

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

Strategic Plan 2018-2022




Message from the Chairman

It is my great honor to introduce the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC's) Strategic Plan as revised for fiscal years 2018 to 2022.

Our strategic vision centers on bringing the benefits of the digital age to all Americans. Broadband opens doors to opportunity in almost every aspect of modern American life. It helps give rise to the democratization of entrepreneurship, so that anyone with a powerful plan and a digital connection can raise capital, start a business and reach a global customer base. It enables education, providing access to valuable learning resources regardless of one's location. It helps improve healthcare services, promoting better communication between patients and providers, and enabling telemedicine for those in rural or remote areas. It creates opportunities for civic involvement and social connection that were unforeseeable only a generation or two ago. To realize these benefits, the FCC is focusing on bringing the benefits of the digital age to all Americans by emphasizing the following priorities.

- **Closing the Digital Divide** - High-speed Internet access, or broadband, is critical to economic opportunity. But there are too many parts of the country where broadband is unavailable or unaffordable. The FCC has tools it can use to help close this digital divide, bring down the cost of deploying broadband, and create incentives for providers to connect consumers in hard-to-serve areas.
- **Promoting Innovation** - A key priority for the FCC is to foster a competitive, dynamic, and innovative market for communications services through policies that promote the introduction of new technologies and services. We will ensure that the FCC's actions and regulations reflect the realities of the current marketplace, promote entrepreneurship, expand economic opportunity, and remove barriers to entry and investment.
- **Protecting Consumers & Public Safety** - The FCC's core mission has always been to serve the broader public interest, and that means protecting consumers and keeping the public safe. We will work to combat unwanted and unlawful robocalls, which intrude into consumers' lives, and to make communications accessible for people with disabilities. We will also protect public safety, and in particular, take steps to assist and safeguard the communications of our nation's law enforcement officers and first responders.
- **Reforming the FCC's Processes** - As Chairman, I have made it a priority to implement process reforms to make the work of the FCC more transparent, open, and accountable to the American people. We will modernize and streamline the FCC's operations and programs to improve decision-making, build consensus, reduce regulatory burdens, and simplify the public's interactions with the Commission.

I look forward to working closely with Congress, other federal, state, and local agencies, as well as other external parties as the FCC implements its strategic plan. I believe the strategies outlined in this plan will allow the FCC to address both current and future challenges.



Ajit V. Pai
Chairman

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Mission

As specified in section one of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC's) mission is to "make available, so far as possible, to all the people of the United States, without discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, or sex, rapid, efficient, Nation-wide, and world-wide wire and radio communication service with adequate facilities at reasonable charges."¹ In addition, section one provides that the Commission was created "for the purpose of the national defense" and "for the purpose of promoting safety of life and property through the use of wire and radio communications."²

Vision Statement

The FCC's vision is to develop a regulatory environment to encourage the private sector to build, maintain, and upgrade next-generation networks so that the benefits of advanced communications services are available to all Americans. The FCC will work to foster a competitive, dynamic and innovative market for communications services through policies that promote the introduction of new technologies and services and ensure that Commission actions promote entrepreneurship and remove barriers to entry and investment. The Commission will also strive to develop policies that promote the public interest, improve the quality of communications services available to those with disabilities, and protect public safety.

About the Federal Communications Commission

The FCC is an independent regulatory agency of the United States Government. The FCC is charged with regulating interstate and international communications by radio, television, wire, satellite, and cable. The Commission also regulates telecommunications, advanced communication services and video programming for people with disabilities, as set forth in various sections of the Communications Act.

The FCC is directed by five Commissioners appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate for five-year terms, except when the unexpired term of a previous Commissioner is filled. Only three Commissioners can be from the same political party at any given time. The President designates one of the Commissioners to serve as Chairman.

The FCC is organized by function. There are seven Bureaus and ten Offices. The Bureaus and the Office of Engineering and Technology process applications for licenses to operate facilities and provide communications services; analyze complaints from consumers and other licensees; conduct investigations; develop and implement regulatory programs; and organize and participate in hearings and workshops. Generally, the Offices provide specialized support services. The Bureaus and Offices are:

- **The Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau** develops and implements 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 responding to consumer inquiries and informal 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. In addition, the Bureau's Disability Rights Office provides expert policy and

¹ 47 U.S.C. § 151.

