessibility needs.³⁴ Overall, CTIA states that “the flexible directives in the CVAA have helped make advanced communications services and products more inclusive and accessible to people with disabilities.”³⁵

13. Still, some comments highlight continuing challenges to accessibility. For example, Disability Belongs, a consumer organization, notes that, “[w]hile many communications technologies include accessibility features, individuals with disabilities continue to encounter barriers when using these tools in everyday settings.”³⁶ They further elaborate about remaining challenges, including “messaging and communications platforms that do not consistently integrate with screen readers or other assistive technologies”; “video conferencing tools where accessibility features such as captioning, keyboard navigation, or screen reader compatibility are inconsistent across platforms or devices”; and “communication features embedded within multi-purpose devices that are technically accessible but difficult for users to locate or activate.”³⁷ Below, we highlight some areas of significant improvements in the accessibility of covered products and services, and discuss some remaining accessibility gaps.

14. *Mobile Phones.* A wide range of accessibility improvements have become available for mobile phone operating systems since the last Biennial Report,³⁸ although not all consumers with disabilities may benefit from those accessibility improvements. For example, CTIA notes improvements to keyboard, braille, and other text-input methods and a braille notetaking system; one operating system’s updated “dark theme,” which produces a more comfortable viewing experience, particularly for people with low vision or light sensitivity; a particular feature that allows users with limited mobility and an

³² See generally *2026 CVAA Assessment Public Notice*; AAO Comments; ACB Comments; ACF Comments; Andy Foster Comments; CTA Comments; CTIA Comments; Disability Belongs Comments; WBI Comments. One commenter, Wired Broadband, Inc (WBI), writing on behalf of “Americans injured or disabled by electromagnetic radiation” and other parties, recommends that the FCC recognize electromagnetic radiation syndrome as a disability, and includes a number of related comments regarding FCC licensure and safety issues. WBI Comments at 1-2. While we acknowledge the serious situations the commenters describe, we note that the CVAA adopts the definition of disability from the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. § 12102). See 47 U.S.C. 153(18) (pointing to the three-pronged definition of disability in 42 U.S.C. § 12102). See also 28 CFR part 35, appendix B (in implementing the statutory definition, stating that “it is not possible to include a list of all the specific conditions, contagious and noncontagious diseases, or infections that would constitute physical or mental impairments because of the difficulty of ensuring the comprehensiveness of such a list...”). Altering or adding to that definition, as well as any issues regarding the health and safety limits of radio frequency, siting of infrastructure such as cell towers, or other technologies are beyond the scope of this report.

³³ CTA Comments at 2.

³⁴ CTIA Comments at 2-3, 7.

³⁵ *Id.* at 3.

³⁶ Disability Belongs Comments at 2-3.

³⁷ *Id.* at 3.

³⁸ See CTIA Comments at 9-14; CTA Comments at 2.

external mouse device to specify an amount of time before a cursor automatically performs a click; a captioning feature that “go[es] beyond communicating what someone say[s], to communicate things like tone, volume, environmental cues, and human noises”; a separate captioning feature with braille display integration; better natural language voice control for smartphone-vehicle integration systems and improved voice control options; features enabling wearable devices to display real-time transcriptions and enabling smartphones to function as microphones sending audio to hearing aids; functionality notifying deaf and hard of hearing users to be notified when their name is called; new accessibility options designed for users with dyslexia or low vision; and a feature allowing users to temporarily share accessibility settings when using a different device.³⁹ However, while recognizing the growth of accessibility features on some smartphones in the last two years, including new functionalities for braille displays,⁴⁰ AFB emphasizes that phone accessibility varies depending on the price range of the smartphones.⁴¹ Higher-end smartphones tend to be the most accessible, while at the other end of the spectrum, feature phones and landline telephones typically lack the same accessibility.⁴²

15. *Videoconferencing.* Regarding videoconferencing, the use of interoperable video conferencing services (IVCS) has proliferated in recent years. The Commission affirmed in 2023 that IVCS are advanced communication services covered under the CVAA.⁴³ The FCC has established that IVCS is “a modern communications tool that is critical in connecting for work, education, health, and other fundamental life activities,” and continues to take steps to ensure that “people with disabilities are able to access and use video conferencing.”⁴⁴

