

# **FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION**

## **Strategic Plan 2012-2016**



## Message from the Chairman

It is my great pleasure to introduce the Federal Communications Commission's Strategic Plan for fiscal years 2012 to 2016.

The FCC's work centers on communications networks and technology, which can connect our country, increase opportunity and prosperity, spur American competitiveness and global leadership, strengthen our democracy, protect public safety, and in so many ways transform lives for the better. Our mission is to harness the power of broadband Internet to drive economic growth and benefit all Americans.

With each passing day, communications devices and networks become more essential to the fabric of the daily lives of all Americans. They are how we receive news, information, and entertainment; how we stay in touch with our friends and family; how we work at and run our businesses, large and small; how we communicate and coordinate in times of emergency; and how we—and people across the globe—learn about and participate in our government and express our views.

Our country faces a number of significant challenges and opportunities for which communications—and broadband Internet in particular—play an essential role: our economy, education, health care, energy, and public safety, to name a few. If we can harness the power of broadband to tackle these challenges and seize these opportunities, we will make a positive difference in the lives of this and future generations.

I look forward to working closely with Congress; other federal, state, and local agencies; and stakeholders from across the private sector, including commercial and non-profit entities, as the Commission implements its plan. I believe the strategies outlined in this plan will allow the Commission to address these and other challenges in the years to come.



Julius Genachowski  
Chairman

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## Mission

As specified in section one of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended (the Communications Act) the mission of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is to “make available, so far as possible, to all the people of the United States, without discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, or sex, rapid, efficient, Nation-wide and world-wide wire and radio communication service with adequate facilities at reasonable charges.”<sup>1</sup> In addition, section one provides that the Commission was created “for the purpose of the national defense” and “for the purpose of promoting safety of life and property through the use of wire and radio communications.”<sup>2</sup>

## Vision Statement

The FCC’s vision is to promote innovation, investment, competition, and consumer empowerment in and on top of the communications platforms of today and the future – maximizing the power of communications technology to grow our economy, create jobs, enhance U.S. competitiveness, and unleash broad opportunity and a higher quality of life for all Americans.

## About the Federal Communications Commission

The Federal Communications Commission is an independent regulatory agency of the United States (U.S.) Government. The FCC is charged with regulating interstate and international communications by radio, television, wire, satellite, and cable. The Commission also regulates telecommunications services for hearing-impaired and speech-impaired individuals, as set forth in Title IV of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The FCC is directed by five Commissioners appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate for five-year terms, except when filling the unexpired term of a previous Commissioner. Only three Commissioners can be from the same political party at any given time. The President designates one of the Commissioners to serve as Chairman.

The FCC is organized by function. There are seven Bureaus and ten Offices. The Bureaus and the Office of Engineering and Technology process applications for licenses to operate facilities and provide communications services; analyze complaints from consumers and other licensees; conduct investigations; develop and implement regulatory programs; and organize and participate in hearings and workshops. Generally, the Offices provide specialized support services. The Bureaus and Offices are:

- **The Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau** develops and implements consumer policies, including disability access and policies affecting Tribal nations. The Bureau serves as the public face of the Commission through outreach and education, as well as responding to consumer inquiries and complaints. The Bureau also maintains collaborative partnerships with state, local, and Tribal governments in such critical areas as emergency preparedness and implementation of new technologies.

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<sup>1</sup> 47 U.S.C. § 151.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

- **The Enforcement Bureau** enforces the Communications Act and the FCC’s rules. It protects consumers, ensures efficient use of spectrum, furthers public safety, and promotes competition.
- **The International Bureau** administers the FCC’s international telecommunications and satellite programs and policies, including licensing and regulatory functions. The Bureau promotes pro-competitive policies abroad, coordinating the Commission’s global spectrum activities and advocating U.S. interests in international communications and competition. The Bureau works to promote a high-quality, reliable, globally interconnected, and interoperable communications infrastructure.
- **The Media Bureau** recommends, develops, and administers the policy and licensing programs relating to electronic media, including radio and broadcast, cable, and satellite television in the United States and its territories.
- **The Public Safety & Homeland Security Bureau** supports initiatives that strengthen public safety and emergency response capabilities to better enable the FCC to assist the public, law enforcement, hospitals, the communications industry, and all levels of government in the event of a natural disaster, pandemic, or terrorist attack.
- **The Wireless Telecommunications Bureau** is responsible for wireless telecommunications programs and policies in the United States and its territories, including licensing of wireless communications providers. Wireless communications services include cellular, paging, personal communications, and other radio services used by businesses and private citizens. The Bureau also conducts auctions of licenses for the communications spectrum.
- **The Wireline Competition Bureau** develops and recommends policy goals, objectives, programs, and plans on matters concerning wireline telecommunications (*e.g.*, telephone landlines, and fixed—as opposed to mobile—broadband), striving to ensure choice, opportunity, and fairness in promoting the development and widespread availability of such communications services. The Bureau has particular responsibility for the Universal Service Fund, a public-private partnership that helps connect all Americans to communications networks.
- **The Office of Administrative Law Judges** is composed of judges who preside over hearings and issue decisions on matters referred to them by the Commission.
- **The Office of Communications Business Opportunities** promotes competition and innovation in the provision and ownership of telecommunications services by supporting opportunities for small businesses as well as women and minority-owned communications businesses.
- **The Office of Engineering and Technology** advises the Commission on technical and engineering matters. This Office develops and administers FCC decisions regarding spectrum allocations and grants equipment authorizations and experimental licenses.
- **The Office of the General Counsel** serves as the Commission’s chief legal advisor.
- **The Office of the Inspector General** conducts and supervises audits and investigations relating to FCC programs and operations.
- **The Office of Legislative Affairs** serves as the liaison between the FCC and Congress, as well as other Federal agencies.

