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Selective Review News Brief Series – Technology Planning and Budget

May 28, 2008

This is the second in USAC's weeklong series of News Briefs on [Selective Review](#) topics.

Question: What is a Technology Plan "creation date"?

The technology plan creation date is the month and year the technology plan was written, not the date when you began to develop or draft it. The technology plan must be created in sufficient detail to support the services requested in your Form 470, and the creation date must be prior to the date your Form 470 is posted. USAC considers the technology plan to be created or written when it first contains the five required elements.

Your technology plan must have these five elements:

- Goals and realistic strategy for using telecommunication and information technology
- Professional development strategy
- An assessment of telecommunication services, hardware, software, and other services needed
- Budget resources
- An ongoing evaluation process

Question: My Selective Reviewer told me that my technology plan is missing one of the five required elements. What should I do?

You can update your technology plan with the missing element. As part of your response to the Selective Review questions, include a copy of that updated section of your plan. If you fail to provide the missing element during your review, your FRN(s) for services other than basic telephone service will be denied.

Question: Our operating budget is updated annually. Should we update the technology plan budget annually as well?

The technology plan budget element is a forecast of your budget resources. You are not required to update your budget in your technology plan each year.

Please keep in mind that a technology plan is not a static document. It should be responsive to new and emerging opportunities and open to review. If you find that your technology needs change and you want to order services beyond the scope of your existing plan, you must prepare and timely submit a new plan for approval.

Question: My technology plan has not been approved yet. What should I do?

You are not required to have an approved technology plan until discounted services start or you file Form 486, whichever is earlier.

For more information regarding technology planning, see USAC's website at [Develop a Technology Plan](#).

Question: I do not have a final approved budget. What can I provide instead?

The purpose of Selective Review budget questions is to determine that you have budgeted sufficient funds to pay your non-discount share **prior to certifying your Form 471**. Since some applicants cannot provide a final approved budget because the timing of their budget cycle does not match that of the application process, USAC will accept certain other documents in place of a final approved budget.

If you do not have a final approved budget, you can respond by providing BOTH:

- a signed and dated letter from an official from your school or library AND
- an alternative budget document.

Letter from School or Library Official

The letter must respond to the following questions:

- What phase of the budget approval process are you in?
- What outside action (e.g., voter approval, governing board approval, state legislation, etc.), if any, does your share of funding depend upon?
- If that action does not occur, will you still be able to pay your non-discount share? How?

The letter should identify the specific amount that you will have available to pay your non-discount share. Note that USAC considers your non-discount share to be the total of the Item 25c entries in all of your Form(s) 471.

Alternative Budget Document

In addition to the letter from the school or library official, you MUST provide one of the following documents:

- A draft budget covering the current funding year.
- A signed (if possible) and dated resolution of a governing Board authorizing the filing of Forms(s) 471 for a given dollar amount, for specific services and/or products, and within a particular timeframe. The resolution should state the funding year, fiscal year, or school year during which the payment is authorized.
- A signed and dated donor or commitment letter to the applicant. The letter MUST specify the level and commitment of funds or other resources and the timing of the delivery of such resources. It must also state that the resources are for the applicant (non-discount) share of eligible products/services or for items needed to effectively use the discounted services. The grants or outside funding organizations must be independent of the service provider.

Question: We use funds from an annual grant to pay our non-discount share. We have not received our grant award letter yet. What can we do?

You can provide a letter signed and dated by an official from your school or library stating that your organization has a "reasonable expectation" that it will have the funds at the time services are delivered. You should also provide historical documentation indicating you have received the grant in the past. Before your Form 486 is certified, you will be asked to demonstrate that your organization has secured your non-discount share.

See also the [Operating Budget](#) section of the Selective Review guidance on the USAC website.

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