16. Commenters identified a number of ongoing challenges to accessibility of videoconferencing platforms, while acknowledging that it has offered a “new and exciting form of communication technology.”⁴⁵ In its comments, AAO identifies a number of remaining challenges to accessible videoconferencing, including the lack of voice recognition functionality that can generate understandable speech when used by people with speech disabilities, and the need for a simplified user interface.⁴⁶ AAO further highlights a need for visual interpretation services (using human assistance or automation to generate real-time descriptions of visual information, including images and text), and screen-reader capability for all user interface elements and visual information, including presentations, videos, and interactive documents shared during interoperable video conferencing calls for people who are blind and low vision.⁴⁷ Moreover, ACB reports, the content presented using the screen-sharing

³⁹ CTIA Comments at 10-12.

⁴⁰ AFB Comments at 1.

⁴¹ *Id.*

⁴² *Id.*

⁴³ *Access to Video Conferencing; Implementation of Sections 716 and 717 of the Communications Act of 1934, as Enacted by the Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act of 2010; Telecommunications Relay Services and Speech-to-Speech Services for Individuals with Hearing and Speech Disabilities; Petition of Sorenson Communications, LLC for Limited Waiver of the Privacy Screen Rule*, CG Docket Nos. 23-161, 10-213, and 03-123, Second Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 39 FCC Rcd 11068 (2024) (*2024 Video Conferencing Order*).

⁴⁴ *See, e.g., 2024 Video Conferencing Order*, 39 FCC Rcd at 11069.

⁴⁵ ACB Comments at 3. *See also, e.g.,* AAO Comments at 2-4; ACB Comments at 2; AFB Comments at 2; Disability Belongs Comments at 3-4.

⁴⁶ AAO Comments at 3.

⁴⁷ *Id.*

function is often inaccessible for those who use screen-reading software.⁴⁸ Likewise, AFB explains that, while the basic screen reader accessibility of many video conferencing services is quickly improving, “[p]eople who are blind still lack access to many features of video conferencing” and that “[i]t is difficult or impossible to access information that is shared visually even though a few platforms have demonstrated that providing such access is feasible.”⁴⁹ AFB also notes problems with text on a shared screen being “not perceivable by the screen reader, and platforms may or may not offer a way to magnify the text for users with low vision.”⁵⁰ Finally, AFB suggests that there is a need for the capability to use side channels via other applications to access visual interpretation services, to provide descriptions of visual content that are not otherwise accessible, as well as “the option to easily use refreshable braille displays across platforms,” which “would greatly assist people who are deafblind as well as people who are hearing and blind.”⁵¹

17. AAO echoes the need for refreshable braille displays and other devices used for the tactile conveyance of interface elements and visual information to be fully compatible with presentations, videos, and interactive documents shared during interoperable video conferencing calls, to improve accessibility for some people who are blind or low vision.⁵² Disability Belongs similarly notes that there are accessibility limitations within video conferencing platforms that affect navigation, caption placement, or compatibility with assistive technologies.⁵³ AAO also identifies an ongoing need to incorporate hands-free technologies.⁵⁴ Another commenter recommends the FCC should “[e]nsure all video conferencing platforms have a built-in feature to allow a user to bring in an interpreter for meetings as a native feature.”⁵⁵

18. *Communication in Video Games.* With respect to accessibility of video game communications, and building on a Disability Advisory Committee October 2024 report on the accessibility of communications in video games,⁵⁶ AFB comments that progress continues to be made, especially for low vision users.⁵⁷ However, “many games still lack functional accessibility for blind and low vision gamers who want to use the communications features, and those that have accessibility features may not implement the full suite of accessibility that would make the user interface more usable

⁴⁸ ACB Comments at 2. ACB further described the issue and recommended the solution of implementing the chat functions as a toggle. (“As a result, if a document is shared with attendees, participants who are blind cannot access this information. Additionally, interaction between the chat function and screen-reading software can make active participation frustrating, particularly in events where the chat function is heavily used. A process of utilizing the chat function and screen-reading software simultaneously needs to be developed. This could be accomplished through having the chat function implemented as a toggle.”)

⁴⁹ AFB Comments at 2.

⁵⁰ *Id.*

⁵¹ *Id.*

⁵² AAO Comments at 3.