- **The Office of the Managing Director** administers and manages the FCC.
- **The Office of Media Relations** informs the media of FCC decisions and serves as the FCC's main point of contact with the media.
- **The Office of Strategic Planning and Policy Analysis** works with the Chairman, Commissioners, Bureaus, and Offices in strategic planning and policy development for the agency. It also provides research, advice, and analysis of complex, novel, and non-traditional economic and technological communications issues.
- **The Office of Workplace Diversity** ensures that the FCC provides employment opportunities for all persons regardless of race, color, sex, national origin, religion, age, disability, or sexual preference.

## **Strategic Goals**

The FCC is responsible to Congress and the American people for ensuring an orderly policy framework within which communications products and services can be efficiently and effectively provided to consumers and businesses. Equally important, the FCC must also address the communications aspects of public safety, health, and emergency operations; ensure the universal availability of basic telecommunications service; make communications services accessible to all people; and protect and empower consumers in the communications marketplace. The FCC, in accordance with its statutory authority and in support of its mission, has established eight strategic goals. They are:

### **Strategic Goal 1: Connect America**

*Maximize Americans' access to – and the adoption of—affordable fixed and mobile broadband where they live, work, and travel.*

### **Strategic Goal 2: Maximize Benefits of Spectrum**

*Maximize the overall benefits of spectrum for the United States.*

### **Strategic Goal 3: Protect and Empower Consumers**

*Empower consumers by ensuring that they have the tools and information they need to make informed choices; protect consumers from harm in the communications market.*

### **Strategic Goal 4: Promote Innovation, Investment, and America's Global Competitiveness**

*Promote innovation in a manner that improves the nation's ability to compete in the global economy, creating a virtuous circle that results in more investment and in turn enables additional innovation.*

### **Strategic Goal 5: Promote Competition**

*Ensure a competitive market for communications and media services to foster innovation, investment, and job creation and to ensure consumers have meaningful choice in affordable services.*

### **Strategic Goal 6: Public Safety and Homeland Security**

*Promote the availability of reliable, interoperable, redundant, rapidly restorable critical communications infrastructures that are supportive of all required services.*

### **Strategic Goal 7: Advance Key National Purposes**

*Through international and national interagency efforts, advance the use of broadband for key national purposes.*

### **Strategic Goal 8: Operational Excellence**

*Make the FCC a model for excellence in government by effectively managing the Commission's human, information, and financial resources; by making decisions based on sound data and analyses; and by maintaining a commitment to transparent and responsive processes that encourage public involvement and best serve the public interest.*

In carrying out its eight strategic goals, the FCC has identified performance objectives associated with each strategic goal. Commission management annually develops targets and measures related to each performance goal to provide direction toward accomplishing those goals. Targets and measures are published in the FCC's Performance Plan, submitted with the Commission's annual budget request to Congress. Results of the Commission's efforts to meet its goals, targets and measures are found in the FCC's Annual Performance Report published each February. The FCC also issues a Summary of Performance and Financial Results every February, providing a concise, citizen-focused review of the agency's accomplishments.

The Sections that follow provide the overall objectives for each of the strategic goals. In addition, key factors external to the FCC and beyond its control are identified for each goal. These key factors can significantly affect the FCC's achievement of its general goals. Finally, strategies for achieving these goals and objectives are outlined.



## Goal 1: Connect America

*Vision: Maximize Americans' access to – and the adoption of—affordable fixed and mobile broadband where they live, work, and travel.*

**Objective 1.1: Maximize broadband adoption by promoting affordability and removing other barriers to adoption by all Americans, including those with low incomes and disabilities.**

Broadband for all Americans has gone from being a luxury to a necessity for full participation in our economy and society. Broadband adoption is key to America's competitiveness. More than 80 percent of Fortune 500 companies today require online job applications. Students who have access to broadband at home have a seven percent higher graduation rate than students without access. Consumers with broadband at home can save more than \$7,000 a year from discounts available exclusively online. Unfortunately, America's broadband adoption rate is approximately 67 percent, compared with over 90 percent in South Korea and Singapore. One-third of all Americans – 100 million people – haven't adopted broadband at home. According to research from the PEW Charitable Trust, there are three primary reasons for non-adoption: cost, digital literacy, and relevance. The FCC will implement several broadband adoption initiatives challenging the broadband ecosystem to help close the adoption gap. For example, under its Connect to Compete initiative, the FCC facilitated the creation of a coalition of Internet service providers, technology companies, and nonprofit organizations to make available for hard-pressed Americans low-cost computers and broadband service, microfinancing to help families with upfront costs of connection, and digital literacy and job training.

**Objective 1.2: Maximize availability of fixed and mobile broadband to all Americans and community anchor institutions, including in rural and insular areas and Tribal lands, while ensuring that universal service programs are efficient, effective, and impose no greater burden on consumers and businesses than necessary.**

Broadband empowers people by providing access to information and applications, and increasingly affordable means to communicate within communities and around the world. However, the Commission's universal service programs, when established, did not envision the critical need for broadband access. The cost of the Universal Service Fund (USF) grew significantly for many years, resulting in an increasing financial burden on the consumers that pay in to USF. For these reasons, the FCC is implementing comprehensive reforms of USF and a related system of regulated payments among carriers for the exchange of voice traffic known as intercarrier compensation (ICC), in order to accelerate broadband build-out to the 18 million Americans living in rural areas who currently have no access to robust broadband infrastructure. This reform will expand the benefits of high-speed Internet to millions of consumers in every part of the country by transforming the existing USF into a new Connect America Fund focused on broadband, while minimizing the burden USF and ICC place on consumers.

