



# NEWS

**Federal Communications Commission**  
**445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, S.W.**  
**Washington, D. C. 20554**

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

---

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).

---

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
March 3, 2011

**MEDIA CONTACT:**  
Robert Kenny: 202-418-0506  
Email: [Robert.Kenny@fcc.gov](mailto:Robert.Kenny@fcc.gov)

## **FCC CHAIRMAN GENACHOWSKI TAKES STEPS TO INCREASE ACCESS TO BROADBAND AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES FOR ALL AMERICANS**

Washington, D.C. – The Federal Communications Commission, under the leadership of Chairman Julius Genachowski, this week took a series of steps to expand access and opportunity to broadband and telecommunications services across the nation.

Chairman Genachowski said, “In our 21<sup>st</sup> century digital economy, broadband – high-speed Internet – is the great equalizer – giving every American with an Internet connection access to a world of new opportunities previously beyond their reach.

Our new initiatives and reforms to existing programs are aimed at narrowing the digital divide. I look forward to working with my fellow commissioners, the public, industry, civil rights organizations, schools and health care facilities across the nation to eliminate the digital divide once and for all.”

The FCC approved several items this week to strengthen and improve access to broadband and telecommunications services for persons with disabilities, Native Americans, low-income consumers and small businesses.

The Commission voted this week to adopt the following items:

### **Implementing the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act of 2010**

- A Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) that will help promote persons’ with disabilities access to advanced communications services through manufacturing requirements, enhanced enforcement efforts and expanded access to mobile broadband services;
- A NPRM that would reinstate the Commission’s video description rules for video programming for broadcast and paid television; and
- A NPRM seeking public comment on whether participation and contribution to the Telecommunications Relay Service Fund should be extended to non-interconnected voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) service providers.

### **Expanding Native Americans Access to Broadband and Telecommunications Services**

- A Notice of Inquiry (NOI) to improve communications services for Native Nations that seeks comment on a number of issues, including greater broadband deployment, the need for a uniform definition of Tribal lands to be used agency-wide in rulemakings, and the importance of strengthening the FCC’s nation-to-nation consultation process with Native Nations;
- A NPRM on ways to expand the efficient use of spectrum over Tribal lands so as to improve access to mobile wireless communications, which will provide consumers with more choices on how they communicate, share information and get their news; and

- Two orders and a NPRM to help expand opportunities for Tribal entities to provide broadcast radio services to Native communities.

**Lifeline/LinkUp Reforms: Ensuring Eligible Low-Income Americans Have Access to Phone Services Long-Term**

- Strengthening protections against waste, fraud, and abuse, including through creation of a National Accountability Database to verify consumer eligibility;
- Taking immediate steps to create a uniform national framework for validating ongoing eligibility;
- Allowing discounts to be used for bundled voice-broadband service plans;
- Launching pilot programs to test strategies for supporting broadband service; and
- Evaluating a cap on the program, either temporary or permanent, in light of recent, rapid growth.

**Section 257 Triennial Report: Eliminating Market Entry Barriers for Entrepreneurs and Other Small Businesses**

- This Report highlights many of the FCC's actions to advance and support policies, rules and regulations that remove barriers to entry and place undue burdens on small businesses, including those owned by minorities and women. The report recommends the following among other ideas and ongoing efforts:
  - Continue to partner with the Small Business Administration (SBA) and assist in coordinating special small business size standards with the SBA to promote business growth;
  - Partner with civil rights and other public interest groups to promote the expansion of small businesses;
  - Promote innovation in mobile and wireline broadband technologies through 4G mobile broadband and Next Generation wireline broadband technologies;
  - Foster greater competition in the market for providing video service to apartment and condo complexes, and other real estate developments by instituting a ban on exclusivity clauses in the provision of video services to multiple dwelling units;
  - Increase outreach to Tribal Nations on an ongoing basis, with emphasis on expanding telecommunications access and market entry in Indian Country; and
  - Focus on compliance activities to eliminate any anti-competitive or discriminatory business practices by telecommunications carriers that established barriers to entry by small businesses. This is typically accomplished through the use of forfeitures and other enforcement tools imposed on violators.

-FCC-

News about the Federal Communications Commission can also be found at [www.fcc.gov](http://www.fcc.gov)