

Alaska Rural Communications Service Digital Conversion Planning **FY2011 Request: \$50,000**
Reference No: 49392

AP/AL: Appropriation **Project Type:** Information Technology / Systems / Communication

Category: Education

Location: Statewide

House District: Statewide (HD 1-40)

Estimated Project Dates: 07/01/2010 - 06/30/2011

Contact: Eric Swanson

Contact Phone: (907)465-5655

Brief Summary and Statement of Need:

Funding is needed for developing an Alaska Rural Communications Services (ARCS) digital conversion plan.

Funding:	<u>FY2011</u>	<u>FY2012</u>	<u>FY2013</u>	<u>FY2014</u>	<u>FY2015</u>	<u>FY2016</u>	<u>Total</u>
Gen Fund	\$50,000						\$50,000
Total:	\$50,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$50,000

<input type="checkbox"/> State Match Required	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> One-Time Project	<input type="checkbox"/> Phased - new	<input type="checkbox"/> Phased - underway	<input type="checkbox"/> On-Going
0% = Minimum State Match % Required		<input type="checkbox"/> Amendment	<input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health Bill	

Operating & Maintenance Costs:

	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Staff</u>
Project Development:	0	0
Ongoing Operating:	0	0
One-Time Startup:	0	
Totals:	0	0

Additional Information / Prior Funding History:

No prior year funding has been appropriated for this project.

Project Description/Justification:

The FCC will soon mandate that all low power television services convert from analog to digital. While this represents a major change in technology, it also offers an opportunity to significantly expand the over-the-air public service to residents in bush Alaska. Digital conversion will allow multiple services, including those already being transported by our satellite multiplex, to be made available to viewers. Digital ARCS could broadcast four channels of video service comprised of commercial television programs on ARCS, a full channel of public television, the legislative coverage channel and the University of Alaska's learning channel. For bush residents, this new level of programming capacity would be an incredible advancement in service from the State.

Such a large scale statewide conversion project will come with a significant price tag. The good news is that the federal government has made funds available to assist by reimbursing much of the project expense. However, that source is limited and already dwindling.

For these reasons, Alaska Public Broadcasting, Inc. (APBI) recommends that \$50,000 be included in the FY11 budget for the purpose of developing an ARCS digital conversion plan.