**Objective 1.3: Enable the private sector to accelerate the deployment and expansion of broadband networks by minimizing regulatory and other barriers to broadband build out.**

The FCC is removing regulatory barriers to broadband infrastructure deployment, speeding build-out and reducing costs. The Commission adopted a shot clock to speed local review of tower and antenna applications, and both streamlined the process and substantially reduced the cost of attaching broadband equipment to utility poles.

***Objective 1.4: Measure and monitor the country's progress on broadband.***

Section 706 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 requires the Commission to encourage deployment of advanced telecommunications capability. To implement this requirement, the Commission has undertaken regular inquiries to determine whether such capability is being deployed to all Americans on a reasonable and timely basis and to take action, if necessary, to accelerate broadband deployment. By focusing resources and improving its capability to collect meaningful data, the FCC is better able to assess the state of broadband deployment in the U.S. For example, the FCC's Broadband Progress Reports rely on the collection of nationwide data about actual broadband deployment, rather than the estimates based on broadband adoption used by previous reports. With more accurate data, the FCC will target its programs and initiatives to communities and regions where efforts will be most effective in increasing broadband deployment and adoption.

***External Factors Affecting Achievement of This Goal:***

- Despite significant recent developments, broadband infrastructure is not yet universally deployed, particularly in rural areas. Some platforms are more suitable than others for deployment in certain areas of the country due to physical impediments. As broadband infrastructure continues to develop, the industry must seek cost effective solutions to deploy high speed broadband to all Americans regardless of where they reside.
- From the perspective of many consumers, the price of a personal computer and broadband service can inhibit their choice to adopt broadband. Of particular concern are consumers in groups that have significantly lower broadband adoption rates than the national average, including people with low incomes, people with disabilities, and Native Americans.
- Significant and necessary changes in the regulatory environment will often be litigated. Decisions on pending court cases addressing broadband regulation may ultimately affect such regulations.
- The appropriate policy and regulatory roles for the Commission in the dynamic broadband marketplace must be clearly understood throughout the industry, by legislators, and by the public.

***Strategies:***

- The Commission will employ rigorous and effective policy analysis as well as sound data-driven decision making in addressing policies regarding broadband deployment and adoption.
- The Commission will establish improved oversight and internal controls for its universal service programs to improve management of those programs and reduce waste, fraud, and abuse.
- The FCC will create and establish innovative, targeted outreach programs to overcome barriers to broadband adoption.
- Working in partnership with state, local, and tribal governments, the Commission will facilitate discussions among key groups of constituents, including industry and consumer groups, to identify and establish best practices.

## **Goal 2: Maximize Benefits of Spectrum**

*Vision: Maximize the overall benefits of spectrum for the United States.*

**Objective 2.1: Develop and implement flexible, market-oriented spectrum allocation and assignment policies that promote innovation, investment, jobs and consumer benefits, including by ensuring meaningful availability of unlicensed spectrum.**

The Commission's allocation and assignment of spectrum must continue to evolve towards more flexible, market-oriented approaches to increase the opportunity for technologically innovative and efficient spectrum use and to ensure adequate spectrum is available for broadband, and other purposes. Rulemaking proceedings will be conducted to enable more flexible operations, and allow for repurposing of spectrum. The FCC will also evaluate and refine, where necessary, its spectrum assignment policies and procedures, including but not limited to its auction processes. The Commission will work with other regulators around the world to promote the importance and benefits of implementing market-oriented spectrum reforms and spectrum harmonization. In conjunction with the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) and the Department of State, the FCC will develop proposals for reforming the processes and policies of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) so that international spectrum allocations can be updated on a more timely and flexible basis.

Working through its rulemaking and other proceedings, the Commission will delineate the rights and responsibilities of spectrum users so that the potential for harmful interference can be minimized and opportunities for new spectrum uses, including both licensed and unlicensed uses, can be explored. The Commission will work closely with NTIA, as well as regulators in Mexico, Canada, and other countries, to identify and resolve instances of harmful interference on an international basis and to avoid harmful interference in the future.

**Objective 2.2: Develop and implement policies that support highly efficient use of spectrum.**

The Commission, through its rulemaking proceedings, will take steps to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of spectrum use. These steps may include, for example, (1) exploring new and innovative means of fostering secondary markets for spectrum that reduce entry barriers; (2) minimizing harmful interference; and (3) encouraging the development of new technologies, such as software defined radio, cognitive radio, and dynamic frequency selection that may allow for shared spectrum use. The FCC will work with regulators outside the U.S. to determine steps that may be needed, on a global, regional, or bi-lateral basis, to encourage more efficient spectrum use.

**Objective 2.3: Serve as a resource domestically and internationally on issues involving use and management of our spectrum resources.**

The Commission, as appropriate, will provide Congress and the Executive Branch with timely and expert professional advice and information concerning efficient and effective spectrum utilization. The Commission will publish public notices regarding spectrum issues, keep its spectrum-related web pages current, and conduct conferences regarding spectrum management and use, so that spectrum users and other consumers have access to licensing and technical information. The Commission will actively participate in the work of the international bodies that address spectrum issues, lending our expertise, knowledge, and recommended approaches to complex spectrum issues.