² *Id.*

compliance advice on accessibility with respect to various forms of communications for persons with disabilities.

- **The Enforcement Bureau** enforces the Communications Act and the FCC's rules. It protects consumers, ensures efficient use of spectrum, furthers public safety, promotes competition, resolves intercarrier disputes, and protects the integrity of FCC programs and activities from fraud, waste, and abuse.
- **The International Bureau** administers the FCC's international telecommunications and satellite programs and policies, including licensing and regulatory functions. The Bureau promotes pro-competitive policies abroad, coordinating the FCC's global spectrum activities and advocating U.S. interests in international communications and competition. The Bureau works to promote a high-quality, reliable, globally interconnected, and interoperable communications infrastructure that is of high quality and reliability.
- **The Media Bureau** recommends, develops, and administers the policy and licensing programs relating to electronic media, including broadcast, cable, and satellite television in the United States and its territories.
- **The Public Safety & Homeland Security Bureau** develops and implements policies and programs to strengthen public safety communications capabilities that assist the public, first responders, the communications industry, and all levels of government in preparing for and responding to emergencies and major disasters.
- **The Wireless Telecommunications Bureau** is responsible for wireless telecommunications programs and policies in the United States and its territories, including licensing and regulatory functions. Wireless communications services include cellular, paging, personal communications, mobile broadband, and other radio services used by businesses and private citizens. The Bureau also conducts auctions of spectrum licenses and reverse auctions that award support from the Universal Service Fund for broadband deployment.
- **The Wireline Competition Bureau** develops, recommends, and implements policies and programs for wireline telecommunications, including fixed (as opposed to mobile) broadband and telephone landlines, striving to promote the widespread development and availability of these services. The Bureau has responsibility for the Universal Service Fund, which helps connect all Americans to communications networks.
- **The Office of Administrative Law Judges** is composed of one judge (and associated staff) who presides over hearings and issues decisions on matters referred by the FCC.
- **The Office of Communications Business Opportunities** promotes competition and innovation in the provision and ownership of telecommunications services by supporting opportunities for small businesses as well as women and minority-owned communications businesses.
- **The Office of Engineering and Technology** advises the FCC on technical and engineering matters. This Office develops and administers FCC decisions regarding spectrum allocations and grants equipment authorizations and experimental licenses.
- **The Office of the General Counsel** serves as the FCC's chief legal advisor.

- **The Office of the Inspector General** conducts and supervises audits and investigations relating to FCC programs and operations.
- **The Office of Legislative Affairs** serves as the liaison between the FCC and Congress, as well as other Federal agencies.
- **The Office of the Managing Director** administers and manages the FCC.
- **The Office of Media Relations** informs the media of FCC decisions and serves as the FCC's main point of contact with the media.
- **The Office of Strategic Planning and Policy Analysis** works with the Chairman, Commissioners, Bureaus, and Offices in strategic planning and policy development for the agency. It also provides research, advice, and analysis of complex, novel, and non-traditional economic and technological communications issues.
- **The Office of Workplace Diversity** ensures that the FCC provides employment opportunities for all persons regardless of race, color, sex, national origin, religion, age, disability, or sexual orientation.

Stakeholder Engagement

As an independent rulemaking agency, the FCC regularly solicits comments on issues and conducts workshops, forums, and meetings with outside parties. The FCC receives millions of comments from the public each year on its proceedings, and the FCC welcomes public feedback and input on its strategic goals as well.

Strategic Goals

The FCC is responsible to Congress and the American people for ensuring a vibrant competitive marketplace driven by principles and policies that create an environment for innovation and investment, better products and services for consumers, lower prices, more job creation, and faster economic growth. The FCC must also provide leadership to ensure that the communications needs of public safety officials are met; promote the universal availability and deployment of broadband and telecommunications services; make communications services accessible to all people; and protect and empower consumers in the communications marketplace. The FCC, in accordance with its statutory authority and in support of its mission, has established four strategic goals. They are:

Strategic Goal 1: Closing the Digital Divide

Develop a regulatory environment to encourage the private sector to build, maintain, and upgrade next-generation networks so that the benefits of advanced communications services are available to all Americans. Where the business case for infrastructure investment doesn't exist, employ effective and efficient means to facilitate deployment and access to affordable broadband in all areas of the country.

