



# NEWS

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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action.  
See MCI v. FCC, 515 F 2d 385 (D.C. Circ 1974).

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## **FCC Announces Selection of 12 Grassroots Groups for DTV Outreach Valued at \$8.4 Million**

*Focus is Reaching Seniors, People with Disabilities and Spanish-speaking households in Areas with Highest Over the Air Populations*

*Washington, DC* – The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) today announced it has selected 12 grassroots organizations and local agencies to help over the air viewers prepare for the digital transition. Today's selections are worth up to \$8.4 million and are the culmination of a full and open procurement process.

The Commission sought proposals to conduct outreach in all parts of the country, with a particular focus on the 82 markets with the highest over the air television populations. In particular, the FCC selected organizations dedicated to serving across the country populations most at risk in the digital transition including senior citizens, people with disabilities and Spanish-speaking households. Specifically, the FCC sought the assistance of local, regional and national organizations with converter box procurement and installation, establishment and staffing of local call centers, educating consumers about the transition and other local grass roots efforts.

Last September, as part of the Continuing Resolution for Fiscal Year 2009, Congress appropriated \$20 million to the FCC to help fund its digital television outreach efforts. On September 15, the FCC initiated a broad public request for proposals to conduct community-based grassroots outreach work for the digital television transition.

Following federal procurement practices, the Commission conducted a full and open competition. The FCC made its requirements public and sent copies of the procurement documents to dozens of organizations, who could potentially assist over the air viewers in getting ready for the digital television transition. In addition, the Commission's Consumer Advisory Committee worked to ensure that all of the potentially impacted communities were aware of the request for proposals.

Below is a description of the vendors selected, the outreach the group will perform, and their award amounts.

### **Nationwide Plans**

AARP is a national nonprofit service organization that will assist senior citizens across the entire United States with the DTV transition by using its existing sophisticated telephone service center to provide help to seniors with questions about the transition. The organization will train its existing help center staff to answer questions, provide information and telephone-based technical help to seniors who need assistance with setting up their converter boxes and antennas. AARP will publicize the availability of its help centers in its publications and newsletters targeted to seniors. Awarded : \$2,719,947.

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Communication Service for the Deaf (CSD) is a national nonprofit service organization that will assist disabled citizens (specifically, deaf and hard of hearing Americans) by providing assistance and information on how to obtain and install DTV converter boxes, how to make use of DTV closed captioning services, and other related technical questions relating to the DTV transition. This organization will create a national telephone/TTY help center for deaf / hard of hearing consumers. CSD will also work with other national service organizations serving the deaf and hard-of- hearing communities to provide information about the DTV transition to these consumers. Awarded: \$1,117,441.

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Hispanic Information and Telecommunication Network (HITN) will assist the Hispanic population nationwide with procuring and installing converter boxes, partner with local community organizations to establish walk-in help centers within the 20 U.S. television markets with the highest Hispanic population, and conduct outreach. It will also continue to provide assistance after the transition through March 31, 2009 and will promote the availability of converter box assistance on television and in newspapers.

HITN will provide free installations of converter boxes and emphasize need for Hispanics in U.S./Mexican border states to get converter boxes with analog pass-through so they can continue to see both analog signals from Mexico and DTV from U.S. This will help people who may need to get new antennas, help those who haven't yet obtained converter boxes or who have trouble with installation. HITN has already conducted a field trial. Awarded : \$750,281.

### **State / Local / Regional Plans**

PinTech Corporation is a private corporation that will offer consumer assistance to seniors, low income, disabled and non-English speaking and minority communities in a four-state region, Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina. This company will work with volunteers from state and local service organizations to assist consumers with information about the DTV conversion. In addition, this company will also provide a telephone DTV help center in each state to help citizens install their DTV converter boxes and will dispatch technicians to make on-site visits to assist customers whose problems cannot be solved over the phone. Awarded: \$ 2,839,783.