⁵³ Disability Belongs Comments at 4.

⁵⁴ *Id.*

⁵⁵ Andy Foster Comments at 1.

⁵⁶ Disability Advisory Committee (October 18, 2024). Recommendation on Accessible Communication in Gaming for People Who Are Blind, Have Low Vision, or Are DeafBlind.

⁵⁷ AFB Comments at 2-3.

to all blind and low vision gamers.”⁵⁸ AFB further notes that “[a]ccessible user interfaces for communication should be expected even if game developers do not build fully accessible gameplay.”⁵⁹

19. *Emergency Services.* Accessible communication products and services have made it easier for people with disabilities to contact emergency services and receive critical alerts,⁶⁰ though specific improvements are recommended by consumer organizations.⁶¹ AAO notes the need to increase public safety answering points capable of receiving real-time-text (RTT)-to-911, and also highlights that more work is needed to achieve full and equal 911 access for individuals whose primary language is American Sign Language (ASL).⁶² AAO emphasizes the need for direct video calling (DVC), i.e., video conferencing that allows conversations to occur between two callers using ASL without the need for translation services, as the best means of achieving effective and direct communication for calls made to first responders in 911 dispatch centers, firefighters, law enforcement officers, self-help and crisis hotlines that offer services such as mental health counseling and suicide prevention, and other municipally supported services that address urgent and emergency situations.⁶³ AAO suggests that for communities with high densities of deaf ASL users, it may work best to enable ASL users to communicate directly with DVC call handlers stationed in their local PSAPs, and for less ASL-dense communities, regional or national DVC centers might provide the best solution for DVC-to-911 calls.⁶⁴

20. *One Number Solution.* Consumer organizations continue to highlight the importance of the “one number solution,” particularly for individuals who are deaf, deafblind, hard of hearing, or have speech disabilities.⁶⁵ Consumer organization commenters explain that these users often have many different telephone numbers to receive direct voice calls, texts, and relay calls, which can create many challenges for providing the best contact number.⁶⁶ Further, consumer organizations comment that “[b]y developing and implementing a one number solution, the FCC would reduce fragmentation, streamline communications, and advance more equitable and effective access to these services.”⁶⁷

21. *Other Technologies.* Consumer organization commenters also identify additional accessibility barriers, including, for example, communication features embedded within social media platforms that present challenges for screen reader users, and remaining accessibility barriers in some customer service systems that rely on automated chat interfaces or phone systems, which may not be fully accessible.⁶⁸

⁵⁸ AFB Comments at 2-3 (citing an *AccessWorld* survey of popular games for low vision accessibility that describes some of the successes as well as usability challenges, including the lack of a screen reader, the scalability of the user interface, zoom settings that max out at 150%, and reliance on users, rather than the developers, to modify the game for accessibility features).

⁵⁹ *Id.*

⁶⁰ See CTA Comments at 2; CTIA Comments at 16-18.

⁶¹ See AAO Comments at 4-8.

⁶² *Id.* at 4.

⁶³ *Id.* at 7 (describing that DVC allows ASL-fluent callers to converse more naturally, expressively and effectively, adding facial and bodily movements and other nonverbal information to convey critical information needed to secure swift emergency assistance.)

⁶⁴ *Id.* at 7-8. Note 13 notes that these comments also have been filed in the Commission’s Next Generation 911 proceeding. *Id.* at 7, n. 13.

⁶⁵ See *id.* at 10.

⁶⁶ *Id.*

⁶⁷ AAO Comments at 10.

⁶⁸ See, e.g., Disability Belongs Comments at 4-5; Andy Foster Comments at 1.

B. Usability

22. Sections 255, 716 and 718 also require that covered services and equipment are “usable” by people with disabilities.⁶⁹ A product or service is “usable” if companies provide people with disabilities with information on how to use services, such as documentation for the product or service, including instructions, product or service information (including accessible feature information), customer support, and technical support.⁷⁰ We tentatively find that, while usability continues to improve for some covered services and equipment, there is still room for improvement.

