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April 27, 2016

NEW Process for Receiving and Answering PIA Questions

Starting with FY2016, applicants will receive and answer Program Integrity Assurance (PIA) questions in our new IT system, known as the E-rate Productivity Center (EPC). PIA is the process used by USAC to review applications for compliance with program rules and policies. During this process, USAC will review the information on your FCC Form 471 and may contact you with questions in order to complete the review of your application.

PIA has begun reviewing FY2016 applications and you could receive questions as early as next week. Note that not all applications will require us to send you questions. For FY2016, we will send all PIA questions to your **News** feed in EPC and applicant responses will be sent back to us in EPC. PIA questions will not be emailed or faxed.

In addition to this SL News Brief, USAC will email instructions on accessing PIA questions in EPC to the main contact person identified on FY2016 FCC Forms 471. We will send these instructions to every contact person on a certified FCC Form 471. Make sure the contact information on your form is current. If you need to update your contact information or provide holiday/summer contact information, you can submit a modification to your form (see below).

Following is the process for accessing and responding to PIA questions for FY2016 applications:

How you will be notified

PIA will send an email to the contact person informing him or her that questions are available through the EPC **News** tab.

The notification in the EPC **News** tab reads: **From the FCC Form 471 Review Team**. The notification includes:

- Today's date
- The due date for your response
- Contact name
- Applicant name
- FCC Form 471 application number
- A brief description of the inquiry(ies)
- Your PIA reviewer's name and telephone number
- A hyperlink to your questions (the blue bar at the bottom of the notification)

TIP: Enter "471 Review Team" in the **News** search function and hit the "Enter" key to locate these notification(s) more easily.

You can also locate your questions in the **My Tasks** section of your landing page. The hyperlinked name for each task is "Respond to Notifications for Form 471 [form number]."

Keep in mind that the **News** item hyperlink will take you to the complete list of PIA questions, but the **My Tasks** hyperlinks each take you to an individual question. For example, if you receive five PIA questions, you will see a list of all five questions if you use the **News** item option, and five separate tasks if you use the **My Tasks** option.

If you submitted more than one FCC Form 471 that requires PIA review, you will receive a separate set of questions for each form.

How to access your PIA questions

When you click on the hyperlink (from either **News** or **Tasks** in EPC) you will access the **Review Inquiries** page. The **Review Inquiries** page is the applicant's dashboard (repository) for all PIA inquiries for each application. You can also access the **Review Inquiries** page by selecting **Records**, then "Review Inquiries" from the left-hand navigation.

You can perform the following actions from the **Review Inquiries** page by clicking the appropriate button at the top of the page:

1. Respond to inquiries
2. Request an extension
3. Submit a modification to your form ("RAL correction")

How to respond to your PIA questions

Click on the "Respond to Inquiries" button to view and respond to your PIA questions.

When you click on this button, you will see **Pending Inquiries** and **Submitted Inquiries** dashboards. These dashboards list the status of the PIA outreach, for example: the type of outreach, the date the notification was sent, the response due date, the reviewer's name and telephone number, and the read status (the blue eye in the "Read" column turns grey after you open that inquiry). Pending inquiries are questions submitted by PIA to the contact person; submitted inquiries are responses you submitted to PIA.

When the applicant selects a pending inquiry, a template is displayed listing the PIA question(s) associated with that inquiry. You can enter your answers within the template, upload supporting documentation (a single document or multiple documents), and/or provide additional narrative information.

The system allows you to begin to work on your answers and then save your work for later by clicking the "Save & Close" button. To return to your work, choose "Review Inquiries" from the **Records** tab.

As always, provide complete answers and respond to all of the questions. Contact your PIA reviewer if you are unsure of what to do or you need clarification. If you do not respond within seven days – or your response is incomplete – you will receive a reminder notification.

After you have finished your response, submit it to PIA by clicking the "Submit" button. Your submitted response will then appear in the **Submitted Inquiries** dashboard. To expand this dashboard, click on the plus sign ("+") to the right of the **Submitted Inquiries** header.

How to request an extension of time to answer PIA questions

You can request more time to respond to your PIA review questions if you need it. You will automatically be granted a seven-day extension upon your first request. Your original response due date (generally 15 days from the date your questions were issued) is automatically adjusted and a new due date is calculated and displayed.

Subsequent extension requests are not automatic. These requests are reviewed and the decision to grant or deny the request will appear in the **Review Inquiries** dashboard.

How to submit modifications to your FCC Form 471

If you need to provide or correct information on your FCC Form 471 in advance or during the process of responding to PIA questions, you can submit allowable corrections to your FCC Form 471 by clicking the "Submit Modifications" button on the **Review Inquiries** page.

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