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The Mayor's Commission on Technology is a local government agency serving Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. It will help residents procure converter boxes by coordinating free installations via the city's 311 hotline. This organization will also create a local walk-in help centers and

partner with local television stations to create local call-in centers. This organization will expand its DTV outreach efforts through e-mail blasts, town halls, and media interviews. It will provide assistance through March 13, 2009. It has already reached 25% of Philadelphia residents through its DTV outreach initiative. Awarded: \$166,244.

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WXXI Public Broadcasting is a public broadcasting organization serving the greater Rochester, New York area, a rural region that includes many over-the-air television households. This organization will reach out to seniors, citizens in rural areas, disabled citizens, and minority communities in the area by conducting public educational outreach seminars about the DTV conversion and providing a toll-free telephone help center for consumers with additional questions. For elderly and disabled consumers who experience problems that cannot be solved over the phone, this organization will also send qualified professional technicians and the organization's own staff members in teams to make in-home visits to install converter boxes. Awarded: \$202,498.

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VN TeamWork, Inc. is a local non-profit, community-based organization serving Southwest Houston and the Greater Houston area of Texas. In particular, it will target low-income, non-English speaking Asian Americans. It will help residents install converter boxes. This organization will also create a local walk-in help center and call-in center. In addition, this organization will publicize the DTV transition through radio announcements and the distribution of language-appropriate literature. It will continue providing assistance after the transition. Awarded: \$45,798.

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Iowa Public Broadcasting Board is a state public broadcasting organization serving the state of Iowa. This organization will conduct a statewide education campaign to provide Iowans with information about the DTV conversion and how to prepare for it. In addition, this organization will also establish a telephone help center targeting seniors, citizens living in rural areas of the state, and low-income families and individuals in Iowa who need assistance making the transition to digital. The help center will answer consumer questions and provide technical troubleshooting advice over the phone, both before and in the days immediately following the February 17th transition date. Awarded: \$223,516.

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Idaho Public Television is a state public broadcasting organization serving the state of Idaho. This organization will provide a statewide toll-free help line for citizens of Idaho (a rural state with a high percentage of viewers receiving television over the air) to answer consumer questions about the DTV transition. In addition, this organization's engineering staff will be available to assist consumers with technical troubleshooting issues by phone and email. Awarded: \$35,168.

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Wisconsin Public Television is a state public broadcasting organization operated by a major state university system. This organization will provide statewide community outreach events for citizens throughout Wisconsin such as informational Q&A presentations about the DTV transition and will work with state and local service organizations to reach out to citizens looking

for help with installing and using their converter boxes. The organization will also provide a telephone help line to answer consumer questions about DTV and troubleshoot converter installation issues. This organization will specifically target hard to reach rural and minority populations (such as Hispanics and Hmong immigrant communities) in Wisconsin. Awarded: \$94,613.

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Ohio State University / WOSU Public Media is a television organization serving the Columbus, Ohio television market, covering 55 counties in Ohio, Kentucky, and West Virginia. It will help residents procure converter boxes by coordinating free installations with local partner agencies. This organization will also create a local call-in and walk-in help center, and publicize the digital transition through live call-in shows on radio and television, as well as distributing printed materials through local libraries and partner organizations. It has already addressed 50 community groups about the transition and collected 2,300 coupons as of Oct. 2008 to donate to residents. Awarded: \$196,500.

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Knox County CAC is a local non-profit agency serving Knox County, Tennessee, including Knoxville, Tennessee. It will help residents procure converter boxes by coordinating volunteers to accompany residents to stores or buying boxes on behalf of target groups, including seniors, people with disabilities, non-English speakers, and other minority groups. This organization will also create a local walk-in help center and call-in center. This organization will partner with local organizations including Meals on Wheels and Head Start, and the local Office on Aging to publicize the transition by distributing printed DTV materials. Awarded: \$36,241.

The total amount of the combined awards is \$8,428,031.

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