Strategic Goal 2: Promoting Innovation

Foster a competitive, dynamic, and innovative market for communications services through policies that promote the introduction of new technologies and services. Ensure that the FCC's actions and regulations reflect the realities of the current marketplace, promote entrepreneurship, expand economic opportunity, and remove barriers to entry and investment.

Strategic Goal 3: Protecting Consumers & Public Safety

Develop policies that promote the public interest by providing consumers with freedom from unwanted and intrusive communications, improving the quality of communications services available to those with disabilities, and protecting public safety.

Strategic Goal 4: Reforming the FCC's Processes

Modernize and streamline the FCC's operations and programs to increase transparency, improve decision-making, build consensus, reduce regulatory burdens, and simplify the public's interactions with the agency.

Strategic Goal 1: Closing the Digital Divide

***Vision:** Develop a regulatory environment to encourage the private sector to build, maintain, and upgrade next-generation networks so that the benefits of advanced communications services are available to all Americans. Where the business case for infrastructure investment doesn't exist, employ effective and efficient means to facilitate deployment and access to affordable broadband in all areas of the country.*

Strategic Objective 1.1: Expand broadband deployment in all parts of the country, including hard-to-serve areas, rural areas, and Tribal lands, and reduce the digital divide across America by creating a light-touch regulatory environment that maximizes private sector investment in broadband.

Performance Goal 1.1.1: Expand facilities-based competition among providers of voice, data, and other communications services, domestic and international, by adopting pro-competitive rules.

Performance Goal 1.1.2: Ensure that broadband networks are built and available to all American consumers, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, geography or other factors.

Strategic Objective 1.2: Reduce and remove regulatory burdens and barriers to infrastructure investment, and provide opportunities for innovation in broadband services and technologies by developing a flexible approach that will modernize, reform, and simplify the Universal Service Fund (USF) programs to facilitate affordable broadband deployment.

Performance Goal 1.2.1: Efficiently support broadband deployment where it is most needed by implementing USF reverse auctions that use market-based funding mechanisms that are grounded in sound economics.

Performance Goal 1.2.2: Decrease the cost and expedite the construction of next-generation networks by removing regulatory barriers to broadband deployment.

Strategic Objective 1.3: Reduce the digital divide and bring the benefits of the digital age to all Americans by ensuring that effective policies utilizing basic principles of economics are in place to promote entrepreneurship and expand economic opportunity.

Performance Goal 1.3.1: Develop recommendations, model codes, and best practices for accelerating broadband deployment by coordinating with industry, Tribal Nations and inter-governmental organizations, state and local government officials and regulators, consumer groups and community organizations.

Performance Goal 1.3.2: Foster an environment that will encourage participation in broadband markets by new and non-traditional participants.

Strategic Objective 1.4: Reduce the digital divide, create incentives for providers to connect consumers in hard-to-serve areas, meet consumer demand for mobile connectivity, and bring the benefits of communications services to all Americans by developing and implementing flexible, market-oriented policies related to the assignment and use of spectrum.

Performance Goal 1.4.1: Encourage facilities-based competition, embrace a flexible use policy for spectrum and free up spectrum for mobile broadband by pursuing spectrum allocation and license assignment policies to achieve the effective and efficient use of spectrum.

Performance Goal 1.4.2: Continue post-incentive auction repacking and reimbursement efforts for broadcasters so that wireless carriers can begin using spectrum in the 600 MHz band.

Performance Goal 1.4.3: Conduct effective and timely spectrum licensing and equipment authorization activities.

Performance Goal 1.4.4: Facilitate broadband deployment and access by employing effective and efficient means, such as reverse auctions.

