

Communications, Video, and Technology Accessibility Act

The ***Communications, Video, and Technology Accessibility Act*** is designed to ensure that people with disabilities have access to innovative communication and video technologies needed to participate equally in employment, education, and other social and civic activities. Technology has evolved significantly since Congress last updated technological accessibility requirements in 2010, bringing with it significant growth in our reliance on streaming platforms, video conferencing services, and artificial intelligence. As a result, federal accessibility laws have key gaps, such as their lack of clear obligations for closed captions and audio description to be included in online programming.

The ***Communications, Video, and Technology Accessibility Act*** contains the following provisions to close these gaps by ensuring that all Americans can benefit from, and have equitable access to, our nation's technological advancements:

Video Programming Access

- Requires closed captioning for new online streaming programming;
- Requires audio description — which narrates key visual elements of programming for persons who are blind and low vision — for all television programming and new online streaming programming;
- Requires the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to establish an advisory committee that will help determine closed captioning and audio description requirements for older online streaming programming; and
- Requires devices, such as televisions and computers, to include features that allow easy activation and customization of audio description preferences and compatibility with assistive technologies, such as braille and voice recognition technologies.

Communications Access

- Requires video conferencing services to provide specified accessibility features, while providing industry flexibility in complying with these requirements;
- Ensures that deaf people who use American Sign Language (ASL) have equitable access to 9-1-1 emergency services through direct video calling and telecommunications relay services;
- Requires customer call centers operated by entities under the FCC's jurisdiction to provide ASL-fluent customer service agents for communication with ASL users; and
- Requires the FCC to ensure that disability access protections keep pace with emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence and virtual reality platforms.