

TECHNOLOGY AND DISABILITY POLICY HIGHLIGHTS 12.2

February 2012

Overview

This month the Department of Justice issued new ADA Standards for Accessible Design. The standards revise regulations for both Titles II and III of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and ensure accessibility of "newly designed and constructed or altered State and local government facilities, public accommodations, and commercial facilities." The new standards will become effective March 15, 2012.

Regulatory activities this month included a **Report and Order (R&O) and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FNPRM)** released by the FCC "In the Matter of Lifeline and Link Up Reform and Modernization" [WC Docket No. 11-42] "Lifeline and Link Up" [WC Docket No. 03-109] "Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service" [CC Docket No. 96-45] and "Advancing Broadband Availability Through Digital Literacy Training" [WC Docket No. 12-23]. The main goals of the **R&O** are to eliminate fraud and waste within the Lifeline program as well as to modernize the program. The **FNPRM** seeks comment on certain aspects of the future developments under consideration, including the features of proposed digital literacy classes and a proposed reorganization of the Lifeline reimbursement system. This month John Bryson, U.S. Commerce Secretary, released the 2013 Department of Commerce budget request. While the request mainly focuses on funding for multiple initiatives aimed toward manufacturing, increasing U.S. exports, and job creation, it also includes implications for wireless technologies and broadband enhancement. Specifically, funding has been requested for the National Institute of Science and Technology to create a Wireless Innovation (WIN) fund to develop new technology and standards for public safety communications. Lastly, this month Eve Hill the Department of Justice's Senior Counselor to the Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights, testified before the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor & Pensions concerning current and future accessible technologies. Hill's testimony highlighted multiple technological accessibility barriers; however, the testimony also included the many regulatory actions that are being taken to correct these and other disparities.

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Regulatory Activities

Lifeline and Link Up Modernization

02.07.12 – The FCC released a **Report and Order (R&O) and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FNPRM)** “In the Matter of Lifeline and Link Up Reform and Modernization” [WC Docket No. 11-42] “Lifeline and Link Up” [WC Docket No. 03-109] “Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service” [CC Docket No. 96-45] and “Advancing Broadband Availability Through Digital Literacy Training” [WC Docket No. 12-23] to instigate modernization of the Lifeline program as well as eliminate fraud and waste within the program. The Lifeline program provides discounts on telephone service to low income households. The **R&O** begins the modernization of the program by issuing goals for the program going forward, including ensuring availability of voice service and broadband service for low income Americans as well as minimizing the “contribution burden on consumers and businesses.” Furthermore, the **R&O** clearly defines the scope of the Lifeline program by defining the program as “voice telephony service,” which encompasses broadband networks and will allow eligible telecommunication carriers to provide Lifeline service for new technologies. In order to simplify the program, the **R&O** has now established a flat rate reimbursement system instead of the previous three tier system. In addition, the **R&O** established uniform eligibility criteria for all states in order to reduce the number of ineligible customers as well as annual re-certification checks to minimize fraud. The **FNPRM** seeks comments on many aspects of the program including the specifics of how digital literacy classes should be funded, how much funding such programs may need, and the criteria of the classes. The **FNPRM** also seeks comment on the proposed flat rate reimbursement system as well as aspects of eligibility, such as whether a national database would streamline Lifeline eligibility determinations or whether there should be automatic eligibility for those enrolled in programs such as the Special Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) or those in Homeless Veterans Programs. Comments are due 30 days after publication in the Federal Register. [Source: FCC]

Additional Information:

[\[WC Docket No. 11-42\]](#) [\[WV Docket No. 03-109\]](#) [\[CC Docket No. 96-45\]](#) [\[WC Docket No. 12-23\]](#)
[\[http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/index.do?document=312317\]](http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/index.do?document=312317)

The Department of Commerce Releases 2013 Budget Request

02.13.12 – John Bryson, U.S. Commerce Secretary, released the 2013 Department of Commerce budget request. The overall budget request is for \$8 million and includes funding for multiple

initiatives aimed toward manufacturing, increasing U.S. exports, and job creation. The budget request also includes implications for wireless technologies and broadband enhancement. Funding has been requested for the National Institute of Science and Technology to create a Wireless Innovation (WIN) fund to develop new technology and standards for public safety communications in addition to the proposed creation of an “interoperable broadband network for first responders.” As part of the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), The Office of Spectrum Management funding was requested to continue work to identify 500 MHz of usable broadband spectrum. Additionally, the budget request asks NTIA to provide funding for the creation of a Public Safety Broadband Corporation. The Corporation will include federal, state, and local representation and will “oversee the building, deployment, and operation of a secure and resilient nationwide public safety interoperable broadband network.” [Source: Department of Commerce]