23. *Full Functionality and Documentation for Covered Products.* Overall, industry commenters share that individuals with disabilities have access to the full functionality and documentation for covered products as required,⁷¹ though some consumer organizations express that information and technical support are inconsistent.⁷² CTIA, for example, states that its members provide “information about accessible features and products to consumers in a variety of formats,” as well as “dedicated support lines” for consumers that live with disabilities, and notes its members’ “extensive user guides” that, among other features, “continue to make smartphones accessible and usable for individuals with disabilities.”⁷³ Consumer organization commenters, however, state that individuals with disabilities may encounter challenges such as user manuals or documentation that are not available in accessible formats; customer service channels that are not compatible with assistive technologies; and limited training among customer support staff regarding accessibility features.⁷⁴ Consumer organization commenters also cite other barriers that continue to affect the usability of communications technologies; for example, automated captioning systems may produce inaccurate captions, particularly for individuals with speech disabilities or speakers with accents.⁷⁵

24. *Videoconferencing.* With respect to usability and videoconferencing, AAO identifies an ongoing need for instructional materials for activating IVCS in plain and simple language and iconography. Consumer organization commenters also highlight that, even where captions are available, some users struggle to locate and activate captioning, and recommend “consistent and clear information” about how to activate them and control display features.⁷⁶ ACB also notes that for users who are blind or have low vision, “accessing the different functions within a platform using keyboard-only navigation can be limiting.”⁷⁷

25. *Direct Video Calling.* Regarding DVC, AAO states that adoption of DVC is critical to usability for ASL users, in both emergency call centers and other contexts.⁷⁸ AAO explains that “[t]he best way to achieve usability for ASL users is through DVC, IP-based telephone customer support using one-on-one video communication that enables a real-time conversation to occur directly between an ASL user and a call center representative who is also fluent in sign language and trained in the subject at

⁶⁹ 47 U.S.C. §§ 255, 617, 619.

⁷⁰ See 47 CFR §§ 6.3(l), 7.3(l), 14.21(c); see also 47 CFR §§ 6.11, 7.11, 14.20(d), 14.60(b)(4).

⁷¹ See, e.g., CTIA Comments at 3; see also CTA Comments at 3-4.

⁷² See ACB Comments at 2.

⁷³ CTIA Comments at 3, 10.

⁷⁴ Disability Belongs Comments at 4-5.

⁷⁵ See, e.g., Disability Belongs Comments at 4.

⁷⁶ AAO Comments at 3-4.

⁷⁷ ACB Comments at 2.

⁷⁸ AAO Comments at 8-9.

issue.”⁷⁹ AAO recommends the adoption of DVC “to improve usability for telecommunications and advanced communication services.”⁸⁰

26. *Internet Browsers Built in Mobile Phones.* Accessibility features for web browsers built into mobile phones continue to improve for users who are blind or low vision,⁸¹ though greater standardization across devices and operating systems may be beneficial for consumers.⁸² CTIA highlights the accessibility features built into common web browsers, and notes that “manufacturers also provide comprehensive user guides detailing how to access accessibility features that work in the built-in browsers.”⁸³ Still, other commenters explain that some devices and internet browsers are accessible and usable for blind and low vision consumers, while others are not.⁸⁴ In particular, commenters describe barriers like inconsistent compatibility between mobile browsers and screen readers; variations in accessibility across different devices, operating systems, and price points; and difficulty identifying devices that provide robust accessibility features when purchasing mobile phones.⁸⁵ Ultimately, these commenters recommend greater transparency for accessibility features and more consistent accessibility across devices.⁸⁶

C. Inclusion of People with Disabilities in Product and Service Design and Development

27. We tentatively find that covered entities have continued to include people with disabilities in product and service design and development. CTIA describes the ongoing work of the wireless industry to “conduct outreach and regularly collaborate with the accessibility community.”⁸⁷ CTA and CTIA explain that industry has engaged consumers in product development and testing,⁸⁸ advisory groups,⁸⁹ conferences,⁹⁰ and product design and demonstrations.⁹¹ ACB confirms that major telecommunication companies “continue to do a good job seeking input from the blind and low vision community while seeking to make their products fully accessible.”⁹² At the same time, ACB recommends having more individuals who are blind and low vision “working internally with developers and

⁷⁹ *Id.*

⁸⁰ AAO Comments at 9.

⁸¹ *See* CTIA Comments at 15-16.

⁸² *See* ACB Comments at 2; Disability Belongs Comments at 4.

⁸³ CTIA Comments at 16.

