

Introduction to the Federal Communications Commission

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FCC Overview

- * An independent federal agency.
- * Regulates television, radio, wireline, fixed and mobile wireless service, satellite and cable in all 50 states and U.S. territories.
- * Established by the Communications Act of 1934.

FCC Mission

To ensure that all Americans have available a rapid, efficient, nationwide and worldwide wire and radio communication service with adequate facilities at reasonable charges.

Leadership

- * The agency is directed by five commissioners (currently only three).
 - * appointed by the President
 - * confirmed by the United States Senate
- * President selects one of the commissioners to serve as chairman.
- * Only three commissioners can be of the same political party at any one time and they cannot have a financial interest in any commission-related business.
- * They serve five year terms.



Leadership

(continued)

- * Commissioners operate under “Government in the Sunshine Act”
 - * law opens government to public inspection
 - * must hold a monthly meeting, open to the public

Staff and Organization

FCC Staff

- * Approximately 1,800 employees
 - * Headquarters in Washington, DC
 - * Facilities in Columbia, MD and Gettysburg PA
 - * 12 Field offices throughout the U.S.

Organized by Function

- * The FCC is organized by function.
- * There are seven Bureaus:
 - * Consumer & Governmental Affairs
 - * Enforcement
 - * International
 - * Media
 - * Public Safety & Homeland Security
 - * Wireless Telecommunications
 - * Wireline Competition
- * There are also ten offices which generally provide support services such as the Office of Managing Director and the Office of General Counsel.

Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau

- * CGB develops and implements the FCC's 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 through the Consumer Center, which is responsible for 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.

Enforcement Bureau

- * **The Enforcement Bureau** is the primary FCC unit responsible for enforcing the provisions of the Communications Act, the Commission's rules, orders, and various licensing terms and conditions. Enforcement Bureau's mission is to investigate and respond quickly to potential unlawful conduct to ensure: (1) consumer protection in an era of complex communications; (2) a level playing field to promote robust competition; (3) efficient and responsible use of the public airwaves; and (4) strict compliance with public safety-related rules.

International Bureau

- * **The International Bureau** administers the Commission's international telecommunications and satellite programs and policies, including licensing and regulatory functions. The Bureau promotes pro-competitive policies abroad, coordinates the Commission's global spectrum activities, and advocates U.S. interests in international communications and competition.

Media Bureau

- * **The Media Bureau** oversees broadcast radio and television, as well as cable and satellite services on behalf of consumers. It also administers licensing and policy matters for broadcast services and cable, and handles post-licensing matters for satellite services.

Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau

- * **The Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau** advises, makes recommendations to, or acts for the Commission under delegated authority, in all matters pertaining to public safety, homeland security, national security, emergency management and preparedness, disaster management, and ancillary operations. The Bureau is responsible for developing, recommending, and administering the agency's policies and rules to advance the security and reliability of the nation's communications infrastructure as well as its public safety and emergency response capabilities.

Wireless Telecommunications Bureau

- * **The Wireless Telecommunications Bureau** develops and executes policies and procedures for fast, fair licensing of all wireless services, from fixed microwave links to amateur radio to mobile broadband services. The Bureau oversees nearly two million licenses, conducts auctions to award services licenses, and manages the tower registration process. The Bureau also produce an annual assessment of the wireless industry – the Mobile Wireless Competition Report – and manage interactive web tools such as the Spectrum Dashboard, which delivers to the public key information on wireless services in a simple, transparent fashion.

Wireline Competition Bureau

- * **The Wireline Competition Bureau** works to ensure that all Americans have access to robust, affordable broadband and voice services. Its programs help ensure access to affordable communications for schools, libraries, health care providers, and rural and low-income consumers. It works to protect consumers and foster competition, especially for the services that small businesses need, and ensure a sustainable policy framework for competitors that rely on the facilities of others. It reviews communications industry transactions and conducts rulemakings and proceedings to ensure the availability of key inputs for communications providers, such as access to utility poles and rights of way. And it provides the public with accurate and comprehensive data about communications services, including broadband.

FCC Budget

- * Most or all of the FCC's budget is funded by fees collected by the agency from licensees and certain other entities.
- * Fiscal Year 2016 budget –\$384 million in appropriated funds. Spectrum auctions funded with small portion of auction proceeds. Universal service funded separately.

Activities and Regulatory Approach

Common Activities

- * Developing and implementing regulatory programs and policies
 - * e.g., universal service and spectrum policies
- * Processing applications
- * Encouraging the development of innovative services
- * Conducting investigations and analyzing complaints
- * Public safety and homeland security
- * Consumer information and education

Regulatory Approach

- * Our regulatory approach emphasizes:
 - * **fact-based and data-driven decisions;**
 - * **an open, transparent and collaborative process,** with public comment invited and decisions made on the regulatory record.

Rulemakings

- * Most FCC rules are adopted by a process known as “notice and comment” rulemaking.
- * FCC gives the public notice that it is considering adopting or modifying certain rules, seeks public comment on the matter and considers those comments when developing final rules.
- * Receives thousands of public comments each year

Stakeholder Engagement

- * The FCC:
 - * Solicits public comment on a broad range of issues.
 - * Regularly conducts workshops, forums and meetings with outside parties.
 - * Establishes Federal Advisory Committees to provide advice and recommendations on various topics.

Independence and Congressional Oversight

An Independent Agency

- * Independent of the Executive Branch
 - * Directly responsible to Congress, not the President
- * Clearly separated from regulated entities
 - * No goal to promote individual companies
 - * Employees may not hold financial interests in or accept valuable gifts from companies subject to regulation by the FCC
- * This independence allows FCC to put the public interest first.

Congressional Oversight

- * Oversight committees in both houses of Congress
- * Appropriations committees in both houses of Congress
- * Congress may:
 - * Request FCC to act on a specific issue
 - * Invite Chairman and Commissioners to testify at a hearing
 - * Pass legislation that nullifies or modifies an FCC rule

Relationship between FCC and Other Government Entities

FCC and NTIA – Spectrum Policy

- * FCC – handles commercial spectrum allocation and assignments
- * NTIA – the Department of Commerce’s National Telecommunications and Information Administration handles government allocations

FCC and State Regulators

- * State regulators are independent – they report only to state governments
- * FCC, state and local regulators do cooperate
 - * Intergovernmental Advisory Committee
 - * Broadband Development Advisory Committee
 - * Federal-State Universal Service Joint Board
 - * Federal-State Joint Conference on Advanced Telecom Services

Commission Priorities

Robocalls

Gigabit Opportunity Zones

Improved Mobile Broadband in Middle America

Buildout Obligations Linked with Longer Licenses

Mobility Fund Phase II

Portion of Future Auction Proceeds to Fund Rural
Broadband





Thank you

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