Additional Information:

[Department of Commerce 2013 Budget Request](#)

[<http://www.commerce.gov/news/press-releases/2012/02/13/secretary-bryson-announces-fiscal-year-2013-budget-request>]

Eve Hill Testifies Concerning Disability Technology

02.07.12 – Eve Hill, the Department of Justice’s Senior Counselor to the Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights, testified before the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor & Pensions concerning current and future accessible technologies. According to Hill, “We are at a critical juncture for people with disabilities and technology. Technology may prove to be both the catalyst and the conduit to full integration of people with disabilities into society as envisioned by the ADA – or it may serve as the ultimate barrier.” Hill’s testimony highlighted multiple technological accessibility barriers, including school-required e-book readers that cannot convert text to speech, inaccessible course materials for students, and kiosks that lack accessibility features; however, the testimony also included the many regulatory actions that are being taken to correct these and other disparities. The testimony references many actions by the Department of Justice to ensure that schools include accessible materials and also references new and proposed rulemakings, such as those that will require closed captioning for video content delivered over the internet or those that require accessibility features for new electronic and information technology equipment and kiosks. In addition, the testimony discusses the importance for the inclusion of accessibility features in the new Next Generation 9-1-1 system, identifying that the new system needs to include features such as text and video to be accessible for persons with speech or hearing disabilities. [Source: Department of Justice]

Additional Information:

[Eve Hill Testimony](#)

[<http://www.help.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Hill1.pdf>]

New ADA Standards for Accessible Design

02.14.12 – The Department of Justice has issued new ADA Standards for Accessible Design, which will become effective on March 15, 2012. The standards revise regulations for both Titles II and III of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (as amended) and ensure accessibility of “newly designed and constructed or altered State and local government facilities, public accommodations, and commercial facilities.” Technical standards included in the regulations incorporate accessibility to teletypewriter (TTY) by requiring a public TTY when public phones are provided. Standards are also included for automatic teller machines and specify that such machines must be speech enabled with easy access, including Braille instructions, to initiate speech mode. The standards also require that “all displayed information for full use [of an automatic teller machine] shall be accessible to and independently usable,” while stressing that each user is entitled to personal security and privacy while in use of the machine. When assistive listening systems are provided, the 2010 standards state that they must meet “minimum performance levels for volume, interference, and distortion.” [Source: Department of Justice]

Additional Information:

[2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design](http://www.ada.gov/2010ADASTandards_index.htm)

[http://www.ada.gov/2010ADASTandards_index.htm]

Publications and Reports

The App Economy

02.08.2012 – “Where the Jobs Are: The App Economy,” a report examining the economic impact of apps was released by Technet. According to the report, the growth of the App Economy is a direct result of the “rise of smartphones, tablets, and social media,” wherein each app represents many jobs from programmers to managers and support staff. The report highlights that since the development of the iPhone in 2007 approximately 466,000 app related jobs have been created, and while the greatest percentage of app economy jobs are in California, other states such as New York, Texas, Illinois and Georgia also have stakes in the App Economy market. Conclusions from the report recognize that the App Economy is still very new and in a very fluid state; thus, it is likely that the “location and number of app-related jobs are likely to shift greatly” depending on the future of wireless and social networks. [Source: Technet]

Additional Information:

[Where the Jobs Are: The App Economy](http://www.technet.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/TechNet-App-Economy-Jobs-Study.pdf)

[<http://www.technet.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/TechNet-App-Economy-Jobs-Study.pdf>]

Smartphone Growth Study

02.20.2012 – Nielsen released the results of a survey entitled “New U.S. Smartphone Growth by Age and Income.” The survey, which interviewed over 20,000 mobile consumers in January of this year, highlights that while overall smartphone ownership was at 48 percent, ownership varied by both age

and income level. The age groups with the highest smartphone ownership levels were the 25-34 and 18-24 age groups, with 66 percent and 62 percent respectively. In addition, of individuals in the 25-34 and 18-24 age groups to purchase a phone in the last three months, 80% purchased a smartphone. The survey also indicated that income has an effect on smartphone ownership in that individuals with higher incomes are more likely to have smartphones than individuals with lower incomes. As the Wireless RERC is concerned with disability access to wireless technologies, there appears to be a void in this data that addresses smartphone adoption by disability. Coming soon from the WiRERC research team is an updated Survey of User Needs which addresses how people with all types of disability use wireless communications technology, and what features, functions, and service plans work best for them. [Source: Nielsen Wire]

Additional Information:

[Survey: New U.S. Smartphone Growth](#)

[<http://blog.nielsen.com/nielsenwire/?p=30950>]

