

[Back](#) [header](#)

## Schools and Libraries News Brief

November 11, 2011

**TIP OF THE WEEK:** Remember that it is not too late to request an extension if you missed the deadline for filing an invoice for FY2010 recurring services. Refer to [last week's SL News Brief](#) for details on filing an extension request.

### Commitments for Funding Years 2011 and 2010

**Funding Year 2011.** USAC will release FY2011 Wave 22 Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs) November 15. This wave includes commitments for approved Priority 2 (Internal Connections and Basic Maintenance) requests at 90%. As of November 11, FY2011 commitments total over \$1.24 billion.

**Funding Year 2010.** USAC will release FY2010 Wave 75 FCDLs November 16. This wave can include commitments for approved Priority 2 requests at all discount levels. As of November 11, FY2010 commitments total over \$2.85 billion.

On the day the FCDLs are mailed, you can check to see if you have a commitment by using USAC's [Automated Search of Commitments](#) tool.

### APPLICATION PROCESS: Technology Planning

For many applicants, the first document prepared under the E-rate program will be a technology plan. A technology plan is a written document that describes the technologies and associated resources, both existing and planned, that will assist a school to provide educational services or a library to provide library services.

Beginning with FY2011, technology plans are required only for Priority 2 services – i.e., Internal Connections and/or Basic Maintenance of Internal Connections.

- Under certain limited conditions, equipment may be eligible as Priority 1. However, if USAC must move a funding request for such equipment from Priority 1 to Priority 2 Internal Connections during application review because it doesn't meet all of those conditions, a technology plan is required. Please refer to the website guidance document [On-premise Priority 1 Equipment](#) for more information.)

The basic requirements of a technology plan are listed below. Note that service providers should not write or assist in the writing of a technology plan.

- It must be created (written) before the Form 470 is filed.
- It must cover all 12 months of the funding year for which you are applying.
- It must contain all required elements (see below).
- It must be approved by a USAC-certified Technology Plan Approver (TPA) before the Form 486 is filed or services start, whichever is earlier.
- We recommend that it not cover more than three years.

Let's look at each of these in turn.

### The technology plan must be created before the Form 470 is filed.

Your technology plan must form the basis for the products and services you are seeking on your Form 470 and the products and services you subsequently order on your Form 471. The products and services you request on your Form 470 must therefore be consistent with your technology plan. Your technology plan should be specific enough to allow you to achieve your goals and strategies for providing educational or library services, but flexible enough that you can consider different available technologies to attain those goals.

The technology plan written before the Form 470 filing is not necessarily the final version of your technology plan, nor the version that will eventually be approved by your TPA. It should, however, be far enough along in its development that it can reasonably support your requests for discounted products and/or services. In addition, we recommend that you document the date that you created your technology plan since this information may be requested during review of your Form 486. The creation date is defined as the date your technology plan first contained all of the required elements in sufficient detail to support the products or services requested on your Form 470.

NOTE: Currently approved plans that cover at least part of the upcoming funding year and support the services that will be requested on the Form 471 meet this requirement. Also, an applicant that purchases services from a state master contract and cites the associated state-filed Form 470 on the funding request is not required to have a written technology plan before the state filed its Form 470.

**The technology plan must cover all 12 months of the funding year.**

Internal Connections and Basic Maintenance of Internal Connections products and services that are received during the funding year must be covered by the technology plan. Because services are usually received during the entire funding year, the technology plan must cover the entire funding year.

If your current technology plan expires before the end of the funding year for which you are applying, you must have a written and approved technology plan that covers the remainder of the funding year. As above, that new technology plan must be written before the Form 470 is filed and approved before the Form 486 is filed so that your services for the entire year are covered by approved technology plans.

**The technology plan must contain all of the required elements.**

Those elements are:

- Goals and strategies for using telecommunications and information technology
- A professional development strategy
- An assessment of telecommunications services, hardware, software, and other services needed
- An ongoing evaluation process
- Budget resources [Beginning with FY2011, this element is not required.]

Your technology plan should address each of these elements at a level of detail appropriate to the size of your entity. For example, the technology plan for a one-room rural library with a single router would be much shorter and simpler than the technology plan for a large urban library with 20 branches and the internal connections equipment required to provide service to all of the branches.

**The technology plan must be approved by a USAC-certified Technology Plan Approver (TPA).**

USAC certifies certain entities to approve technology plans. In general, state departments of education and state libraries can approve plans. Other agencies can approve technology plans for non-public and other entities, such as diocesan schools or special libraries.

You can access a list of agencies that are certified to approve technology plans using the [Technology Plan Approver Locator tool](#) in the [Search Tools](#) section of the website. You should not submit your plan to an approver who is not certified by USAC to approve plans for your state or entity type. If you cannot find an appropriate approver for your state or entity type, use the email link on the TPA locator web page or [Submit a Question](#) (choose Topic Inquiry "Technology Planning" and Specific Inquiry "I can't find my Tech Plan Approver on your website") to ask USAC for help in locating an approver.

The technology plan must be approved before services start. However, because some applicants are eligible to file a Form 486 early if they meet certain requirements, the technology plan must be approved before the Form 486 filing if the Form 486 is filed before services have started.

**The technology plan should not cover more than three years.**

New technologies and services develop and change rapidly. Funding can be reduced or increased. Staff changes can lead to modifications of organizational goals. For these and other

reasons, technology plans can become out-of-date in a relatively short period of time. Consequently, we recommend that your technology plan should not cover more than three years. However, we recognize that in certain situations a technology plan may be in effect for longer than three years, such as:

- State five-year plans required by the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) meet E-rate requirements for state library agencies applying for discounts.
- School five-year plans required by the U.S. Department of Education's Enhancing Education Through Technology (EETT) program meet E-rate requirements.

For more information on all aspects of technology planning, you can refer to the following guidance documents:

[Develop a Technology Plan](#)

[Technology Planning](#)

[Questions to Consider in Technology Planning](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions about Technology Planning](#)

[Tech Plan Approver Locator tool description](#)

You may download and print copies of [Schools and Libraries News Briefs](#) on USAC's website. You may [subscribe](#) to or [unsubscribe](#) from this news brief. For program information, please visit the [Schools and Libraries area](#) of the USAC website, [submit a question](#), or call us toll-free at 1-888-203-8100. Feel free to forward this news brief to any interested parties.

Please do not reply to this email directly, as it was sent from an unattended mailbox.

1997-2011, Universal Service Administrative Company, All Rights Reserved.

[Back](#)