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May 27, 2016

TIP OF THE WEEK: The FCC Form 471 application filing window for schools and school districts has closed. Remember that your profile is now locked, and you will only be able to request changes to your form or to your profile by submitting a RAL modification.

Information Requests from USAC - Summer Contact Period Starts Today

USAC has procedures to contact applicants and service providers if more information is necessary to process a form. The two most common reasons we need to contact you are:

- Program Integrity Assurance (PIA) is reviewing your FCC Form 471 and needs more information from you in order to complete their review.
- The Client Service Bureau (CSB) received a program form from you on paper and cannot complete data entry because of incomplete or inconsistent information. (Note that online filing is required for FCC Forms 470 and 471, and strongly encouraged for FCC Forms 486, 472, and 474.)

We encourage you to respond promptly to our requests so that we can continue processing your form.

PIA Review

If PIA has questions for you, the questions will be posted in the E-rate Productivity Center (EPC). EPC will generate an email notifying the FCC Form 471 main contact person that the questions are posted on the **Review Inquiries** page in EPC. The email contains a hyperlink to the questions.

You can also access the **Review Inquiries** page from the left-hand menu on the first screen of your certified FCC Form 471. Full- and partial-rights users on the organization's account can also see and respond to the PIA questions from this page.

USAC's customary procedure is as follows:

- USAC uses the FCC Form 471 main contact email address to send a notice that questions are available in EPC and posts the questions to the FCC Form 471. Full- or partial-rights users will not receive the email.
- If we have not heard from you or you provide only a partial response after seven days from our first attempt to contact you, we will send you a reminder and also inform your state E-rate coordinator that we are attempting to contact you.
- If we have not heard from you after 15 days from our first attempt to contact you, you will receive a second notification reminding you to respond. We will make every attempt to obtain the information from you. However, if we do not receive a response, we will use the information we have to complete the processing of your form.

We realize that, during a summer period and a winter period each year, many applicants are unavailable due to extended holiday and break schedules. PIA will not continue the process described above during these periods unless we are able to make a live contact by telephone with the contact person or someone else who has been designated to respond to our questions.

- Our summer contact period is defined as the Friday before Memorial Day through the Friday after Labor Day. For 2016, the dates of the summer contact period are May 27 (today) through September 9.

If our first attempt to contact you is on or after today, and we cannot confirm that you are available to respond to our questions, we will put our process on hold and not continue the review of your application until after September 9. You can always contact us to restart the review of your application if you become available before September 9.

If PIA has already contacted you and you wish to designate someone to answer questions in your absence, be sure to send your designee's contact information to your PIA reviewer. If PIA has not contacted you and your designee will be checking your messages, be sure that you have provided written authorization for your designee to answer questions about your application.

If PIA makes contact with someone representing your organization but that person is not in a position to answer PIA questions, he or she should clearly state to the PIA reviewer that the review of your application should be put on hold until you are available.

Remember also that you can ask for more time to respond if you need it.

Paper forms

FCC Forms 470 and 471 can no longer be filed on paper. However, other program forms have both a paper and an online version, or a paper version only.

We strongly encourage you to file forms online if an online option is available. Paper filers should monitor their emails and voice mails for at least three weeks after they file a paper form in case we have questions, as many paper forms require additional outreach. If we cannot get the answers we need – even during the summer contact period – we may have to process the form with the information available.

Next Steps Related to the FY2016 School/School District Filing Window

The filing window has closed for schools and school districts. Many libraries and consortia have also filed forms, although their filing window does not close until July 21. We are providing a few reminders for those applicants who have already filed FCC Forms 471.

Review the information on your FCC Form 471.

We want to call attention to a few fields that you should double-check for accuracy:

FCC Form(s) 470 you cited on a funding request. Applicants citing an FY2016 FCC Form 470 filed and certified their form in EPC. However, applicants with multi-year contracts or who started their competitive bidding process before the FY2016 FCC Form 470 was available in EPC may be citing a form from a previous funding year. Check to be sure that each 15-digit application number you provided was for the correct FCC Form 470 that was posted for the correct service type and for which you waited at

least 28 days before you chose your service provider. Also, for FCC Forms 470 not filed in EPC, make sure they are certified.

You can check the status of an FCC Form 470 filed for a previous funding year with the [Search FCC Form 470](#) tool, and you can certify an uncertified form with the [Certify FCC Form 470](#) tool.

FCC Registration Number. Check this 10-digit number to make sure it is correct, especially if this is the first year you have filed E-rate program forms.

Costs and cost allocations. Check your math. The pre-discount costs of your funding requests should match the information in your contract(s) or other documentation you used to prepare your form.

If you notice any incorrect information, you can [submit a RAL modification](#).

- **Schools and school districts:** Your profile information has been locked because the discount calculations for libraries and for consortia that include schools depend on the information you provided in your profile. At some point after the library/consortium filing window closes on July 21, your profiles will be unlocked. Meanwhile, if your profile information is incorrect, you can [submit a RAL modification](#).

Gather your documentation.

As part of your application filing process, you may have produced, accessed, or received a number of documents. You may need to refer to one or more of these documents at various times during the application process, for example, to prepare for a PIA review or an audit, or to file an FCC Form 486, an invoice, or an appeal. If you collect and store this documentation in a manner that allows you – or your successor – to easily access and produce these documents, you can respond much more quickly to information requests.

You have already provided some of this information to USAC – your RFP document(s) in your FCC Form 470, your contract information in your profile – but you should keep your own copies as well.

Some documents that might be easier to find and store now but that might be more difficult to locate later include (this list is not exhaustive):

- Competitive bidding

- Request for Proposal (RFP) and RFP documents
- Public notice of RFP issued (if required by your state or local procurement laws)
- Winning and losing bids
- Questions and answers provided to potential bidders – emails, supporting documents, or other correspondence produced as part of the competitive bidding process
- Completed bid evaluation matrices or other documents that show how the bids received were evaluated and the winning bid chosen
- Contracts and/or legally binding agreements, with evidence of board approvals (if required by your state or local procurement laws)
- If there is a restriction that prevents services and costs from being made public, a copy of the precise cite to the law, statute, local rule, or court order identifying the restriction.

- Discount calculations

- National School Lunch Program (NSLP) data sources

- Income surveys or other surveys
- Direct certification documentation and other documents related to participation in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) or other provisions of NLSP
- Other documentation used to compute student counts.

- Supplemental documentation

- Consulting agreements or letters of agency
- Draft and/or final budgets
- Receipt Notification Letter (RNL) modifications submitted
- RAL modifications submitted
- Questions received from PIA and your responses.

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. For guidance on how to organize your documentation, review the [E-rate Binder Table of Contents](#) and the [Samples and Examples](#) on the USAC website.

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.

Last Week in "File Along with Me":

- Window countdown: 3, 2, 1, 0. [Read More](#)

"File Along with Me" is a blog that covers the E-rate Program application process step-by-step, and serves as a schedule you can follow to manage your application. Ready to join us? [Read the Blog](#)

Commitments for Funding Year 2015

Funding Year 2015. USAC will release Funding Year (FY) 2015 Wave 52 on June 3. This wave includes commitments for approved requests for all service types and at all discount levels. As of May 27, FY2015 commitments total over \$3.28 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.

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