Other Items of Interest

New NIDRR Funding Opportunities

The National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) has issued a notice inviting applications for funding opportunities for Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRPs) as well as a Center on Knowledge Translation for Disability and Rehabilitation Research (KTDRR Center). DRRPs include projects that seek to “improve the effectiveness of services authorized under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, by developing methods, procedures, and rehabilitation technologies that advance a wide range of independent living and employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities, especially individuals with the most severe disabilities.” Priority has also been placed on the creation of a KTDRR Center. According to NIDRR, a KTDRR Center would, among other requirements, identify standards for disability and rehabilitation research, provide other NIDRR grantees with technical assistance and guidance on best practices in knowledge translation methods, and facilitate events such as conferences or workshops for NIDRR grantee capacity building.” NIDRR is currently offering one award with a proposed budget of no more than \$750,000 for up to 60 months. The applications are due April 16, 2012. [Source: NIDRR]

Additional Information:

[NIDRR Announcement](#)

[<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2012-02-14/html/2012-3414.htm>]

[NIDRR Notice of Priority](#)

[<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2012-02-14/html/2012-3416.htm>]

Wireless RERC Updates

Ben Lippincott and Mario Romero on Atlanta and Company

Ben Lippincott and Mario Romero appeared on Atlanta and Company to discuss the upcoming Abilities Expo which will take place February 17-19 in Atlanta, Georgia. Ben and Mario highlighted some of the features of the event, including the Assistive Technologies Showcase, which included demonstrations by the Shepherd Center and the Wireless RERC. The Wireless RERC demonstrated the accessibility features of current smartphones and tablets at its "live bar." During the segment, Mario Romero also demonstrated the upcoming BrailleTouch smartphone app, which was presented at the expo by Georgia Tech's Ubiquitous Computing Lab. The app is the first of its kind and will serve as a portable and cheaper alternative to the current Braille keyboards on the market.

View the Video Clip here:

[Atlanta and Company](#)

Frank Lucia to Present at 66th Interdepartmental Hurricane Conference

Frank Lucia will present "TV, Radio, Mobile Alerting for Weather Emergencies: And the Winner is..." at the Office of the Federal Coordinator for Meteorological Services and Supporting Research sponsored 66th Interdepartmental Hurricane Conference in Charleston, SC, March 5-8, 2012. The presentation highlights the dissemination of emergency information for people with disabilities. Specifically, this presentation will focus on how people with disabilities viewed the effectiveness of the recent nationwide test of the Emergency Alert System. The discussion will also touch on how modes of communications such as social media can provide avenues for dissemination of emergency information and will provide recommendations on how to leverage the unique features of TV, radio and mobile alerting of severe weather using Federal, state and local emergency notification and alert policies and to also assure accessibility to all.

Additional Information:

[66th Interdepartmental Hurricane Conference](#)

[http://www.ofcm.gov/homepage/text/spc_proj/ihc.html]

Upcoming Events

FEMA Think Tank

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has begun hosting a Think Tank in the form of an online forum as well as monthly conference calls. Each monthly conference call will discuss emergency management ideas generated from the online forum. The most recent conference call was held on

February 17th and discussed the distribution of emergency information when cellular and online communications become unavailable and the role of mobile apps in emergency management.

Additional Information:

[FEMA Think Tank](#)

[<http://www.fema.gov/thinktank/>]

Accessibility Forum

The Accessibility Interoperability Alliance will be hosting an accessibility forum entitled "Taking Accessibility Mainstream: Making the Case for an International Society of Accessibility Professionals." The forum is part of the CSUN conference and will be held on February 28, 2012 at the Manchester Grand Hyatt Hotel in San Diego, California. The forum will discuss the field of assistive technology including best practices and other issues within the industry as well as the development of an International Accessibility Professional Society.

Additional Information:

[AIA Accessibility Forum](#)

[<http://www.atia.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=4161>]

Annual International Technology and Persons with Disabilities Conference

The Center on Disabilities in the California State University is holding the 2012 CSUN conference in San Diego, CA at the Manchester Grand Hyatt Hotel from February 27 – March 3, 2012.

Additional Information

[Center on Disabilities Conference Welcome](#)

[<http://www.csun.edu/cod/conference/index.php>]

ADA Symposium

The ADA National Network will be hosting two separate ADA Symposiums from March 12-14 at the Caribe Royale All-Suites Hotel in Orlando, Florida, and from May 30 – June 1 at the Hyatt Regency Indianapolis in Indianapolis, Indiana. The symposiums will provide information on current Americans with Disabilities Act "regulations and guidelines, implementation strategies, and best practices" that are "applicable to work as well as daily life."

