
Reminder: \$1000 Federal Grants Available to Eligible Low-Power Television Stations to Purchase Digital-to-Analog Conversion Devices

by Richard R. Zaragoza

Reminder: The National Telecommunications and Information Administration has set aside \$1,000 per eligible low-power television station, for the purchase of digital-to-analog conversion devices. Individual grants come from a Federal fund limited to \$1 million and are awarded on a first-come-first-serve basis until February 17, 2009.

The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) has established the Low-Power Television and Translator Digital-to-Analog Conversion Program, in order to aide low-power stations to continue their analog broadcasts. As of November 18, 2008, this program has set aside \$1 million in grants to help eligible stations purchase the necessary equipment to allow them to receive digital signals and convert them to analog. After February 17, 2009, low-power stations will not be able to receive and retransmit the incoming digital signal of the full-power stations that they rebroadcast with out such converters. A uniform grant of \$1,000 has been allocated for each eligible station and will be awarded on a first come, first serve basis until **February 17, 2009**. These grants are, therefore, limited to the first 1,000 eligible stations that apply, and will not be available after the deadline.

The definition of eligible stations includes: "low-power television broadcast station, Class A television station, television translator station, or television booster station" that holds a license or construction permit from the FCC. Additionally, these stations must broadcast exclusively in analog format and cannot have purchased a digital-to-analog conversion device prior to the enactment of the Digital Television Transition and Public Safety Act of 2005, on February 8, 2006. It is also important to note that low-power stations receiving their signal either via satellite or in a "daisy chain" are not eligible for this program.

The conversion device as described is a digital tuner/receiver that converts the digital television signal from the corresponding full-powered station and provides an output that can be used by the low-power station's

analog transmission. This will replace the analog tuner/receiver that most low-power stations are currently using. The \$1,000 grant will be awarded to eligible stations to fund their purchase of such a tuner/receiver.

Applicants may request funds for each eligible station that they operate, and only one request is permitted per station. The application consist of two forms, the DTV-4 Application form: Low-Power Television and Translator Digital Conversion Program, and the ACH Vendor/Miscellaneous Payment Enrollment form. Both of these can be found at <http://www.ntia.doc.gov/lptv> under the “apply for funds” option. Once approved, the grant monies will be wired into the account designated by the grantee. Although these forms must be completed electronically, they may not be submitted via email or fax. Once completed, all forms must be downloaded, printed and signed individually. One original and one copy of each form must be mailed to NTIA at the following address:

NTIA LPTV Conversion Program
Room H-4812
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20230

All applications must be postmarked by February 17, 2009, or they will not be reviewed or accepted. Hand deliveries must be submitted by the same date, to Room 1874, which is at entrance #10 on 15th Street. The grant will be awarded as soon as the application is received, reviewed and approved. At that point, the grantee will be notified of the approval date of his \$1,000 grant. There will then be a six-month period after the grant has been awarded during which the grantee must purchase and install the funded equipment. In addition, all grantees must retain records of their purchase of the digital-to-analog conversion device for three (3) years after the date of the NTIA grant. The NTIA reserves the right to request proof of purchase at any time during this three-year window, so stations must keep such records readily available.

In addition to this program, the NTIA has established a fund, known as the Low-Power Television and Translator Upgrade Program, which has set aside \$65 million to “upgrade low-power television stations from analog to digital in eligible rural communities.” The definition of an eligible station is the same as that provided in the aforementioned program, but must also be in a rural area that serves less than 10,000 viewers. Under this program, such stations may receive reimbursements beginning February 18, 2009 for analog-to-digital upgrade equipment. Further details on this program are still being established.

Live Link

Low Power Television and Translator Grant Programs; Digital Television Transition and Public Safety;
National Telecommunications and Information Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce

For further information, please contact:

Richard R. Zaragoza (bio)
Washington, DC
+1.202.663.8266
richard.zaragoza@pillsburylaw.com

This publication is issued periodically to keep Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP clients and other interested parties informed of current legal developments that may affect or otherwise be of interest to them. The comments contained herein do not constitute legal opinion and should not be regarded as a substitute for legal advice.
© 2008 Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP. All Rights Reserved.