



NEWS

Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D. C. 20554

News Media Information 202 / 418-0500
Internet: <http://www.fcc.gov>
TTY: 1-888-835-5322

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

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NEWS CONTACT:
Mark Wigfield, 202-418-0253
Email: mark.wigfield@fcc.gov

BROADBAND PLAN'S WORKING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR KEY NATIONAL PRIORITIES UNVEILED

Plans Shows How Broadband Can Transform Key Sectors to Provide Better Quality of Life

Washington, D.C. -- Working recommendations meant to bring the innovative force of broadband to healthcare, education, energy and the environment, government, public safety and homeland security, job training, and small business were unveiled today at a meeting of the Federal Communications Commission.

With the deadline for delivering a National Broadband Plan to Congress on March 17 less than a month away, the team developing the plan highlighted elements under consideration in the "national purposes" section of the plan. The working recommendations are designed to support America's competitive advantages in key sectors of the economy and society.

Government plays a major role in these sectors as policymaker, buyer, or supplier, but its policies have often inhibited or failed to provide incentives for investment in and innovative use of broadband. The working recommendations presented today are intended to integrate broadband into the country's priorities and deliver to consumers high-quality healthcare, world-class education, smarter energy tools, 21st century jobs, greater public safety, more opportunities for civic engagement, and a better quality of life.

Key themes include using broadband to foster innovative approaches to intractable problems. Broadband can help the country achieve better results in important areas by facilitating the flow of information; removing barriers of time and space; and making data accessible for research, applications, and decision-making, all while protecting privacy.

Following are some of the key challenges and working recommendations to address them by subject area. More detail can be found in the presentation made to the Commission, which is posted at <http://reboot.fcc.gov/open-meetings/2010/february>.

PROVIDING JOBS AND CREATING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

- **Challenge:** The current job training system is fragmented and difficult to expand or contract to accommodate changing demands for service.
- **Solutions:** Accelerate efforts to deliver employment assistance, including job training and placement services, on a scalable online platform.

- **Challenge:** Small businesses are less likely to use broadband to increase productivity.
- **Solutions:** Launch public-private partnership to expand efforts to provide technology training for small and disadvantaged businesses.

IMPROVING HEALTHCARE AND CONTROLLING COSTS

- **Challenge:** Remote monitoring of vital signs and electronic health records could save \$700 billion over 15-25 years, but the U.S. lags in health IT adoption.
- **Solutions:** Create conditions for broader adoption and innovation in e-care technologies; reduce regulatory barriers to increase access to care.
- **Challenge:** Many healthcare providers lack broadband connections or pay high prices.
- **Solutions:** Ensure all providers have access to affordable broadband by transforming the Rural Health Care Program to subsidize both ongoing costs and network deployment, while expanding the definition of eligible providers.

PROVIDING MORE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AND IMPROVING OUTCOMES

- **Challenge:** While 97% percent of public elementary and secondary schools have Internet access, speeds are insufficient.
- **Solution:** Upgrade E-rate program to provide additional connectivity, flexibility and efficiency.
- **Challenge:** Online learning can reduce time required to learn by half and increase course completion rates, but there are barriers to wider adoption.
- **Solutions:** Remove regulatory barriers to online learning; increase supply of digital content and online learning systems; promote digital literacy for students and teachers.

PROMOTING ENERGY INDEPENDENCE AND EFFICIENCY

- **Challenge:** The intermittency of renewable power and the increased loads from electric vehicles will strain the current electric grid, unless we modernize the grid with broadband and advanced communications.
- **Solutions:** Ensure that broadband is integrated into the smart grid by promoting and improving commercial broadband networks, better coordinating and standardizing private utility networks, and enabling partnerships with public safety networks. A smart grid can reduce greenhouse gasses from electricity generation by up to 12% by 2030.
- **Challenge:** Consumers lack access to and control of their own digital energy data to understand and manage their energy use, which limits the innovation potential and energy savings of smarter homes and smarter buildings.
- **Solutions:** Ensure consumers have access to and privacy of real-time and historical digital energy information through changes to state and federal policies.

ENHANCING GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE & INCREASING CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

- **Challenge:** The government lags in adoption of Internet technologies, hindering quality of service and civic engagement.
- **Solutions:** Release more government data on digital platforms; enable citizen-centric online services; encourage greater use of social media.

- **Challenge:** Federal assets not used effectively to spur local adoption and deployment of broadband.
- **Solutions:** Have federal buildings serve as anchor tenants for unserved and underserved communities; encourage greater coordination in broadband grants; open federal NETWORKX contract to state and local governments.

INCREASING PUBLIC SAFETY & HOMELAND SECURITY

- **Challenge:** First responders lack a nationwide interoperable broadband wireless network dedicated to the provision of public safety services.
- **Solutions:** Enable the construction and operation of an interoperable nationwide broadband wireless public safety network with appropriate capacity and resiliency, leveraging commercial technology; creation of an Emergency Response Interoperability Center to ensure nationwide interoperability; and appropriation of grant funding for network construction, operation and evolution.
- **Challenge:** Transition to Next Generation 9-1-1 networks and emergency alerting is hampered by a lack of intergovernmental coordination, as well as jurisdictional, legal and funding issues.
- **Solutions:** Promote innovation in the development and deployment of the Next Generation of 9-1-1 networks and emergency alerting systems by fully embracing broadband technologies and ensuring that coordination, jurisdictional, legal and funding impediments are avoided.

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The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 directed the FCC to submit a National Broadband Plan to Congress that addresses broadband deployment, adoption, affordability, and the use of broadband to advance solutions to national priorities. More information about development of the National Broadband Plan can be found at www.broadband.gov