Additional Information:

[ADA Symposium](#)

[<http://www.adasymposium.org/>]

FCC Sponsored Exhibition Fair of "Text-to-911"

The FCC's Emergency Access Advisory Committee will be sponsoring an exhibition of current "text-to-911" technologies from March 28 – 29 at the FCC's Technology Experience Center in Washington, DC. The FCC is also inviting stakeholders to exhibit their "text-to-911" products. Those interested in exhibiting are asked to contact the exhibit coordinator at EAAC@fcc.gov.

Additional Information:

[FCC Exhibition Fair of "Text-to-911"](#)

[http://transition.fcc.gov/Daily_Releases/Daily_Business/2012/db0223/DA-12-266A1.pdf]

66th Interdepartmental Hurricane Conference

The Office of the Federal Coordinator for Meteorological Services and Supporting Research (OFCM) is hosting the Interdepartmental Hurricane Conference in Charleston, South Carolina from March 5-8, 2012. The conference acts as a place for stakeholders to "review the Nation's hurricane forecasting and warning program and to make recommendations on how to improve the program in the future." This year's theme is "Tropical Cyclone Operations and Research: Strength and Success through Partnerships and Alliances."

Additional Information:

[66th Interdepartmental Hurricane Conference](#)

[http://www.ofcm.gov/homepage/text/spc_proj/ihc.html]

5th International Conference on Information and Communication Technologies and Development

Georgia Tech is hosting the 2012 International Conference on Information and Communication Technologies and Development, which will examine "the role of computer and communications in social, economic and political development". The conference is at the Georgia Tech Hotel and Global Learning Center in Atlanta, GA from March 12 – 15, 2012.

Additional Information:

[Georgia Tech College of Computing Events](#)

[<http://www.cc.gatech.edu/events/ictd-2012-fifth-international-conference-information-and-communication-technologies-and-devel>]

9-1-1 Goes to Washington Event

The National Emergency Number Association (NENA) will be hosting the event 9-1-1 Goes to Washington to discuss public safety and potential policy issues. The event will be held from March 26 – 29, 2012 at the L'Enfant Plaza Hotel in Washington, D.C.

Additional Information:

[9-1-1 Goes to Washington](#)

[http://www.nena.org/?page=911GTW_2012]

Partners in Emergency Preparedness Conference

The 2012 Partners in Emergency Preparedness Conference will be held from April 9 – 11 at the Greater Tacoma Convention and Trade Center in Tacoma, Washington. The conference will discuss “cutting-edge information on subjects such as business continuity planning, school safety, public health preparedness, homeland security, and public information.”

Additional Information:

[Partners in Emergency Preparedness Conference](#)

[<https://www.cm.wsu.edu/ehome/index.php?eventid=25597&>]

International CTIA Wireless Conference

CTIA, The Wireless Association will host its annual conference from May 8 – 10, 2012 at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center in New Orleans, Louisiana. The conference annually hosts over 40,000 attendees, 1,000 exhibitors and many prominent speakers.

Additional Information:

[2012 International CTIA Wireless](#)

[<http://www.ctiawireless.com/>]

The End of the Phone System Workshop

The Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania will be hosting an Experts’ Workshop entitled “The End of the Phone System” from May 16 – 18, 2012 held at the Wharton School in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The event will focus on presentations that address the potential obsolescence of the legacy phone system due to the technological migration to wireless and Internet protocol communications.

Additional Information:

[The End of the Phone System](#)

[<http://www.cci.utk.edu/conference/end-phone-system>]

NENA Conference

The National Emergency Number Association (NENA) will be hosting their annual conference at the Long Beach Convention Center in Long Beach, California from June 9 – 14, 2012. The conference will discuss many public safety topics, including Next Generation 9-1-1, social networking and emergency

response, and accessibility within public safety. The conference will also include an exhibit hall with over 120 “providers of emergency communications products and services.”

Additional Information:

NENA2012

[<http://www.nena.org/?page=NENA2012>]

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February 2012

Technology and Disability Policy Highlights reports on national and local public policy events and recent wireless technological advances and political activities; and tracks emerging issues of interest to individuals with disabilities. *Technology and Disability Policy Highlights* is published monthly by the Wireless RERC. The Wireless RERC is a research center promotes universal access to wireless technologies and explores their innovative applications in addressing the needs of people with disabilities. For more information on the Wireless RERC, please visit our web site at [<http://www.wirelessrerc.org>].

For further information on items summarized in this report, or if you have items of interest that you would like included in future editions, please contact this edition’s editors, Braeden Benson [braeden@cacp.gatech.edu], Salimah LaForce [salimah.laforce@cacp.gatech.edu], or James White, Ph.D., [james@cacp.gatech.edu].

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