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Schools and Libraries News Brief

February 13, 2009

TIP OF THE WEEK: If your Form 471 was submitted online or postmarked after 11:59 p.m. EST on February 12, you must request a waiver from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) if you want to ask that your form be considered in-window. If instead you file an appeal with USAC based on your out-of-window letter, USAC will issue you a form letter that explains how to request a waiver from the FCC.

Now That the Window Has Closed...

The FY2009 Form 471 application filing window closed last night, February 12, at 11:59 p.m. EST. While it may be tempting to relax or return to other pressing concerns, you should take a few minutes now to prepare for the next steps in the application process.

Organize and file your documents.

As part of your application filing process, you may have produced or accessed a number of documents such as:

- Technology plans
- Requests for Proposals (RFPs)
- Winning and losing bids
- Bid evaluation matrices and other evaluation documents
- Contracts
- National School Lunch Program (NSLP) data reports
- Alternative discount mechanism documentation (e.g., income surveys)
- Draft or final budgets

You may be asked to provide or refer to some or all of these documents during Program Integrity Assurance (PIA) reviews, appeal reviews, audits, or other program activities. We suggest you take the time now to organize and file all documents related to your application in a manner that will allow you to easily locate and retrieve them for any future needs.

If you would like guidance on how to organize your documentation, review the [E-rate Binder Table of Contents](#) in the Reference Area of the website under the heading "Checklists and Samples."

Submit your Item 21 attachments.

An Item 21 attachment is a detailed description of the products and services requested in a Form 471 Block 5 funding request. Applicants include the attachment number in Item 21 of the funding request and follow up by providing the attachment itself. Item 21 attachments can be filed online, electronically, by fax, or on paper.

Although the Item 21 attachment does not need to be filed before the window closes, the review of your application cannot begin until your PIA reviewer has access to your attachment. We recommend that you file your attachment as soon as possible instead of waiting for PIA to contact you and set a deadline for your response.

You can [file your Item 21 attachment online](#) if you have your Form 471 application number and security code. You can also refer to the [Item 21 Attachments](#) guidance document for other filing options and more information on preparing your Item 21 attachments.

Certify any Form 470 that you cited on a funding request.

Each Form 470 cited in Item 12 of a Form 471 Block 5 funding request must be certified. Because a Form 470 can be posted to the USAC website without being certified, applicants

sometimes forget to complete this important step. Although you will be reminded during PIA review if a Form 470 needs to be certified, we suggest that you take the time now to certify any Forms 470 that you have cited.

To verify the status of a Form 470, click on the Search Posted button in the Form 470 column on the [Apply Online](#) page. Choose the appropriate funding year and, on the following screen, provide the application number or other details that will allow you to locate your Form 470. If the status on the third line of the form display is "COMPLETE," return to the Apply Online page, click on the "Certify Complete" button in the Form 470 column, and follow the instructions to certify your form either online (if you have a PIN) or on paper.

Certify your Form 471.

Within the next few weeks, USAC will issue a reminder letter to applicants identifying any Form 471 that was submitted online before the close of the window but that has not yet been certified. Applicants will have 20 days from the date on that letter to certify the Form 471 and still have the form be considered in-window. Forms 471 certified after the deadline in the letter will be considered out-of-window. Again, we encourage you to certify your Form 471 now rather than waiting for the reminder letter.

If you certify on paper, be sure to postmark your certification on or before the due date in the letter. The status of your form will change from "COMPLETE" to "CERTIFIED - IN WINDOW" after USAC successfully processes your paper certification.

You can also certify your form online on or before the due date. However, be advised that the status of your application will show as "CERTIFIED - OUT OF WINDOW." After the 20-day deadline has passed, USAC will identify all applications certified online within the grace period and change the status for those applications to "CERTIFIED - IN WINDOW."

To check the status of a Form 471, click on the "Application Status" button in the Form 471 column of the [Apply Online](#) page. Enter the Billed Entity Number and choose the funding year, then click on the "Continue" button on the following page to pull up a list of Forms 471 filed by that Billed Entity and their current statuses. You can also view an individual form and its status using the Form 471 "Display" button.

Review your RNL and RAL and submit any allowable corrections.

USAC issues a [Form 470 Receipt Notification Letter \(RNL\)](#) to each applicant that posts a Form 470 and a [Form 471 Receipt Acknowledgment Letter \(RAL\)](#) to each applicant that timely certifies a Form 471. These letters contain instructions for identifying and submitting allowable form corrections after the forms have been submitted. We suggest that you review your letters carefully and, if you notice any errors, submit those corrections to USAC as soon as possible using the process described in the appropriate letter.

Check the status of your technology plan.

Applicants requesting discounts on more than [basic telephone service](#) must have an approved technology plan before services start or the Form 486 is filed, whichever is earlier. We suggest you do the following:

- If you are already covered by an approved technology plan, check the expiration date of the plan. For FY2009 services to be covered, the approval of your technology plan must extend through June 30, 2010.
- If you wrote a new technology plan before you filed your Form 470 for FY2009, make sure you understand the technology plan approval process for your state and/or your entity type. You should be actively working to get your technology plan through the appropriate approval process and approved no later than July 1, 2009 in order for it to cover FY2009 services.

You should also organize and file your documents that relate to technology planning. At a minimum, these include:

- A dated copy of the technology plan that was written before your Form 470 was filed. Note that if a funding request for FY2009 is based on a multi-year contract that has already been in effect for several years, you may still need to refer to the technology plan that served as the basis for the establishing Form 470 for that multi-year contract.
- A copy of the final approved technology plan.

- A copy of the approval letter or other proof of approval from the [USAC-certified Technology Plan Approver](#) that approved your technology plan. The letter should clearly state the period for which the plan is approved, for example: "This technology plan is approved for the three-year period starting July 1, 2009 and ending June 30, 2012."

Prepare for PIA review.

If you have all of your documentation in order, you should be in good shape for PIA review. Remember to respond promptly to any PIA requests for information or documentation. You can ask for additional time to respond if you need it. We will cover PIA review in more detail in a future edition of the SL News Brief.

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