***External Factors Affecting Achievement of This Goal:***

- Increasing demand for spectrum requires new and innovative management techniques to allocate, assign, and use spectrum more efficiently and effectively. Methods for avoiding and mitigating harmful interference, and increasing opportunities for flexible use, require continued study.
- Where spectrum reallocation is desirable, crafting economic incentives for incumbent spectrum users to relocate continues to be challenging.
- Legislation could impact the FCC's spectrum management policies. Differences among international and domestic spectrum allocation policies may lead to disparity and inconsistency among U.S. and foreign licensing processes. Decisions in pending court cases may affect Commission action in this area.

***Strategies:***

- The Commission will employ rigorous and effective technical and economic analysis in developing policies that enhance research and development and spectrum access, management and use.
- The FCC will build upon the creation of its Spectrum Dashboard by adding more comprehensive data on spectrum bands, including commercial, state and local allocations, and will implement ongoing improvements that will assist in spectrum policy planning and decision making, promote a robust secondary market in spectrum, and improve communications services in all areas of the United States, including rural, underserved and Tribal areas.
- The FCC will examine additional positive incentives that may assist in the development of secondary markets, such as reducing secondary market transaction costs and encouraging and facilitating the use of dynamic spectrum leasing arrangements that harness emerging technologies.

## **Goal 3: Protect and Empower Consumers**

*Vision: Empower consumers by ensuring that they have the tools and information they need to make informed choices; protect consumers from harm in the communications market.*

### **Objective 3.1: Promote transparency and disclosure.**

The Commission is pursuing an aggressive Consumer Empowerment Agenda. Our Agenda is focused on harnessing technology and transparency to empower consumers with the information they need to make smart decisions. Mobile devices are increasingly an essential part of Americans' everyday lives. But as Americans increase their use of voice, text, and data capabilities, avoiding a sudden, unexpected increase in their monthly wireless bills can be a challenge. According to a recent survey by the FCC, one in six mobile users, totaling 30 million Americans, have experienced bill shock. Common cases of bill shock occur when a subscriber is charged for unknowingly exceeding his or her allotments for voice, text or data, or gets hit with roaming charges that are unexpected. Consumers can also be victimized by mystery fees on bills that subscribers weren't aware of and that, in a number of cases, were unauthorized. The FCC is working to ensure that providers warn customers when they are about to exceed their wireless plan allocations, and to provide clear and simple disclosures of fees. Armed with this information, as well as providing data on broadband performance, the FCC is striving to give consumers the tools and information they need to make the market work.

### **Objective 3.2: Act swiftly and consistently in the use of enforcement authority to protect consumers.**

Among the Commission's most important responsibilities is protecting and empowering consumers. As communications networks and technologies become increasingly complex and essential to Americans' everyday lives, the Commission must be a vigilant watchdog for the consumer. The FCC will continue its vigorous enforcement of communications statutes and regulations, taking appropriate actions against those who seek to deceive consumers or otherwise violate the Commission's rules. The FCC will ensure that Commission proceedings take account of consumer interests, and that consumer protection and empowerment policies apply consistently and reasonably across technologies and bureaus at the FCC. We will continue to provide consumers with up-to-date, user-friendly advisories concerning their rights, responsibilities, service options, and information to make informed decisions.

### **Objective 3.3: Develop and maintain policies that encourage variety in media programming sources and services for consumers.**

Increased competition, changing ownership patterns, converging markets and industries, and deployment of new technologies have challenged both the legal and economic foundations of the Commission's media regulation. The FCC seeks to maintain an environment that fosters a variety of news, public service, and other media programming to serve an increasingly diverse American citizenry. The Commission will continue to examine its current rules and make changes as required to accommodate the policy goals of competition, diversity, and localism within the evolving media landscape.

***External Factors Affecting Achievement of This Goal:***

- Advances in technology, while increasing benefits for consumers, also increase the number and complexity of choices facing those consumers. The more devices they buy, the more services they subscribe to, the more confusing the communications marketplace can be for consumers.
- Ongoing changes in the methods of delivering news and entertainment programming, may introduce economic uncertainty and thus, risk, into communications markets. Economic factors may spur consolidation within the media industries that could potentially affect competition, diversity and localism.

***Strategies:***

- Processes and procedures for handling and maintaining information will be focused on greater openness while striking the proper balance between transparency and the protection of national security and personal privacy.
- Invest in technology and technical staff to investigate reports of interference and violations of the FCC's rules, and take swift and appropriate actions to remedy those violations that interrupt critical communications.
- The Commission will take appropriate enforcement action to ensure compliance with consumer provisions of the Communications Act and the Commission's rules.
- Even as technology changes, the FCC will continue to serve as a clearinghouse for information and tools that arm consumers with the knowledge they need to make effective choices among communications offerings.
- The Commission will work to promote the rights of consumers with disabilities as well, by monitoring the performance of the Telecommunications Relay Service fund, which provides funding for telephone services that allow persons with hearing or speech disabilities to place and receive telephone calls. The Commission will also implement provisions of the Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act of 2010 to ensure that modern and innovative communications technologies are accessible to people with disabilities.

