

## **CONSUMER ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

### **Charter**

#### **A. The Committee's Official Designation**

The official designation of this federal advisory committee is the "Consumer Advisory Committee" (CAC), formerly known as the Consumer/Disability Telecommunications Advisory Committee.

#### **B. The Committee's Objective and Scope of its Activities**

The Telecommunications Act of 1996 was intended to pave the way for a new era of greater competition and consumer choice in telecommunications for all Americans. In order to ensure that all Americans, including individuals with disabilities and those representing underserved populations, such as tribal nations and persons living in rural areas, have equal access to telecommunications products and services, and to facilitate consumer involvement and input into all activities of the Commission, the CAC is hereby re-chartered pursuant to the Federal Advisory Committee Act.

The mission of the Consumer Advisory Committee (hereinafter the "Committee") is to make recommendations to the Federal Communications Commission (hereinafter the "Commission") regarding consumer issues within the jurisdiction of the Commission and to facilitate the participation of consumers (including people with disabilities and underserved populations, such as Native Americans and persons living in rural areas) in proceedings before the Commission. Issues or questions to be considered by the CAC will include, but are not limited to the following topic areas:

- Access by People with Disabilities (e.g., telecommunications relay services, video description, captioning, accessible billing, and access to telecommunications products and services); and,
- Consumer Protection and Education (e.g., cramming, slamming, consumer friendly billing, bundling of services, Lifeline/Linkup programs, customer service, privacy, telemarketing abuses, and outreach to underserved populations such as Native Americans and persons living in rural areas);
- Implementation of Commission rules and Consumer Participation in the FCC rulemaking process; and,
- Impact of New and Emerging Technologies (e.g., availability of Broadband, digital television, cable, satellite, low power FM, and the convergence of these and emerging technologies).



### **C. Period of Time Necessary for the Committee to Carry Out its Purpose**

Initially, the CAC, formerly known as the Consumer/Disability Telecommunications Advisory Committee, was established for a period of two (2) years from the original charter date. This is the renewal of the Charter with amendments.

### **D. Official to Whom the Committee Reports**

Chairman, Federal Communications Commission.

### **E. Agency Responsible for Providing the Necessary Support**

The Federal Communications Commission will provide the facilities and support staff necessary to conduct meetings of the CAC. Committee members will not be compensated for their services. The Commission will, however, pay costs associated with the provision of reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities when such costs are directly associated with the conduct of the Committee's meetings, or are directly associated with the conduct of subcommittee meetings. Some examples of reasonable accommodations include sign language interpreters, meeting agendas produced in Braille, and computer assisted real-time transcription services (CART).

### **F. Description of the Duties for Which the Committee is Responsible**

In keeping with its advisory role, the duties of the CAC will be to provide general guidance to the Commission, and to gather data and information and to perform those analyses that are necessary to respond to the questions or matters before it.

### **G. Estimated Annual Operating Costs in Dollars and Staff Years**

Annual operating costs associated with supporting the CAC's functions are estimated to be \$275,000, which includes Commission staff time equivalent to 2.25 FTE's.

### **H. Estimated Number and Frequency of Committee Meetings**

The Committee shall meet a minimum of two (2) times per year. The Committee is authorized to facilitate its work through informal subcommittees, which shall report their activities and recommendations to the Committee as a whole. It is anticipated that the work of subcommittees will be conducted primarily through telephone calls, e-mail correspondence, and e-mail discussion lists. Recommendations of subcommittees must be reported to the CAC as a whole, and only as modified or ratified by the committee as a whole, may such recommendations be included in the official record of the CAC's proceedings, and reported to the Chairman of the Commission.

## **I. Committee's Termination Date**

The Committee shall terminate two (2) years from the renewal date of this charter, unless renewed prior to the termination date. A decision whether to renew shall include input from the Committee members.

## **J. Membership**

Members of the Committee shall be appointed by the Chairman of the Commission in consultation with the Chairperson of the CAC and appropriate Commission staff. Members will be selected to balance the expertise and viewpoints that are necessary to address effectively the issues to be considered by the CAC. Members will be recognized experts in their fields, including but not limited to, consumer advocacy organizations, organizations representing persons with disabilities, representatives of underserved populations (*e.g.*, rural organizations and tribal nations), equipment manufacturers, telecommunications service providers (including wireless), and broadcast/cable providers. Members should be prepared to attend a minimum of two (2) meetings per year of the CAC, and are also expected to participate regularly in the deliberations of subcommittees.

Members will have an initial and continuing obligation to disclose any interests in, or connections to, persons or entities who are, or will be, regulated by, or who have interests before the Commission.

## **K. Chairperson**

The Chairperson of the Committee shall be appointed by the Chairman of the Commission. The Chairpersons of any subcommittees shall be appointed by the Chairperson of the Committee.

## **L. Meetings**

Meetings shall be open to the public and timely notice of each meeting shall be published in the Federal Register, and shall be further publicized through other appropriate vehicles. Meetings shall be conducted in accordance with Roberts Rules of Order Newly Revised, 10<sup>th</sup> edition, Perseus Books, © 2000. Records of the proceedings will be kept, as required by applicable laws and regulations. Meetings of the CAC will also be broadcast over the Internet.

## **M. Date of Renewed Charter**

November 20, 2004