

THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION OF
AT&T OHIO FOR A WAIVER OF DIVISION
(B) OF SECTION 4901:1-6-15, OHIO
ADMINISTRATIVE CODE.

CASE NO. 20-1139-TP-WVR

ENTRY

Entered in the Journal on June 11, 2020

{¶ 1} Pursuant to Ohio Adm.Code 4901:1-6-15(B), upon a customer request, a local exchange carrier providing basic local exchange service (BLES) shall make available to BLES customers the option to have a printed telephone directory at no additional charge.

{¶ 2} Pursuant to Ohio Adm.Code 4901:1-6-02(E), upon application or upon a motion filed by a party, the Commission may waive any requirement of this chapter, for good cause shown, other than a requirement mandated by statute from which no waiver is permitted.

{¶ 3} On June 8, 2020, AT&T Ohio, AT&T Corp., and Teleport Communications America, LLC (collectively, AT&T) filed an application for waiver of Ohio Adm.Code 4901:1-6-15(B) so that they can provide telephone directories to their BLES customers in an electronic format. AT&T proposes to provide its BLES customers with at least 60 days advanced notice of the discontinuance of the ability to request printed directories. AT&T requests that the waiver be effective no later than January 1, 2021, so that AT&T can apply the waiver beginning with the May 2021 directories. The proposed time frame will allow AT&T to provide two rounds of customer notice via monthly bill inserts and to coordinate the wind down of printed directories with the directory publisher.

{¶ 4} In support of its request, AT&T submits that the demand for printed directories has dwindled; that better directory information is available online; that limited demand for printed directories no longer justifies the cost and administrative burden of providing them; and that legislatures and regulators in many states, including Ohio, have recognized these developments by removing requirements for printed directories. Further,

AT&T references the 2010 amendment to R.C. 4927.01 allowing for the provision of telephone directories to BLES customers in any reasonable format with no express requirement to provide a printed directory.

{¶ 5} According to AT&T, of the roughly 16,000,000 subscriber lines in Ohio, less than 0.06 percent are BLES customers that can request a printed directory from AT&T Ohio. Additionally, it represents that in 2015, it received and processed requests for printed directories from 13,829 customers and that in 2019 that number declined to 3,240 requests. Further, AT&T represents that for 2020, it is projecting a demand of just 1,836 directories. AT&T submits that the requirement to provide printed directories creates unnecessary expense since it must retain the services of a third-party publisher to create and distribute directories and must also maintain a process to receive and fulfill requests. AT&T asserts that these expenses place it at a competitive disadvantage in the marketplace. Finally, AT&T believes that there is environmental benefit to granting its waiver since the directories are discarded each year and take up space in landfills.

{¶ 6} At this time, the Commission seeks comments regarding AT&T's proposed waiver request. Initial comments should be filed on or before June 29, 2020, with reply comments to be filed on or before July 8, 2020.

{¶ 7} It is, therefore,

{¶ 8} ORDERED, That comments regarding AT&T's waiver request be submitted in accordance with Paragraph 6. It is, further,

{¶ 9} ORDERED, That a copy of this Entry be sent to the telephone industry list-serve and served upon all parties and interested persons of record.

THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO

/s/ Jay S. Agranoff

By: Jay S. Agranoff
Attorney Examiner

SJP/mef

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Summary: Attorney Examiner Entry seeking comments regarding AT&T's proposed waiver request. Initial comments due 6/29/20, reply comments due 7/8/20. electronically filed by Ms. Mary E Fischer on behalf of Jay S. Agranoff, Attorney Examiner, Public Utilities Commission of Ohio