

PROGRAM I: POLICY DIRECTION AND SUPPORT

Statutory authority

Communications Act of 1934, as amended, and the Communications Satellite Act of 1962.

Nature of program and benefits

The Commissioners' policy and support personnel which are not directly chargeable to specific programs are in the following areas: The Offices of the Chairman and the Commissioners, Office of Executive Director, Office of General Counsel, Office of the Secretary, and Office of Information.

The Federal Communications Commission is a bipartisan independent regulatory agency composed of seven commissioners appointed by the President, by and with the consent of the Senate, one of whom the President designates as Chairman. The normal term of appointment is 7 years. Commissioners provide policy direction for the agency in the numerous and complex issues which come before the Commission as it carries out its regulatory responsibilities in the rapidly developing field of communications. Its mission covers administrative, quasi-judicial and quasi-legislative responsibilities in the regulation of interstate and foreign communications, by wire, cable, radio, and satellites, with the objective of—

"making available, so far as possible, to all the people of the United States a rapid, efficient, nationwide, and worldwide wire and radio communication service with adequate facilities at reasonable charges, for the purpose of the national defense, for the purpose of promoting safety of life and property through the use of wire and radio communication. * * * (Sec. 1, Communications Act.)

The Chairman of the Commission, in addition to his duties as a commissioner, serves as the chief executive officer of the agency. In this capacity, he presides at Commission meetings and represents the Commission at legislative and budgetary hearings before the Congress and the Bureau of the Budget. He also acts as the primary manager of Commission administrative operations, including activities affecting other Government agencies and congressional liaison functions.

The specific description of organization, functions and responsibilities of the major staff units listed above (i.e., Executive Director, General Counsel, Office of the Secretary, and Office of Information) is contained in part 0 of the Commission's rules and regulations.

The Executive Director is directly responsible to the Commission and works under the supervision of the Chairman, assisting him in carrying out of the Commission's organizational and administrative responsibilities. His principal role is to coordinate the activities of the staff units of the Commission, with the objective of prompt disposition of the matters with which they are charged. He is directly responsible for personnel management, budgetary planning and administrative services operations, and supervises implementation of the Public Information Act of 1966. Illustrative of work outputs in activities supervised by the Executive Director are: more than 10,000 personnel actions of all types processed annually, preparation of various budget and planning proposals, duplicating of approximately 35 million impressions a year and the processing of more than a million pieces of mail annually. The Executive Director also supervises the emergency communications functions of the Commission and reports directly to the Defense Commissioner in this responsibility.

The Office of General Counsel is responsible for advising the Commission on legal matters involved in setting and implementing policy. The General Counsel also represents the Commission in litigation in the courts, coordinates the preparation of the Commission's legislative program and acts in international communications matters. During fiscal year 1967, the Commission participated in 99 Federal court proceedings, including actions pending before the Supreme Court, the various Courts of Appeal and U.S. District Courts. The most recent Supreme Court case involved the vital issue of the Commission's role and authority in regulating community antenna television systems.

The Office of the Secretary has the responsibility for signing and processing certain Commission correspondence and documents. He is the custodian of the Commission's seal and records and maintains minutes and records of Commission actions and docket proceedings. The Secretary supervises the library and assures that library procedures and volumes procured are responsive to the increasing Commission requirements for information.