Strategies:

- The FCC will use a competitive reverse auction to bring mobile broadband to millions of Americans through the Mobility Fund Phase II Auction.
- The FCC will bring high-speed Internet access to currently unserved rural Americans through the Connect America Fund Phase II auction, and will encourage a wide range of entities to participate, from wireless Internet service providers to electric utilities.
- The FCC will employ effective technical and economic analysis to develop policies that enhance spectrum access, management, and use so as to maximize the availability of broadband.
- The FCC will implement ongoing initiatives that will assist in spectrum policy planning and decision making, promote a robust secondary market in spectrum, and improve communications services in all areas of the United States, including rural, underserved and Tribal areas.
- The FCC will continue to collect and evaluate information on competition in the communications markets.
- The FCC will employ initiatives designed to make it easier for companies to build and expand high-speed broadband networks.
- The FCC will set rules that maximize investment in broadband and promote a regulatory approach of light-touch regulation, facilities-based competition, flexible use policy, and freeing up spectrum to encourage and facilitate the development of 5G networks.
- The FCC will work closely with the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), as well as regulators in Mexico, Canada, and other countries, to identify and resolve instances of harmful interference on an international basis and to avoid harmful interference in the future.

External Factors Affecting Achievement of This Goal:

- Barriers to broadband deployment in high-cost areas remain. Sufficient funds may not exist to subsidize buildout in all areas, especially in those areas where costs are the highest.

- Although technological advances make it possible to share spectrum more intensively, explosive growth in new technologies, particularly handheld and wireless devices, has increased demand for new spectrum. Increasing demand for spectrum requires new and innovative management techniques to allocate, assign, and use spectrum more efficiently and effectively. Methods for avoiding and mitigating harmful interference, and increasing opportunities for flexible and efficient use, require continued study.
- Legislation could impact the FCC's spectrum management policies. Differences among international and domestic spectrum allocation policies may lead to disparity and inconsistency among U.S. and foreign licensing processes. Decisions in pending court cases may also affect FCC action in this area.

Strategic Goal 2: Promoting Innovation

Vision: Foster a competitive, dynamic, and innovative market for communications services through policies that promote the introduction of new technologies and services. Ensure that the FCC's actions and regulations reflect the realities of the current marketplace, promote entrepreneurship, expand economic opportunity, and remove barriers to entry and investment.

Strategic Objective 2.1: Advance the networks of the future, and the innovative new products and services that take advantage of those networks, by removing barriers to innovation and investment.

Performance Goal 2.1.1: Allow television broadcasters to innovate, leverage the power of the Internet, and fully enter the digital era by implementing the next-generation broadcast standard.

Performance Goal 2.1.2: Foster innovation and promote the efficient use of spectrum by ensuring a competitive and vibrant unlicensed ecosystem.

Performance Goal 2.1.3: Allow new services and devices to come to market by expediting Commission processes.

Strategic Objective 2.2: Take targeted action to address real problems in the marketplace instead of imposing broad, preemptive regulations to address hypothetical harms.

Performance Goal 2.2.1: Promote a flexible approach to oversight and foster investment in 5G networks by considering actions that address real problems in the marketplace. Decisions will be fact-based, relying on economic analysis, ongoing fact-gathering initiatives and data analysis.

Performance Goal 2.2.2: Promote investment in infrastructure and 5G networks by eliminating unnecessary administrative burdens.

Performance Goal 2.2.3: Work to promote a high-quality, globally interconnected communications infrastructure through international telecommunications and satellite programs and policies.

Strategies:

- The FCC will encourage innovation throughout the Internet economy, focusing on growth and infrastructure investment, rules that expand high-speed Internet access everywhere, and giving Americans more online choice, faster speeds, and more innovation.
- The FCC will use light-touch regulation to restore Internet freedom, promote fast, affordable, and reliable Internet access and the benefits that come from competition, among both established providers as well as smaller competitors entering the broadband marketplace.
- The FCC will speed the process of new services and devices coming to market by complying with Section 7 of the Communications Act and acting on applications for new technologies or services within one year.
- The FCC will conduct effective policy and technical analyses, have access to current and relevant data in developing competition policies and rules, and take enforcement action where necessary to

ensure compliance with the pro-competition provisions of the Communications Act and the FCC's rules.

- FCC staff will seek to promote innovation and job growth by continually reviewing the FCC's rules to determine what rules need to be implemented, revised, or eliminated to achieve its objectives effectively and efficiently.
- The FCC will rely on fact-based decisions which eliminate unnecessary administrative burdens to promote investment in infrastructure and next generation networks.
- The FCC will provide expert guidance to other U.S. government agencies regarding communications policy and technology.