## **Goal 4: Promote Innovation, Investment, and America’s Global Competitiveness**

**Vision:** *Promote innovation in a manner that improves the nation’s ability to compete in the global economy, creating a virtuous circle that results in more investment and in turn enables additional innovation.*

### **Objective 4.1: Foster international engagement and cooperation on communications policy issues, including the broadband innovation initiative and free flow of data across borders.**

The FCC will actively participate in bilateral and multilateral global discussions on communications policy issues in coordination with other U.S. governmental agencies, particularly NTIA and the Department of State, and will engage in meetings and conferences with foreign regulators to foster sound communications policies. We will work with U.S. government agencies and foreign regulators to promote international trade policies for communications services and equipment, such as Mutual Recognition Agreements for telecommunications product approval. The Commission will also be a leader in addressing 21<sup>st</sup> century global technology issues, such as preservation of a free and open Internet, and protecting information and security while enabling the continued growth of cloud computing.

### **Objective 4.2: Advocate U.S. spectrum interests in the international arena**

The FCC will work to secure international spectrum allocations that allow for new services and protect incumbent services from interference. We will prepare and coordinate proposals with the public and other federal government agencies for negotiations in the international arena. For example, the FCC formed an advisory committee under the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) to provide the FCC with public views and recommendations in preparation for its participation in the 2012 World Radiocommunication Conference.

### **Objective 4.3: Preserve the free and open Internet as a platform for economic growth, innovation, job-creation, and global competitiveness.**

One of the most important features of the Internet is its openness. It uses free, publicly available standards that anyone can access and build to, and it treats all traffic that flows across the network in roughly the same way. This design has made it possible for anyone, anywhere to easily launch innovative applications and services, revolutionizing the way people communicate, participate, create, and do business. The FCC is focused on ensuring that every American has access to open and robust high-speed Internet service. The FCC adopted Open Internet rules to ensure that the Internet remains a powerful platform for innovation and job creation; to empower consumers and entrepreneurs; to protect free expression; to promote competition; to increase certainty in the marketplace by providing greater predictability for all stakeholders regarding federal policy; and to spur investment in our nation’s broadband networks. The Commission will continue to work to ensure the openness of the Internet, and will vigorously enforce its rules.

### **External Factors Affecting Achievement of This Goal:**

- Traditional providers of one type of service are increasingly entering new markets by offering voice, video, and broadband data services that compete with incumbent providers. Consumers now have access to more services than ever before. The development of new technologies and product

- Mobility and personalization are also major trends in communications technology today. Both are dependent on wireless growth and innovation, as well as ease of interconnection with traditional networks. As the demand for mobile technology continues to grow and the data needs of users increase, the need for available spectrum increases as well. The FCC has highlighted this spectrum “crunch” and will continue to work to find ways to unleash spectrum.
- The global marketplace is a competitive arena in which the U.S. must work effectively to negotiate international agreements and promote policies that attract investment in the U.S. The FCC can help negotiate agreements with its expertise in communications policy; however, other international relations issues outside of communications policy may impact international agreements as well.

***Strategies:***

- The FCC will continue its efforts to understand both the economic and technical aspects of the global telecommunications marketplace.
- The Commission will use innovative thinking in order to identify ways to encourage the best use of spectrum while maintaining appropriate protections for U.S. spectrum interests.
- The FCC will provide effective negotiation skills in international relations utilizing its knowledge of communications law both domestically and internationally.



## **Goal 5: Promote Competition**

**Vision:** *Ensure a competitive market for communications and media services to foster investment and job creation, and to ensure consumers have meaningful choice in affordable services.*

**Objective 5.1: Ensure effective policies are in place to promote and protect competition for the benefit of consumers, including appropriate interconnection policies for communications networks.**

The Commission will implement and enforce policies that ensure that U.S. consumers benefit from competition in domestic and global services. Domestically, the Commission will implement rules and policies that promote open and competitive entry by communications service providers. The Commission will seek to establish a consistent and transparent regulatory framework across all communications platforms to encourage competition, and will improve the data it collects regarding the broadband market to ensure it can effectively evaluate competition policies. The FCC will continue to engage consumers through its outreach and education initiatives to facilitate informed choice in the competitive communications marketplace. To ensure that U.S. consumers benefit from pro-competitive policies worldwide, the Commission will promote pro-competitive policies in discussions with regulators from other countries, when participating in U.S. government delegations, and when supporting other U.S. agencies as they negotiate international agreements that affect communications. The Commission, in conformance with existing laws and policies, will identify and eliminate market entry barriers for small entities.

**Objective 5.2: Promote pro-competitive and universal access policies worldwide.**

The FCC will actively participate in bilateral and multilateral global discussions and debate on issues in coordination with other U.S. governmental agencies related to competition and universal access, including access for people with disabilities. In addition, the FCC will participate in meetings and conferences with foreign regulators to foster competition in foreign markets and promote universal service policies.

**Objective 5.3: Ensure expeditious and thorough review of proposed transactions to ensure they serve the public interest.**

The FCC will continue to expeditiously and thoroughly review applications for the transfer of control and assignment of licenses and authorizations that underlie proposed transactions and mergers between entities in the media and communications industries. The Commission's goal is a faster and more consistent review and analysis of applications while ensuring that the public interest would be served by approving the transaction. The Commission will ensure that its procedures and analysis of transactions are transparent and consistent across its various bureaus and offices.

***External Factors Affecting Achievement of This Goal:***

- New technologies are challenging existing regulatory structures domestically and internationally, while enabling consumers to have access to more services than ever before. For example, traditional providers of one type of service are increasingly entering new markets by offering voice, video, and broadband data services that compete with incumbent providers of such services. Mobility and personalization are major trends in communications technology today. Both are dependent on wireless growth and innovation, as well as ease of interconnection with traditional networks.

