

Recommendation of the FCC Disability Advisory Committee
Adopted December 6, 2016

1. WHEREAS, DeafBlind consumers of videophones may be unable to independently use videophones without physically-present interpreters to communicate via video communications;
2. WHEREAS, a visually-accessible video usually requires a DeafBlind person to specifically request accommodations during a call, such as use of background panels, skin-contrast clothing, and signing in specific space and pace;
3. WHEREAS, DeafBlind consumers may be unable to view the content of a videomail until such interpreter is present;
4. WHEREAS, video relay service (VRS) interpreters or videophone-to-videophone ("VP-to-VP") callers may be unable to leave messages that are visually-friendly for low-vision DeafBlind consumers;
5. WHEREAS, voicemail-to-text services are readily available, but videomail-to-text services are not readily available;
6. WHEREAS, in the absence of video-to-text services, DeafBlind consumers do not currently have functionally equivalent access to telecommunications;
7. WHEREAS, providing an option of videomail-to-text services similar to the voicemail-to-text service available to audio communication consumers would enhance functional equivalency for DeafBlind consumers;

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS --

8. RECOMMENDED, that the Federal Communications Commission ("FCC") permanently implement, with the advice and participation of diverse groups of DeafBlind consumers inclusive of those who are non-visual ASL signers, VRS videomail-to-text services, including videomail-to-text services for VP-to-VP calls, that are made to DeafBlind consumers;
9. RECOMMENDED further, that the FCC provide guidelines to ensure that converted text messages are delivered in a manner that is visually accessible for low-vision users, and compatible with common assistive technology devices used by non-visual DeafBlind consumers such as refreshable Braille displays;
10. RECOMMENDED further, that the FCC consider the most efficient way to provide and pay for videomail-to-text services for DeafBlind consumers.