External Factors Affecting Achievement of This Goal:

- Significant and necessary changes in the regulatory environment will often be litigated.
- Domestic and global economic conditions will continue to have a major impact on the results of initiatives fulfilling these objectives. The availability of capital for investment in broadband is critical to provide the infrastructure to foster innovation and growth.
- The FCC must consult with industry and maintain relationships with regulators across the country and throughout the world.

Strategic Goal 3: Protecting Consumers and Public Safety

Vision: *Develop policies that promote the public interest by providing consumers with freedom from unwanted and intrusive communications, improving the quality of communications services available to those with disabilities, and protecting public safety.*

Strategic Objective 3.1: **Improve communications services for all Americans, including those with disabilities, by developing and implementing an aggressive consumer agenda.**

Performance Goal 3.1.1: Implement proposals to target and eliminate unlawful telemarketing and robocalling.

Performance Goal 3.1.2: Improve the quality of telecommunications relay services to make them more functionally equivalent to voice services available to hearing individuals.

Performance Goal 3.1.3: Work with stakeholders to ensure that Commission proceedings consider and identify consumer protection issues and policies across different technologies and market sectors.

Performance Goal 3.1.4: Implement actions to ensure that individuals with disabilities can access video programming.

Strategic Objective 3.2: **Support the ability of first responders, including law enforcement, by developing and implementing policies and procedures to strengthen public safety.**

Performance Goal 3.2.1: Combat the use of contraband cellphones in correctional facilities by developing reforms and examining other technological solutions.

Performance Goal 3.2.2: Help protect law enforcement officers by adding a “Blue Alert” option to the nation’s Emergency Alert System, notifying the public of threats to law enforcement and assisting in the apprehension of dangerous suspects.

Performance Goal 3.2.3: Adopt public safety spectrum policies that facilitate interoperable communications by first responders.

Strategic Objective 3.3: **Improve public safety and communications reliability across the country and advance access to public safety and emergency communications by developing and implementing policies using a broad range of technologies.**

Performance Goal 3.3.1: Promote the nationwide availability of reliable and effective 911, Enhanced 911 (E911), and Next Generation 911 (NG911) service by developing and implementing policies that will ensure the reliability and resiliency of communications networks, particularly for 911 and NG911 networks.

Performance Goal 3.3.2: Collect and analyze outage information for communications networks and 911/NG911 networks and work with stakeholders to understand and address problems.

Performance Goal 3.3.3: Analyze major outages and events, looking for existing practices and/or new practices that could have prevented the outage and could prevent future outages.

Performance Goal 3.3.4: Fulfill the FCC's responsibilities to the National Preparedness System, including support to Emergency Support Function #2 (Communications). Provide situational awareness of communications systems; coordinate with industry and other Federal partners to facilitate communications network preparedness, response, and restoration by working closely with local, state, Tribal governments and Federal partners during a crisis.

Performance Goal 3.3.5: Strengthen consumer access to emergency services and emergency public information sources during emergencies by supporting improved preparedness, reliability of communications networks, and disaster management practices.

Performance Goal 3.3.6: Facilitate the effectiveness and reliability of the Emergency Alert System (EAS) and Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA), while encouraging the development of new alerting capabilities within emerging technologies.

Performance Goal 3.3.7: Ensure a fair and efficient process for Commission review of interoperability showings by op-out states and thus assist in the development of the FirstNet nationwide public safety broadband network.

Strategies:

- FCC leadership will work with public safety stakeholders to maximize the availability, interoperability, and reliability of communications in the protection of the Nation's critical communications infrastructure.
- The FCC will work on a variety of fronts to confront unlawful robocalls, scams and other unlawful and harmful practices, including investigating and taking appropriate action to penalize those who are breaking the law and working on rules that will make it easier for carriers to stop these unwanted calls.
- The FCC will move aggressively to give providers more leeway to impede illegitimate callers and to protect consumers, many of whom are small businesses, from scams.
- The FCC will act to improve the quality and efficiency of video relay services and help make these services more useful to disabled Americans in their daily lives.
- The FCC will work to ensure the public's safety through the reliability of our nation's communications networks at all times, and especially during natural and manmade disasters.
- Appropriate FCC personnel will utilize technical knowledge of public safety, homeland security, and disaster management issues, including the impact of new or evolving technologies and of existing and proposed best practices for communications providers.
- Working in partnership with other federal agencies as well as state, local, and Tribal governments, the FCC will facilitate discussions and share information among key constituencies to identify and establish best practices and coordinate efforts to protect America's safety and security.
- The FCC will maintain an experienced, educated, and knowledgeable technical and legal staff that stays abreast of technological and policy developments.