- The Commission must conduct effective policy and technical analysis, have access to current and relevant data in developing competition policies and rules, and take enforcement action where necessary. The Commission must consult with industry and maintain ongoing relationships with regulators across the country and throughout the world. The Commission must provide expert guidance to other U.S. government agencies regarding communications policy and technology.
- Legislation as well as litigation may affect Commission action in this area. Legal issues related to the open Internet and Commission decisions concerning mergers and transactions may be contested and subjected to judicial scrutiny.

***Strategies:***

- The Commission will continue to collect and evaluate information on competition in the communications markets.
- FCC staff will continually review the Commission's rules to determine what rules need to be implemented, revised, or eliminated to achieve competition objectives effectively and efficiently.
- The Commission will take appropriate enforcement action to ensure compliance with the competitive provisions of the Communications Act and the Commission's rules.
- The Commission will continue to monitor trends in consumer complaints and coordinate with state and other federal agencies in an effort to identify marketplace practices that negatively affect competition.
- The Commission will work with regulators from other countries to promote pro-competitive policies and safeguard U.S. consumers from anti-competitive practices.

## Goal 6: Public Safety and Homeland Security

*Vision: Promote the availability of reliable, interoperable, redundant, rapidly restorable critical communications infrastructures that are supportive of all required services.*

**Objective 6.1: Promote access to effective communications services, including next generation services, in emergency situations across a range of platforms by public safety, health, defense, and other emergency personnel, as well as all consumers in need.**

The Commission continues to facilitate the deployment of 911 services and technologies and to pave the way for greater capabilities, including by helping define the system architecture and develop a transition plan to establish a digital, Internet Protocol (IP)-based foundation for the delivery of multimedia 9-1-1 "calls." 911 call centers could receive text, pictures and videos from members of the public, providing additional information to first responders as well as an additional means for persons who are injured, witness an accident or are disabled to contact a 911 dispatcher. The Commission will also take steps to ensure that all segments of the communications industry can provide effective and technologically up-to-date public alerts and warnings to the American public, including through the Emergency Alert System (EAS) and the Personal Localized Alerting Network (PLAN).

The Commission will lay the groundwork for ensuring that public safety has access to a nationwide interoperable broadband network. The Commission will promote and facilitate participation in priority service programs, such as Telecommunications Service Priority (TSP) and Wireless Priority Service (WPS), which provide priority telecommunications services to emergency responders and national security personnel so they can coordinate and respond to crises. The Commission will facilitate participation in the EAS by the full range of communications providers.

**Objective 6.2: Evaluate and strengthen measures for protecting the nation's critical communications infrastructure and facilitate rapid restoration of the U.S. communications infrastructure and facilities after disruption by any cause, including cyberattacks.**

The FCC is committed to ensuring the public's safety through the reliability of our nation's communications networks, including during natural and manmade disasters. The Commission will provide leadership in the protection of the Nation's critical communications infrastructure, including working with public safety and stakeholders to maximize the availability, interoperability, and reliability of communications.

Communications providers also face threats to critical Internet infrastructures. The FCC will determine what safeguards may be needed to protect our nation's commercial communications infrastructure from cyberattack, and work with all levels of government and with industry to develop and implement solutions that promote confidence in the safety and reliability of IP-based communications.

**Objective 6.3: Implement, maintain and conduct exercises for the FCC's Continuity of Operations Plans (COOP) and Emergency Preparedness Plans and act swiftly in matters affecting public safety, homeland security, and disaster management.**

The FCC must be prepared for incidents and disruptions to its own physical and network facilities. The FCC will continue to refine and enhance its COOP and Emergency Preparedness Plans, including fully

participating in annual exercises with other federal agencies, reviewing and updating documentation of emergency procedures, and improving the readiness and redundancy of the FCC's high priority information systems. The Commission will also enhance preparations for specific types of events, reviewing its shelter-in-place procedures, improving the capabilities for mission-critical personnel to work off-site at an alternative work site or through teleworking, and addressing the possibility of a pandemic health event.

***External Factors Affecting Achievement of This Goal:***

- Networks are globally interconnected, and in the case of satellite networks may operate outside the territorial reach of any nation. Networks must be protected from actions initiated outside the United States. Ensuring the reliability and the safety of our critical systems requires international cooperation to facilitate information sharing, reduce vulnerabilities, deter malicious actors, protect information security, and promote a global culture of security.
- Economic cycles may make it difficult for communications infrastructure providers to commit large sums of money to the wholesale improvement of network protection and redundancy in a challenging economy, and for state and local governments to fund next generation services, including NG911 and public safety broadband capability.
- The Commission must continually update its understanding of national and international threats to communications technologies. The Commission must therefore maintain an experienced, educated, and knowledgeable technical and legal staff that stays abreast of technological and policy developments. The Commission must maintain ongoing, highly integrated relationships with the communications industries; other federal regulators; and state, tribal, and local regulators who are heavily involved in public safety matters.

***Strategies:***

- Appropriate Commission personnel will utilize technical knowledge of public safety, homeland security, and disaster management issues, including the impact of new or evolving technologies and of existing and proposed best practices for communications providers.
- Commission staff will continually review the Commission's rules to determine those that should be revised or eliminated to provide effectively and efficiently for public safety and homeland security matters.
- Working in partnership with other federal agencies as well as state, local, and tribal governments, the Commission will facilitate discussions and share information among key groups of constituents to identify and establish best practices and coordinate efforts to protect America's safety and security.

