



Press Statement

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MMTC Statement on FCC Lifeline Reform

WASHINGTON, D.C. (June 18, 2015): The Multicultural Media, Telecom and Internet Council (MMTC) commends the Federal Communications Commission for beginning the process to modernize the Lifeline program to include broadband access for eligible low-income consumers. MMTC believes that the modernization of the program is essential for upgrading the nation's public benefit programs to be more inclusive of broadband-enabled tools and resources that are driving the 21st century economy.

MMTC also applauds FCC Commissioner Mignon Clyburn, the initial champion of the program's reboot, and her commitment to ensuring that the Lifeline program "will build a bridge for struggling Americans" and serve as a path to "transporting consumers out of poverty and isolation, to connectivity and independence."

"Millions of Americans have to engage in what boils down to a choice between bread and broadband," stated MMTC President and CEO Kim Keenan. "Poverty and unemployment continue to plague the nation's economically disadvantaged. Modernization of Lifeline can serve as a bridge to our digital future, connecting communities that desperately need to share in net equality. Broadband must be a resource for inclusion to the benefit of low-income Americans."

The FCC's decision today begins the process for reforming the program to include broadband and the adoption of minimum service standards, increased competition to improve price and service, options for consumer eligibility, and other logistics associated with its design and implementation. The FCC will shortly issue a Notice for Proposed Rulemaking to solicit comments from the public.

"MMTC hopes that a program of such significance to low-income consumers will not be deterred by partisan disagreements," stated MMTC Chief Research and Policy Officer Dr. Nicol Turner-Lee. "It is important that program reforms be contextualized because the final product will be useful in engendering first-class digital citizenship for the nation's underserved."

MMTC looks forward to working with the Commission on this issue.

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About MMTC:

The Multicultural Media, Telecom and Internet Council (MMTC) is a non-partisan, national nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting and preserving equal opportunity and civil rights in the mass media, telecommunications and broadband industries, and closing the digital divide. MMTC is generally recognized as the nation's leading advocate for minority advancement in communications.