⁸⁴ ACB Comments at 2.

⁸⁵ Disability Belongs Comments at 4.

⁸⁶ *Id.*

⁸⁷ CTIA Comments at 20. CTIA states that it “and its member companies remain committed to outreach to and regular collaboration with the accessibility community to advance a collective understanding and awareness of the communications needs of people with disabilities.” *Id.* at 3.

⁸⁸ *See* CTIA Comments at 20-25; CTA Comments at 2.

⁸⁹ *See* CTIA Comments at 22-25; CTA Comments at 2-3. CTIA, CTA, and their members participate in the FCC’s Consumer Protection and Accessibility Advisory Committee. *See* CTA Comments at 2; CTIA Comments at 22-24. (discussing a number of events and initiatives, awards and investments in these efforts).

⁹⁰ *See* CTA Comments at 3.

⁹¹ *See id.* at 6-7 (discussing how the CES trade show provides an opportunity for highlighting innovations in accessible technologies); CTIA Comments at 23 (noting that CTIA’s Accessibility Outreach Initiative Forum includes a showcase of accessible innovations).

⁹² ACB Comments at 2.

manufacturers to ensure accessibility is a core design principle.”⁹³ With respect to AI and the inclusion of individuals with disabilities in product and service design and development, AFB recommends “more concerted efforts by developers to hire and employ accessibility teams that include people with disabilities at the startup stage.”⁹⁴

28. Commenters assert that the involvement of individuals with disabilities in product design and testing can play an important role in improving accessibility outcomes; testing should be conducted in the way users with disabilities use the interfaces and products, or barriers may not be identified.⁹⁵ Commenters recommend engaging individuals with disabilities throughout the design and development process, including consultation with disability-led organizations and user testing involving people with diverse disabilities, access needs, and experience with technology, to strengthen accessibility across communications technologies.⁹⁶

IV. ACCESSIBILITY BARRIERS TO NEW COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGIES

29. We tentatively find that accessibility barriers persist with respect to new communications technologies, even as “innovation is expanding both the functionality and usability of accessible communications tools for people with disabilities.”⁹⁷ CTA identifies a number of new or enhanced, accessibility-focused features for users who are blind or have low vision,⁹⁸ with mobility disabilities,⁹⁹ cognitive disabilities,¹⁰⁰ speech-related disabilities,¹⁰¹ and users who are deaf or heard of hearing,¹⁰² while consumer organizations comment that “[e]merging communications technologies present new opportunities as well as potential accessibility challenges.”¹⁰³

30. Voice assistants powered by AI continue to improve, offering enhanced personalization and automation for users.¹⁰⁴ CTIA, for example, emphasizes how these “features promote accessibility for individuals without or with limited vision, hearing, speech, color perception, manual dexterity, reach and strength, or with prosthetic devices.”¹⁰⁵ However, as consumer organizations note, AI-enabled communications tools and automated captioning systems may not “consistently produce accurate results,”

⁹³ *Id.*

⁹⁴ AFB Comments at 4.

⁹⁵ Disability Belongs Comments at 5.

⁹⁶ *Id.*

⁹⁷ CTA Comments at 4.

⁹⁸ *Id.* (including Braille access notetakers; accessibility readers; tools to share accessibility settings across devices; vehicle motion cues that help reduce motion sickness while reading or using devices on the move).

⁹⁹ *Id.* (head- and eye-tracking controls and synchronized accessibility settings that enable users with limited mobility to interact more easily with their devices and communications apps).

¹⁰⁰ *Id.* (accessibility readers that simplify on-screen content and assistive AI tools that help users understand and manage information more effectively).

¹⁰¹ *Id.* (vocal shortcuts and other voice-based tools that give users with speech differences additional options to control devices and access communications services).

¹⁰² *Id.* (hearing health tools, music haptics, and other features that pair audio content with haptic feedback to provide a richer and more inclusive listening experience).

¹⁰³ Disability Belongs Comments at 6.

¹⁰⁴ CTIA Comments at 14-15.