External Factors Affecting Achievement of This Goal:

- Economic cycles may make it difficult for communications infrastructure providers to commit large sums of money to the wholesale improvement of network protection and redundancy in a challenging economy, and for state and local governments to fund next generation 911 services and public safety broadband capability.
- The FCC must continually update its understanding of national and international threats to communications technologies. The FCC must maintain ongoing, highly integrated relationships with the communications industries, other federal regulators, and state, Tribal, and local regulators who are heavily involved in public safety matters.
- With respect to robocalls, technological challenges, such as Caller ID spoofing, can make it difficult to determine if the caller is a legitimate caller or one who seeks to annoy or defraud consumers.

Strategic Goal 4: Reforming the FCC's Processes

Vision: *Modernize and streamline the FCC's operations and programs to increase transparency, improve decision-making, build consensus, reduce regulatory burdens, and simplify the public's interactions with the agency.*

Strategic Objective 4.1: **Serve the American public by improving the efficiency, effectiveness, and transparency of the FCC's operations.**

Performance Goal 4.1.1: Provide information about the status of matters pending before the FCC by developing and posting information online and communicating with stakeholders.

Performance Goal 4.1.2: Ensure that FCC regulations solve real problems at a reasonable cost by implementing the principles of regulation and requirements for regulatory impact analysis articulated in Executive Order 13563 of January 18, 2011 (Improving Regulation and Regulatory Review), and Executive Order 12866 of October 4, 1993 (Regulatory Planning and Review).

Performance Goal 4.1.3: Ensure the Commission's ability to meet its Mission Essential Functions and other critical activities during emergencies and disasters affecting FCC facilities and/or staff.

Performance Goal 4.1.4: For each program objective, ensure that the Commission adheres to all legal requirements in its operations by providing timely and accurate legal advice and representation regarding proposed and existing policies and rules within the FCC's purview.

Strategic Objective 4.2: **Achieve statutory objectives while reducing burdens on industry and promoting innovation and job growth by continuously reviewing the FCC's regulatory and operational processes and significant regulations.**

Performance Goal 4.2.1: Implement a regulatory reform agenda guided by the principles of Executive Order 13771 of January 30, 2017 (Reducing Regulation and Controlling Regulatory Costs) and Executive Order 13579 of July 11, 2011 (Regulation and Independent Regulatory Agencies) by reviewing existing FCC regulations and eliminating those regulations that fail to solve real problems at a reasonable cost.

Performance Goal 4.2.2: Eliminate reports and related filing requirements that are unnecessary, duplicative, or fail to produce benefits that justify their costs by reviewing the Commission's information collections processes.

Strategic Objective 4.3: **Effectively manage and modernize the FCC's information technology, financial, record keeping, facilities and human capital resources to best achieve the FCC's mission.**

Performance Goal 4.3.1: Make information readily available to agency management for decision-making by improving Commission systems.

Performance Goal 4.3.2: Carry out the agency's mission by upgrading and enhancing technology and tools used by Commission staff.

Performance Goal 4.3.3: Maintain a high level of cybersecurity readiness and presence by providing FCC staff with a secure digital infrastructure.

Performance Goal 4.3.4: Ensure that all financial operations are helping control or contain costs, providing high quality customer service, and improving the effectiveness and efficiency of Commission operations by conducting a program of continuous review and evaluation.

Performance Goal 4.3.5: Expand the role of economics and engineering at the FCC by developing workforce recruitment initiatives.

Strategic Objective 4.4: Ensure that the Universal Service Fund programs are well managed, efficient and fiscally responsible and reduce fraud, waste, and abuse.

Performance Goal 4.4.1: Reduce the potential for fraud, waste, and abuse in the USF programs.

Performance Goal 4.4.2: Ensure that the USF programs are administered efficiently and effectively by reviewing the administrative costs of the programs.

