

# PARTICIPATING IN THE BROADCAST LICENSE RENEWAL PROCESS: A PRIMER

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) grants free and exclusive licenses to radio and television broadcasters on the condition that they serve the public interest.

Those licenses come up for renewal every eight years. Decades of deregulation have stripped the license renewal process down to little more than a postcard that stations mail to the FCC.

While it's unlikely that the FCC would deny a license renewal, it's important that citizen feedback about broadcasters' performance be entered into the public record.

If you have a complaint against one or more of the stations in your media market, you can file an informal objection or a petition to deny. **Petitions to deny** must meet certain legal requirements, which can be found at <http://www.fcc.gov>.

**Informal objections** are much less formal and easier for the average citizen to undertake. Reasons for filing an informal objections might include:

- Failure to provide adequate information about elections, civic issues and/or local governance;
- Non-compliance with federal law requiring at least three hours per week of children's or educational programming (*television only*);
- Obscene or indecent broadcasts;
- Lack of public service announcements about local charities;
- Any action by a broadcaster that you believe is not in the best interest of your community.

By law, stations must keep information about how they are meeting their public interest obligations in their public file. You may wish to examine the public file to find data that will bolster your case, or to see what broadcasters say they are doing to serve the public interest. But keep in mind that stations maintain control over what is included in the file. You will have to visit the station in person to examine the public file; however, you do not need an appointment, and the files must be made available to you immediately if you arrive at the station during regular business hours.



Your informal objection should be filed after the station files its renewal application but before the license expiration date. License renewal dates are based on location:

State	Radio		Television	
	Renewal Application Deadline	License Expiration Date	Renewal Application Deadline	License Expiration Date
Alabama	12/1/03	4/1/04	12/1/04	4/1/05
Alaska	10/1/05	2/1/06	10/1/06	2/1/07
Arizona	6/1/05	10/1/05	6/1/06	10/1/06
Arkansas	2/1/04	6/1/04	2/1/05	6/1/05
California	8/1/05	12/1/05	8/1/05	12/1/06
Colorado	12/1/04	4/1/05	12/1/05	4/1/06
Connecticut	12/1/05	4/1/06	12/1/06	4/1/07
Delaware	4/1/06	8/1/06	4/1/07	8/1/07
District of Columbia	6/1/03	10/1/03	6/1/04	10/1/04
Florida	10/1/03	2/1/04	10/1/04	2/1/05
Georgia	12/1/03	4/1/04	12/1/04	4/1/05
Hawaii	10/1/05	2/1/06	10/1/06	2/1/07
Idaho	6/1/05	10/1/05	6/1/06	10/1/06
Illinois	8/1/04	12/1/04	8/1/05	12/1/05
Indiana	4/1/04	8/1/04	4/1/05	8/1/05
Iowa	10/1/04	2/1/05	10/1/05	2/1/06
Kansas	2/1/05	6/1/05	2/1/06	6/1/06
Kentucky	4/1/04	8/1/04	4/1/05	8/1/05
Louisiana	2/1/04	6/1/04	2/1/05	6/1/05
Maine	12/1/05	4/1/06	12/1/06	4/1/07
Maryland	6/1/03	10/1/03	6/1/04	10/1/04
Massachusetts	12/1/05	4/1/06	12/1/06	4/1/07
Michigan	6/1/04	10/1/04	6/1/05	10/1/05
Minnesota	12/1/04	4/1/05	12/1/05	4/1/06
Mississippi	2/1/04	6/1/04	2/1/05	6/1/05
Missouri	10/1/04	2/1/05	10/1/05	2/1/06
Montana	12/1/04	4/1/05	12/1/06	4/1/06
Nebraska	2/1/05	6/1/05	2/1/06	6/1/06
Nevada	6/1/05	10/1/05	6/1/06	10/1/06
New Hampshire	12/1/05	4/1/06	12/1/06	4/1/07
New Jersey	2/1/06	6/1/06	2/1/07	6/1/07
New Mexico	6/1/05	10/1/05	6/1/06	10/1/06
New York	2/1/06	6/1/06	2/1/07	6/1/07
North Carolina	8/1/03	12/1/03	8/1/04	12/1/04
North Dakota	12/1/04	4/1/05	12/1/05	4/1/06



Ohio	6/1/04	10/1/04	6/1/05	10/1/05
Oklahoma	2/1/05	6/1/05	2/1/06	6/1/06
Oregon	10/1/05	2/1/06	10/1/06	2/1/07
Pennsylvania	4/1/06	8/1/06	4/1/07	8/1/07
Rhode Island	12/1/05	4/1/06	12/1/06	4/1/07
South Carolina	8/1/03	12/1/03	8/1/04	12/1/04
North Dakota	12/1/04	4/1/05	12/1/05	4/1/06
Tennessee	4/1/04	8/1/04	4/1/05	8/1/05
Texas	4/1/05	8/1/05	4/1/06	8/1/06
Utah	6/1/05	10/1/05	6/1/06	10/1/06
Vermont	12/1/05	4/1/06	12/1/06	4/1/07
Virginia	6/1/03	10/1/03	6/1/04	10/1/04
Washington	10/1/05	2/1/06	10/1/06	2/1/07
West Virginia	6/1/03	10/1/03	6/1/04	10/1/04
Wisconsin	8/1/04	12/1/04	8/1/05	12/1/05
Wyoming	6/1/05	10/1/05	6/1/06	10/1/06

Your letter of informal objection should include:

- The station's call sign
- The city and state where the station operates
- The station's facility identification number \*
- The license renewal application file number. \*

\* Available by searching the Consolidated Database System (CDBS) on the FCC's website: <http://www.fcc.gov/mb/elecfile.html>

Mail your comments to:

Office of the Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street NW  
Washington, DC 20554

If your objection is about a television station, send to the Attention of the Video Division, License Renewal Processing Team, Room 2-A665.

If your objection is about a radio station, send to the Attention of the Audio Division, License Renewal Processing Team, Mail Stop 1800B.

Also send a copy of your objection to the general manager of the television or radio station. You can find names of general managers and mailing addresses for stations at <http://www.bia.com/MWS/mws.asp>.