¹⁰⁵ *Id.* at 15.

and automated speech recognition systems may not work reliably for people with speech disabilities or other disabilities.¹⁰⁶

31. Moreover, new communication platforms that integrate messaging, video, and voice functions may not consistently incorporate accessibility features.¹⁰⁷ Commenters thus emphasize that incorporating accessibility considerations during the earliest stages of design and development and integrated throughout the process can help ensure that innovation advances accessibility rather than creating new barriers.¹⁰⁸ For example, AAO states that “the Commission should work with industry to explore solutions to ensure these evolving technologies are accessible to and usable by people with disabilities, as well as compatible with peripheral devices and specialized customer premises equipment commonly used by people with disabilities.”¹⁰⁹ AAO further encourages exploration of “how advanced technologies, including evolving AI technologies, may create accessibility barriers or may improve communications access for people with disabilities including individuals who are blind or low vision, deaf or hard of hearing, DeafBlind, have an auditory processing disorder, a cortical or cerebral visual impairment, or have both communication and mobility disabilities.”¹¹⁰

V. COMPLAINTS RECEIVED PURSUANT TO SECTION 717

32. Under Section 717, a person may file a formal or informal complaint alleging a violation of section 255, 716, or 718.¹¹¹ Before a consumer may file an informal complaint, the consumer must first submit a Request for Dispute Assistance (RDA) to the Commission’s Disability Rights Office (DRO) for help in resolving the accessibility problem between the consumer and the covered entity.¹¹² If the consumer and the covered entity do not reach a settlement within 30 days after an RDA is filed, the parties may agree to extend the time for resolution in 30-day increments, or the consumer may then, pursuant to Section 717, file an informal complaint with the Enforcement Bureau.¹¹³

33. The Commission must forward the informal complaint to the named service provider or equipment manufacturer.¹¹⁴ The service provider or manufacturer then must serve an answer responsive to the complaint and any Commission inquiries and serve the complainant and the Commission with a

¹⁰⁶ Disability Belongs Comments at 6. *See also* AFB Comments at 3-4.

¹⁰⁷ *See, e.g.*, Disability Belongs Comments at 6.

¹⁰⁸ *See id.*; AAO Comments at 11; ACB Comments at 2; AFB Comments at 4 (describing that “humans with disabilities will continue to be vitally important for assessing how ‘usable’ products are”).

¹⁰⁹ AAO Comments at 11.

¹¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹¹ 47 USC § 618(a)(3)(A) (“Any person alleging a violation of section 255, 617, or 619 of this title by a manufacturer of equipment or provider of service subject to such sections may file a formal or informal complaint with the Commission.”); *see also* 47 USC § 618(a)(3)(B) (requiring the Commission to investigate informal complaints and determine if a violation occurred).

¹¹² *See* 47 CFR §§ 14.32 (consumer dispute assistance), 14.34-14.37 (informal complaints), 14.38-14.52 (formal complaints); *see also* *New Procedures for Telecommunications and Advanced Communications Accessibility Complaints*, Public Notice, 28 FCC Rcd 15712 (CGB 2013). A consumer also may file a formal complaint with the Enforcement Bureau without first submitting an RDA or an informal complaint. 47 CFR §§ 14.38-14.52.

¹¹³ 47 CFR § 14.32(e); *see also* *Implementation of Sections 716 and 717 of the Communications Act of 1934, as Enacted by the Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act of 2010; Amendments to the Commission’s Rules Implementing Sections 255 and 251(a)(2) of the Communications Act of 1934, as Enacted by the Telecommunications Act of 1996; and In the Matter of Accessible Mobile Phone Options for People who are Blind, Deaf-Blind, or Have Low Vision*, Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 26 FCC Rcd 14557, 14658, para. 237 (2011).

¹¹⁴ 47 CFR § 14.35(a).

non-confidential summary of that answer within 20 days of service of the complaint.¹¹⁵ Within 180 days after receipt of the complaint, the Commission must conclude an investigation into the merits of the complaint and issue an order determining whether a violation has occurred.¹¹⁶ It may, in such order, or in a subsequent order, direct the service provider to bring the service or, in the case of a manufacturer, the next generation of the equipment, into compliance with the requirements of section 255, 716, or 718 within a reasonable period of time and take other authorized and appropriate enforcement action.¹¹⁷

A. Number and Nature of Complaints Received

34. From January 1, 2024, to December 31, 2025, consumers filed 40 RDAs alleging violations of section 255, 716, or 718.¹¹⁸ During this two-year period, DRO resolved 39 RDAs through facilitated dialogue and negotiation. One consumer exercised their right to file an informal complaint because the RDA was not resolved.