Strategies:

- The FCC will implement policies to increase transparency and public information concerning matters before the Commission to promote accountability and effectiveness and will use its website to convey this information to the public.
- The FCC will adopt procedures for economic analysis of prospective new regulations that reflect longstanding principles articulated in executive orders and Office of Management Budget guidance.
- The FCC's efforts to identify, review, and eliminate outdated regulations are rooted in our commitment that FCC rules and policies promote innovation and job growth, while reducing burdens on industry. This includes our commitment to Executive Orders 13771, 13579, 13563, and 12866, which are consistent with the values and philosophy we apply at the FCC. Each Bureau at the FCC conducts regular reviews of rules within its area with the goal of eliminating or revising rules that are outdated or place needless burdens on businesses. The FCC will continue on this regulatory reform track, using effective cost-benefit analysis, thoughtfully and diligently conducting reviews of existing rules and taking other important steps to meet our statutory obligations and mission in a way that fosters economic growth and benefits all Americans.
- The FCC will promote innovation, job growth, and consumer welfare through an ongoing process of identifying and eliminating or amending rules that fail to solve real problems at reasonable cost.
- The FCC will put processes in place that provide for timely introduction, upgrade, or replacement of technologies and identify ways to leverage and integrate technology to eliminate unnecessary redundancy, and promote efficiency and effectiveness while maintaining continued adherence to a high level of information security standards.
- The FCC will routinely assess our financial internal controls and those of our reporting components, and develop and implement corrective action plans as needed so that the FCC obtains "clean" audit opinions on its financial statements each year. We will also continue to make progress in eliminating and recovering improper payments.
- The FCC will continue to recruit and retain talented professionals, and will continue a robust training program to maintain proficiency among its professional staff.

- The FCC will continue to establish improved oversight and robust internal controls for its Universal Service Fund programs to improve management of those programs and reduce fraud, waste, and abuse.
- The FCC will establish an Office of Economics and Data to provide economic analysis for rulemakings, transactions, and actions, managing the Commission's data resources, and conducting longer-term research on ways to improve the Commission's policies.

External Factors Affecting Achievement of Management Objectives:

- Funding for the FCC to carry out its mission is always a significant determinant of our ability to meet our strategic goals and objectives as expressed in this plan. The FCC relies on its annual appropriations and its authorization from Congress to implement its initiatives for the American people, overhaul its data systems and processes, and modernize and reform the FCC with 21st century communications tools and expertise.
- The FCC has many opportunities to improve customer and employee satisfaction and affect mission accomplishment through the introduction of new or enhanced systems and processes. Ensuring that the FCC has access to the human resources necessary to properly plan, implement, and evaluate the use of these technologies is a complementary factor affecting the achievement of the FCC's organizational excellence goal. Recruiting, hiring, redeploying, training, motivating, and retaining such a staff is a challenge.

Planning and Performance at the FCC

The FCC Strategic Plan provides the framework around which the FCC determines its annual performance plan and budget request. The FCC annually submits its performance plan as part of its budget request to Congress. The annual performance plan includes performance targets for the current fiscal year that stem from the FCC's strategic goals and objectives, and serves as the annual guide for implementing the FCC's Strategic Plan. After each fiscal year, an annual performance report is produced that compares the agency's actual performance to its targets. Copies of these documents may be viewed at: <https://www.fcc.gov/about/strategic-plans-budget>.

Program Evaluations

The FCC uses a variety of methods to evaluate its programs including risk assessments, audits from the FCC's Office of Inspector General (OIG) and reports from the Government Accountability Office (GAO). The FCC annually works with its Bureaus and Offices as well as with its reporting components for the Universal Service Fund, Telecommunications Relay Service fund, and North American Numbering Plan fund to assess the risks the FCC is facing to meeting its strategic goals and objectives. Using this information, the FCC is able to make improvements to its operations and program management on an ongoing basis to better achieve its goals. The OIG, an independent oversight organization within the FCC, conducts audits, investigations, and reviews relating to the FCC's programs and operations. Information on the OIG's work can be found at: <http://www.fcc.gov/office-inspector-general>. The GAO, an independent organization established by Congress, conducts evaluations and analyses and makes recommendations to improve practices of the programs it reviews. GAO reports concerning the FCC's activities can be found at: <http://www.gao.gov/>.