



NEWS

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See MCI v. FCC, 515 F 2d 385 (D.C. Circ 1974).

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AMERICORPS TO HELP CONSUMERS PREPARE FOR DTV TRANSITION

National Service Program to Assist in Converter Box Installations, Outreach Efforts

Washington, D.C. – As part of the Federal Communications Commission’s comprehensive nationwide DTV transition assistance effort, hundreds of AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) members will partner with the FCC to assist individuals who may have difficulty making the switch to digital television, the FCC and AmeriCorps NCCC announced today. The AmeriCorps NCCC members will focus on groups the FCC has targeted for special attention, including low-income individuals, minority communities, non-English speaking consumers, senior citizens, consumers with disabilities and individuals living in rural areas or tribal lands.

The NCCC, an AmeriCorps program made up of men and women between the ages of 18 and 24, will serve on the front lines of the FCC’s DTV transition outreach effort that will extend beyond June 12, the deadline for full-power broadcast stations to cease analog broadcast transmission and to broadcast in digital.

The FCC and AmeriCorps NCCC have signed an interagency agreement that will enable AmeriCorps NCCC members to visit homes where individuals need help to connect their antennas and analog televisions to digital converter boxes, help consumers apply for the \$40 converter box coupons, make presentations at community events, serve in walk-in DTV help centers and otherwise spread the word to over-the-air populations who haven’t yet taken steps necessary to continue watching television after their broadcast stations complete their transitions to all-digital broadcasting.

Teams of 8 to 12 AmeriCorps NCCC members will serve under the guidance of FCC area coordinators and often will work side-by-side with the many FCC employees who volunteer to work in communities throughout the country. AmeriCorps NCCC members will provide assistance in communities that the FCC has targeted as needing additional help from now until the June 12 transition. The members will undergo FCC training before being deployed to the field and will gain additional assistance from the FCC area coordinators once in their locations. The service that AmeriCorps NCCC members will provide in support of DTV outreach is above and beyond their primary service assignment and will mostly occur at night and on weekends.

Denver has been selected as a test market for AmeriCorps NCCC’s participation and the FCC will begin training members there next week in advance of early digital transitions planned for mid-April by several Denver television stations, including two major network affiliates.

AmeriCorps NCCC is a full-time, team-based residential program. Its mission is to strengthen communities and develop leaders through direct, team-based national and community service to meet environmental, educational, public safety and other human needs. AmeriCorps is administered by the Corporation for National and Community Service, which also oversees Senior Corps and Learn and Serve America.

“The FCC is grateful for the assistance from AmeriCorps NCCC, an organization committed to public service, as we focus our DTV education efforts on individuals who may find the transition to digital television particularly difficult,” said Acting FCC Chairman Michael Copps. “This fine organization is composed of dedicated young people with enthusiasm and experience in working with elderly individuals, low income residents and others who may need a hand in hooking up their converter boxes or checking their antennas.”

“Our AmeriCorps NCCC members work extensively with special need populations and are highly effective at outreach, whether it’s providing a brighter future for young people or helping communities respond to disasters,” said Alan Solomont, Chairman of Board of the Corporation for National and Community Service. “We are pleased to join together with the FCC on this initiative and thank our members for taking on this challenge.”

“I have long advocated this partnership to draw on the vast energy of these young AmeriCorps members who are dedicated to helping others in their communities,” said FCC Commissioner Jonathan Adelstein. “It is thrilling that with strong leadership at the White House and the FCC, we are dramatically expanding our outreach and assistance efforts to include AmeriCorps and other trusted sources to reach out to our most vulnerable citizens to make sure nobody falls through the cracks.”

"I'm pleased that we have been able to tap other existing resources within our government to help those who need assistance to get ready for the DTV transition," FCC Commissioner Robert McDowell said. "AmeriCorps' experience with at-risk populations is a great fit for this project, and I think the youthful enthusiasm for technology that the AmeriCorps workers bring to the task should be comforting to those TV viewers who are cautious, or even anxious, about the change to digital broadcasting."

About a third of the nation’s nearly 1,800 full-power television stations already have stopped broadcasting in analog mode and now are transmitting only a digital signal. The remaining stations will make the transition to digital broadcasting between March 30 and June 12. As of March 1, about 3.9 percent of all TV homes were unready for the transition, many of them in the population segments targeted by the FCC for extra help.

AmeriCorps NCCC is among several organizations that will be enlisted to help prepare the public for the transition. The FCC is in the process of finalizing a Statement of Work for a proposed contract with the International Association of Fire Chiefs, which is in a unique position to provide locally based consumer assistance. Through the efforts of member fire chiefs, fire service professionals will be selected to volunteer to help consumers install converter boxes.

The Commission also is preparing to issue Requests for Quotation to solicit bids for contracts to provide call centers, walk-in help centers, and in-home installation assistance primarily in at-risk communities.

The FCC, in conjunction with the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, has developed a list of 49 at-risk communities that statistical data indicate are less prepared than others. Many of the FCC's outreach efforts, including the AmeriCorps project and the planned contracts, will give special attention to those areas.

Below is a list of the targeted areas.

- FCC -

APPENDIX 1

1	Albuquerque-Santa Fe, NM	26	Los Angeles, CA
2	Anchorage, AK	27	Louisville, KY
3	Atlanta, GA	28	Memphis, TN
4	Boise, ID	29	Miami, FL
5	Boston, MA	30	Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN
6	Baltimore, MD	31	Milwaukee, WI
7	Birmingham, AL	32	Monroe, LA-El Dorado, AR
8	Charleston, WV	33	Monterey-Salinas, CA
9	Chicago, IL	34	Nashville, TN
10	Cincinnati, OH	35	New York, NY
11	Cleveland-Akron (Canton), OH	36	Orlando, FL
12	Colorado Springs-Pueblo, CO	37	Philadelphia, PA
13	Dallas-Ft. Worth, TX	38	Phoenix, AZ
14	Dayton, OH	39	Pittsburgh, PA
15	Denver, CO	40	Portland, OR
16	Des Moines-Ames, IA	41	Sacramento-Stockton-Modesto, CA
17	Detroit, MI	42	St. Louis, MO
18	Fresno-Visalia, CA	43	Salt Lake City, UT
19	Harlingen-McAllen-Brownsville, TX	44	San Juan, PR
20	Houston, TX	45	San Francisco-Oakland-San Jose, CA
21	Indianapolis, IN	46	Seattle-Tacoma, WA
22	Jacksonville, FL	47	Springfield, MO
23	Joplin-Pittsburgh, MO - KS	48	Tulsa, OK
24	Kansas City, MO	49	Washington, DC
25	Las Vegas, NV		