B. Discussion of RDAs

35. In their RDAs, some consumers stated that their devices and services were inaccessible. Other consumers claimed accessibility barriers to reaching customer service or that customer service was unable to help them locate accessible devices or to fix accessibility problems. These RDAs were brought by people with a wide range of disabilities. For example, we received RDAs from consumers who are blind; consumers who are deaf or hard of hearing, including ASL users; consumers with physical disabilities and limited mobility or manual dexterity, including people with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) and Cerebral Palsy; consumers with mental health issues; consumers with cognitive disabilities, including memory, language, and learning skills issues; and consumers with multiple disabilities.¹¹⁹ Consumers self-described themselves as veterans, emergency response providers, older adults, or caretakers of relatives or others with disabilities that impacts covered communications access. Several RDAs successfully addressed complex accessibility barriers for individuals. While some resolutions required extensive negotiations to resolve the dispute, the resulting improvements reached a broad audience. These RDA resolutions included covered entities updating communication software used by a variety of health care organizations, creating new accessibility features, creating new device interfaces, altering equipment, finding and testing new equipment to ensure compatibility with networks, and creating disability-related training.

36. Across the RDAs received, many involved inaccessible multi-factor authentication (MFA) processes that prevented blind, low-vision, aging, people with cognitive issues, or people with limited manual dexterity from accessing their accounts, making necessary changes, paying their bills, or participating in promotional opportunities. Additional barriers included inaccessible devices (e.g.,

¹¹⁵ 47 CFR § 14.36(b)-(c). The complainant may then file a reply. 47 CFR § 14.36(d).

¹¹⁶ 47 U.S.C. § 618(a)(3)(B), (a)(4); *see also* 47 CFR § 14.37(a).

¹¹⁷ 47 U.S.C. § 618(a)(3)(B)(i); *see also* 47 CFR § 14.37(b). Any manufacturer or service provider that is the subject of such order has a reasonable opportunity to comment on the Commission's proposed remedial action before the Commission issues a final order with respect to that action. 47 U.S.C. § 618(a)(4); *see also* 47 CFR § 14.37(c).

¹¹⁸ We note that, while consumers filed an additional 680 requests for dispute assistance during this period, DRO determined that these requests were not eligible for the RDA process because they did not allege violations of section 255, 716, or 718 of the Act. These requests are therefore not counted or discussed in this Report. DRO treats such complaints as informal complaints for further DRO processing (if they are related to accessibility) or refers them to the FCC's Consumer Inquiries and Complaints Division for processing (if they are unrelated to accessibility). For requests alleging violations of statutes outside of the Commission's jurisdiction, DRO refers these complaints to the relevant federal agencies (such as the Department of Justice for complaints alleging violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act).

touchscreens that were not usable by blind users or users with limited mobility or dexterity, screen readers that were not accessible or usable by consumers who relied on that technology to access a covered product or service, phones requiring a physical SIM card that the user was not able to successfully install on the basis of their disability). Some consumers stated that they did not have access to visual voicemail. RDAs were also filed based on unreadable billing formats, and customer service or retail staff behaviors that created discriminatory and inaccessible interactions. The RDAs addressed recurrent problems where carriers refused to accept Video Relay Service (VRS) relay calls from deaf users or other legitimate communications from Telecommunications Relay Services (TRS) users, alongside call forwarding failures that blocked access to captioning or accessible communication. Other resolved issues involved technical limitations, such as time-dependent controls that created accessibility barriers, and the removal of essential accessibility features.

37. RDAs were also received concerning inaccessible or unusable videoconferencing platforms. The issues included a number of features, including barriers to effective screen sharing and pinning sign language users, a lack of interoperability with VRS, the lack of user-activated captions, and limitations to multi-pinning functionality, particularly the capability to enable that feature without needing host action and approval.