## **Goal 7: Advance Key National Purposes**

*Vision: Through international and national interagency efforts, advance the use of broadband for key national purposes.*

**Objective 7.1: Promote and facilitate the use of broadband to address key national challenges, including health care, education, energy, and e-government.**

The FCC has initiated programs in many key areas and will continue to develop and implement initiatives that accelerate the transformation that broadband can bring in areas so vital to the nation's prosperity. Some sectors of American life, particularly health care, education, energy, and government, may not have fully adapted their processes to take advantage of the modern communications era. This precludes the country from realizing the improvements broadband can bring in these key national priority areas. In many cases today's levels of availability and adoption of high-speed broadband are insufficient to support current initiatives, let alone meet the needs of potential future applications. The National Broadband Plan contains recommended initiatives to address key national priorities, harnessing the power of broadband and unleashing innovation to meet future challenges.

**Objective 7.2: Ensure that small businesses have the access to broadband and other communications tools needed to drive innovation and economic growth.**

Broadband can provide significant benefits to the next generation of American entrepreneurs and small businesses, the engines of job creation and economic growth for the country. Broadband and broadband-dependent applications allow small businesses to increase efficiency, improve market access, reduce costs and increase the speed of both transactions and interactions. However, many small businesses have a knowledge gap about how best to utilize broadband tools, leaving potential productivity gains unrealized. The FCC will continue to initiate programs that foster small business connection and utilization of broadband. Along with programs mentioned previously to connect rural, economically disadvantaged and tribal areas with high-speed broadband, this would include enhanced IT training and support for small businesses, and resources to help small businesses to keep their networks and information secure such as the FCC Small Biz Cyber Planner.

### ***External Factors Affecting Achievement of This Goal:***

- Domestic and global economic conditions will continue to have a major impact on the results of initiatives fulfilling these objectives. The availability of capital for investment in broadband is critical to provide the infrastructure to address key national priorities.
- Some foreign nations may have the desire to restrict the free flow of information to via the Internet. Recent events provide numerous examples of governments imposing restrictions on free speech by limiting or interfering with digital communications.
- Rules created in the 20th century are inhibiting some of the most effective practices of 21st century health care. Licensing, privileging, and credentialing standards may restrict physicians from practicing medicine remotely and across state lines.

*Strategies:*

- The Commission will invest in attracting and maintaining a creative and professional staff with the vision to develop and implement initiatives that promote small business innovation and remove barriers to its success, and to facilitate programs that promote digital solutions to improve health care, education, energy use, and the environment.
- Working in partnership with state, local, and tribal governments, the Commission will work to put high speed digital deployment at the forefront of regional development. Broadband allows regions and communities to compete globally, attracting new firms, investments and jobs with next-generation communications infrastructure. American communities without broadband will find themselves left out of the digital revolution. Local economic development plans must take this into account when assessing the economic prospects of a community.
- The Commission will continue to promote U.S. positions on international communications matters, and utilize rigorous economic, legal, technical, and statistical analyses in support of the development of international communications policies and programs.

## Goal 8: Operational Excellence

*Vision: Make the FCC a model for excellence in government by effectively managing the Commission's human, information, and financial resources; by making decisions based on sound data and analyses; and by maintaining a commitment to transparent and responsive processes that encourage public involvement and best serve the public interest.*

**Objective 8.1: Effectively manage the FCC's information technology resources by maintaining secure systems that meet the needs of both the FCC and the system users.**

Information technologies change rapidly in today's world. This requires organizations to put processes in place that provide for timely introduction, upgrade, or replacement of technologies. The Commission will continue to implement and revise its long-term vision for the strategic use of technology, while appropriately balancing the flexible introduction of performance-enhancing technologies with transparent and accountable management of all resources. The FCC will also seek to leverage newer technologies, such as cloud computing, to enhance our services to stakeholders. This will be balanced with continued adherence to a high level of information security standards.

**Objective 8.2: Effectively manage the human resources of the FCC in order to ensure sufficient resources and knowledge to handle the FCC's workload.**

Carrying out the mission of the FCC requires a highly trained, expert staff capable of assessing and understanding technological and industry trends and enforcing technical requirements with up-to-date technological tools. The FCC requires substantial investment in human capital to maintain its expertise to appropriately deal with current and future telecommunications issues. The Commission must maintain an experienced, educated, and knowledgeable technical, legal, and economic staff that is able to keep pace with technological developments and trends, and promote the implementation of new initiatives and policies. The Commission will continue to recruit or appropriately redeploy, and retain talented professionals, and will continue a robust training program to maintain proficiency among its professional staff.

**Objective 8.3: Effectively manage the FCC's financial resources to best achieve the FCC's mission and to maintain internal controls that allow for sound financial management and accounting.**

With greater demands for transparency and accountability of expenditures of taxpayer dollars, sound financial stewardship is more important than ever. For six consecutive years, the FCC has obtained an unqualified or "clean" audit opinion on its financial statements, and we will continue the practices that made this possible. The Commission will build on the implementation of a new agency-wide financial system by working to efficiently deploy the full functionality of that system. The FCC will also work closely with our reporting components for the Universal Service Fund, the Telecommunications Relay Service Fund, and the North American Numbering Plan in their efforts to modernize their financial systems. The Commission will routinely assess our financial internal controls and those of our reporting components, and develop and implement corrective action plans. We will also continue to make progress in eliminating and recovering improper payments.

