

[FCC Sets Out Procedures for Noncommercial Station Fundraising For Japan Relief](#)

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Under FCC policies, stations licensed as **noncommercial educational (NCE) stations** cannot conduct fundraising for parties other than the station licensee if such fundraising will disrupt the normal program schedule of the station. So the Jerry Lewis Telethon and similar charitable programming efforts cannot be conducted by noncommercial stations without a waiver from the FCC. In recent years, when there have been major disasters, like Hurricane Katrina and the Haitian earthquake, the FCC has adopted a liberal waiver policy to allow noncommercial stations to join the rest of the world in aiding the victims of such tragedies. This week, the FCC adopted a similar policy for noncommercial stations wanting to conduct fundraisers for Japanese relief efforts, issuing a [Public Notice](#) setting out that policy. Waiver requests can be filed by an email to the head of the Audio or Video Division of the FCC (depending on whether the request is coming from a radio or TV station), setting out the following information:

- a. the nature of the fundraising effort;
- b. the proposed duration of the fundraising effort;
- c. the organization(s) to which funds will be donated; and
- d. whether the fundraiser will be part of the licensee's regularly scheduled pledge drive or fundraising effort.

As we [wrote when the Haitian Notice was issued](#), there does not seem to be a need, under FCC precedent, for stations to have to request permission from the FCC if these fundraising appeals will not interrupt regular station programming. Yet it might be safest to ask for that permission if the requests will be regularly run during the course of programming on the station - to avoid any question about such activities. Of course, the question could be raised as to whether the FCC really needs to have this rule any longer - or if it might not be more appropriate for noncommercial stations to use their own discretion to make programming decisions about the fundraising that they want to do in the public interest. But that is a question for another day - as stations have a good cause to which they can contribute now, and the FCC has given them the ability to do so on an expedited basis.

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