C. Actions Taken to Resolve RDAs

38. Through collaboration between the DRO, consumers, and service providers, nearly all RDAs were successfully resolved. Manufacturers and service providers implemented various accessibility improvements in response to consumer concerns and needs. Examples included providing accessible phones with preinstalled SIM cards, or devices with certain voice dialing or call notes functionalities. Several companies added or restored alternative identity and security verification methods. Multiple carriers affirmed their commitment to accept VRS calls and other TRS calls and ensure quality staff training. Some carriers worked to restore visual voicemail or provide accessible alternatives. Some companies found workarounds such as processing device exchanges by mail. Many companies committed to continued development of longer-term systemic accessibility improvements.

D. Actions Taken to Resolve Informal Complaints

39. One RDA did not reach a resolution. In that RDA, a consumer who is legally blind alleged that the mobile phone provider failed to provide accessible and usable wireless service, by failing to provide bills in the requested large font format. After the consumer was unable to reach a resolution with the company, the consumer filed an informal complaint with the Commission's Enforcement Bureau (EB).

E. Time Used to Resolve RDAs and the Informal Complaints

40. Of the RDAs that were filed during the reporting period, seven (18%) were completed within thirty days, ten (25%) were completed between thirty one and sixty days, three (8%) were completed within sixty one and ninety days, nine (23%) were completed within ninety one and 180 days, and eleven (28%) were completed after one hundred and eighty days. One informal complaint was filed.

F. Actions for Mandamus and Appeals Filed

41. There were no actions for mandamus or appeals filed with respect to complaints during the period covered by this Report.

VI. EFFECT OF SECTION 717'S RECORDKEEPING AND ENFORCEMENT REQUIREMENTS ON THE DEVELOPMENT AND DEPLOYMENT OF NEW COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGIES

42. Section 717(b)(1)(G) requires the Commission to provide an assessment of the effect of the requirements of section 717 on the development and deployment of new communications technologies.¹²⁰ We tentatively find that there has been no effect on the development and deployment of new communications technologies.¹²¹

VII. PROCEDURAL MATTERS

43. *Ex Parte Rules.* The proceeding this Notice initiates shall be treated as a “permit-but-disclose” proceeding in accordance with the Commission’s *ex parte* rules.¹²² 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 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.

44. *Filing Requirements.* Interested parties may file comments on or before the date indicated on the first page of this document.¹²³ Comments may be filed using the Commission’s Electronic Comment Filing System (ECFS).¹²⁴ All comments should refer to **CG Docket No. 10-213**. Please title comments responsive to this Notice as “Public Notice Comments – 2026 CVA A Biennial Report Tentative Findings.”

- Electronic Filers: Comments may be filed electronically using the Internet by accessing the ECFS: <https://www.fcc.gov/ecfs/>.
- Paper Filers: Parties who choose to file by paper must file an original and one copy of each filing.

¹²⁰ 47 U.S.C. § 618(b)(1)(G).

¹²¹ One commenter suggested that additional guidance and best practices from the FCC may be beneficial. *See Disability Belongs Comments* at 7.

¹²² 47 CFR §§ 1.1200 *et seq.*

¹²³ 47 CFR §§ 1.415, 1.419.

¹²⁴ *See Electronic Filing of Documents in Rulemaking Proceedings*, 63 FR 24121 (1998).

- Filings can be sent by hand or messenger delivery, by commercial courier, or by the U.S. Postal Service. All filings must be addressed to the Secretary, Federal Communications Commission.
- Hand-delivered or messenger-delivered paper filings for the Commission's Secretary are accepted between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. by the FCC's mailing contractor at 9050 Junction Drive, Annapolis Junction, MD 20701. 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 courier deliveries (any deliveries not by the U.S. Postal Service) must be sent to 9050 Junction Drive, Annapolis Junction, MD 20701.
- Filings sent by U.S. Postal Service First-Class Mail, Priority Mail, and Priority Mail Express must be sent to 45 L Street NE, Washington, DC 20554.

45. *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 202-418-0530 (voice), or 844-432-2275 (videophone).

46. *Additional Information.* For further information regarding this Notice, please contact Molly Burgdorf, Disability Rights Office, Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau, at (202) 418-2173 or Molly.Burgdorf@fcc.gov or Stephen Wang, Disability Rights Office, Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau, at (202) 418-1634 or by e-mail at Stephen.Wang@fcc.gov. Individuals who use videophones and are fluent in American Sign Language may call the FCC's ASL Consumer Support Line at 844-432-2275 (videophone).

– FCC –