

Truth For The World

Newsletter

Federal Communications Commission Opens Low-Power FM Opportunity For Churches

On June 17, 2013, the Federal Communications Commission announced an upcoming application window for Low-Power FM (LPFM) radio stations in the United States. The application window will be open between October 15th and October 29th, 2013. (<http://www.fcc.gov/document/lpfm-window-open-october-2013-revised-form-318-released>)

This announcement opens up an opportunity for churches and other non-profit groups to apply for their own LPFM station in their community.

LPFM stations broadcast like other FM stations except they are less powerful and thus have less coverage area. The coverage area can still be significant enough to reach into a local community. According to information from the Prometheus Radio Project website, a LPFM station at maximum power of 100 watts and with an antenna height of 30 meters will generally provide solid coverage for a radius of 3.5 miles and can reach a radius of up to 10 miles away. (<http://www.prometheusradio.org/what-is-lpfm>)

Other distinguishing characteristics for LPFM stations are that they are cheaper to build than Full-Power FM stations, and they must be licensed by a non-profit organization with an educational mission. Churches qualify to own these stations by their very nature.

The FCC has not opened up an application window for over 10 years, and this opportunity may not occur again for another 10 years. “We are treating this application filing window as a one-shot deal,” says Kendal Rasnake, Director of Truth For The World and former general manager of an FM radio station in Missouri. “Even if the FCC were to open up another application opportunity after this, the limited open space on the FM dial in someone’s area might be grabbed up by applicants in 2013.”

LPFM applicants do not even need prior radio experience. “There are currently almost 800 LPFM stations on-the-air, and most of the organizations have limited resources and knew little-to-nothing about broadcasting when they started,” says Jason Bennett, a Technical Consultant at FM Expansion Group. (<http://fmexpansion.com/>)

Applying for an LPFM station is essentially a 3-part process:

1. Submit FCC Form 318 (<http://www.fcc.gov/forms>)
 - a. There is no charge for applying to the FCC but you may have to spend a few hundred dollars for engineering help with the application.
 - b. Wait a few months/years for the FCC to process the applications and notify the public of their decision-making
2. If you are approved, you will be awarded a Construction Permit (CP). The CP gives you permission to build a radio station within 3 years from the date the CP is issued.
3. Once the station is built, obtain final license from the FCC and go on-the-air.

The cost for building a LPFM station is estimated between \$10,000 and \$25,000. To put that number in comparison, a church may spend almost \$15,000 to pay for one week of religious programming on an AM station in Tennessee. Recurring costs after construction may include tower rental (if an antenna needs to be placed on someone else’s tower), staffing, electricity, etc. “The main components that are needed are a couple of computers and a transmitter,” Bennett says. “It can sometimes be as simple as putting an antenna on the roof

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and the equipment in a well-ventilated closet.”

“A congregation with a LPFM station in their area could broadcast the truth of the Bible to their community in one fell swoop and make it available constantly,” says Rasnake. “Truth For The World is doing what we can to notify congregations of this opportunity, to help with their questions, and to potentially partner with church of Christ LPFM stations, including offering them radio programming for free.”
(<http://truthfortheworld.org/lowpowerfm>)

Congregations can look for potential LPFM space in their area by going to the FCC’s LPFM Channel Finder at <http://www.fcc.gov/encyclopedia/low-power-fm-lpfm-channel-finder> . A qualified firm can often find an appropriate channel even if the channel finder indicates that no appropriate frequencies are available. Some firms will also do an initial analysis that includes coverage maps, population counts, and estimated construction costs for a potential station at a specific location.

Memorials/Honors

*In Memory of: **Robert Dudley***

Given by: Lorene Lanham

*In Memory of: **Marian Bales***

Given by: Lorene Lanham

*In Memory of: **Hope Schull***

Given by: Lorene Lanham

*In Memory of: **Mary Ann Rochelle***

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*In Memory of: **Robert Lee, Jr.***

Given by: Deborah Boyce

*In Memory of: **Jane Hatly***

Given by: Lorene Lanham

*In Memory of: **Roy Luxton***

Given by: Lorene Lanham

*In Memory of: **Aaron Snider***

Given by: Mike and Tracie Lanier

*In Honor of: **Jimmie & Minnie Lincoln on their 50th
Wedding Anniversary***

Given by: Lorene Lanham

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