***Objective 8.4: Effectively manage the FCC’s administrative and management program resources to provide for the appropriate support for all of the FCC’s activities and to maintain internal controls that allow for sound facility and equipment expenditures.***

By continuing to develop and enhance an organizational culture that embraces transparency and accountability, the Commission will be able to plan and carry out effective functions that will lead to full achievement of its goal of Operational Excellence. The Commission’s administrative and management initiatives will continue to support all aspects of FCC programs. This is particularly true of the FCC’s internal controls program. Internal controls relate to the reliability of financial reporting, timely feedback on the achievement of operational or strategic goals, and compliance with laws and regulations. We will expand and enhance our internal controls to provide our stakeholders with assurance that FCC programs effectively mitigate risk, comply with requirements, and strive to eliminate waste, fraud, and abuse.

***Objective 8.5: Effectively manage the FCC’s processes for monitoring and disposing of applications, petitions, and complaints before the FCC in order to achieve timely action on pending items.***

Even though the Commission receives tens of thousands of applications, petitions, and complaints each year, we strive to provide timely review and response for each of these filings. Americans should have an expectation that their government will take timely action, and the FCC is working to effectively provide such service to individuals and businesses. The Commission undertook an initiative to eliminate inactive proceedings. This initiative resulted in the closure of almost 1,000 dockets. We will implement enhanced information systems and more efficient procedures to ensure timely action and reduce backlogs.

***Objective 8.6: Continuously review and examine our regulatory processes and significant regulations to achieve statutory objectives while reducing burdens on industry and promoting innovation and job growth.***

The Commission is committed to being a responsive, efficient and effective agency that harnesses and promotes the technological and economic opportunities of the new millennium. Our extensive efforts to eliminate outdated regulations are rooted in our commitment to ensure that FCC rules and policies promote a healthy climate for private investment and job creation. This includes our commitment to act in accordance with President Obama’s Executive Order on Regulation and Independent Agencies, which is consistent with the values and philosophy we apply at the FCC. Each bureau at the FCC will conduct regular reviews of rules within their areas with the goal of eliminating or revising rules that are outdated or place needless burdens on businesses. . The Commission will continue on this regulatory reform track, thoughtfully and diligently conducting reviews of existing rules and taking other important steps to meet our statutory obligations and mission in a way that fosters economic growth and benefits all Americans.

***External Factors Affecting Achievement of This Goal:***

- Funding for the FCC to carry out its mission is always a significant determinant in meeting our strategic goals and objectives as expressed in this plan. The Commission relies on its annual appropriations and its authorization from Congress to implement its initiatives for the American people, overhaul its data systems and processes, and modernize and reform the FCC by ushering in 21<sup>st</sup> century communications tools and expertise.



- The Commission has many opportunities to improve stakeholder and employee satisfaction and effect mission accomplishment through the introduction of new or enhanced systems and processes. Ensuring that the Commission has access to the human resources necessary to properly plan, implement, and evaluate the use of these technologies is a complementary factor affecting the achievement of the Commission's organizational excellence goal. Recruiting, hiring, redeploing, training, motivating, and retaining such a staff is a challenge.

*Strategies:*

- The Commission will develop and implement processes to recognize and reward effective, results-oriented management. It will also identify ways to leverage and integrate technology in order to eliminate unnecessary redundancy, promote efficiency and effectiveness, and improve stakeholder satisfaction.
- The Commission will continue to hire or redeploy, train, equip, and retain a diverse and expert staff essential to the FCC's critical functions.
- The Commission will maintain a robust internal controls program that is risk-based, identifies and remediates critical vulnerabilities, and significantly reduces the potential for waste, fraud and abuse. This includes not only all Commission programs, but components of the FCC such as the Universal Service Fund, the Telecommunications Relay Service Fund, and the North American Numbering Plan.
- The Commission will seek to remove burdens on industry and promote innovation and job growth through an ongoing process of identifying and eliminating or amending outmoded or counterproductive rules.

## **Planning and Performance at the FCC**

The FCC Strategic Plan is the pinnacle of the Commission's planning and performance process. It provides the framework around which the FCC determines its annual performance plan and budget requests. This performance budget, submitted to Congress, includes performance targets that stem from the Commission's strategic goals and objectives, and serves as the guide for implementing the Strategic Plan. After each fiscal year, an annual performance report is produced that compares the agency's actual performance to its targets. In addition, the FCC annually publishes a Summary of Performance and Financial Information to provide a citizen-focused summary of the Commission's progress in meeting its key challenges. Copies of these documents may be viewed at <http://www.fcc.gov/encyclopedia/fcc-strategic-plan>.

## **Working with Congress and the Public**

Pursuant to the Government Performance and Results Modernization Act of 2010, P.L. 111-352, the FCC will be updating its strategic plan over the coming two years to produce a new strategic plan covering four years by February of 2014. During the next two years, the FCC will work with Congress and other interested outside parties from the public and industry as we implement the strategic goals contained in this plan.

As an independent rulemaking agency, the FCC regularly solicits comments on issues and conducts workshops, forums, and meetings with outside parties. The FCC receives thousands of comments from the public each year on its proceedings, and the FCC welcomes public feedback and input on its strategic goals as well.

We look forward to working with Congress, the public, and other interested parties as we deliver on the FCC's mission and promote the public interest through this strategic plan.

## **Program Evaluations**

The FCC uses a variety of methods to evaluate its programs including audits from the FCC's Office of Inspector General (OIG) and reports from the General Accountability Office (GAO). The OIG, an independent oversight organization within the FCC, conducts audits, investigations, and reviews relating to the Commission's programs and operations. Information on the OIG's work can be found at (<http://www.fcc.gov/office-inspector-general>). The GAO, an independent organization established by Congress, conducts evaluations and analyses and makes recommendations to improve practices of the programs it reviews. GAO reports concerning the FCC's activities can be found at (<http://www.gao.gov/>).