April 9, 2021

> **TIP OF THE WEEK:** **Be sure to gather the documentation you used to complete your FY2021 FCC Form 471 to help you prepare for USAC's review of your application (see below).** You can also notify your service provider(s) that you may need their help if USAC requests specific documentation or technical information on the services they provide.

Commitments for Funding Year (FY) 2020

FY2020. USAC released FY2020 Wave 50 Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs) on April 8. As of April 9, FY2020 commitments total over $2.37 billion.

On the date that USAC issues FCDLs, you can access your FCDL notification from the **Notifications** section of your landing page in the E-Rate Productivity Center (EPC).

Overview of the PIA Review Process

[Program Integrity Assurance (PIA)](#) is the process USAC uses to review applications for compliance with program rules and policies. During this process, USAC reviews the information on your FCC Form 471 and may contact you with additional questions on specific items.

Following is a summary of the Initial Review, Final Review, and Quality Assurance steps in PIA review.

Initial Review

USAC assigns an initial reviewer to process your FCC Form 471. The information you provided on your form may be sufficient for the initial reviewer to complete your review. If not, the initial reviewer prepares the questions that USAC must ask based on the information you provided (or did not provide) on your application.

The initial reviewer issues questions to you via EPC. You will receive an email when the questions are available. If you are a public school or library, we also notify your state E-Rate coordinator.

- You can click the link provided in the email to access our questions. You can also navigate to the **Pending Inquiries** section of your organization's landing page in EPC and, using the drop-down menus, choose "FCC Form 471" for the **Type** and "2021" for the **Funding Year**.
- Read each question carefully. The inquiry may require you to provide a Yes/No answer, a short response in a text field, or a file or scanned document.

- Only one user can work on a specific inquiry at one time, although different users can work on different inquiries simultaneously. One user can allow another user to review and/or edit their work by saving a draft response and then exiting the inquiry.

Please respond promptly to any PIA requests for information or documentation. Reviewers will continue their attempts to contact applicants to ensure that they are available to respond to inquiries.

During the PIA review process, you always have the following options:

- If you do not understand one or more questions, you can ask your initial reviewer what the question means or what information USAC expects in your response.
- You can ask for more time to respond. However, note that your initial reviewer may not be able to return to your application quickly once you provide the information.
- You can ask to speak to a manager if you are having trouble communicating with your initial reviewer. USAC will not penalize you for doing so, and the manager can help you understand the questions USAC is asking and the responses USAC expects to receive.

If we intend to modify or deny a funding request, your initial reviewer will notify you through EPC. You can provide additional information at this point, but you must respond quickly because we do not stop the review process to wait for a response.

Final Review and Quality Assurance

Final Review is a peer review of the work done during Initial Review. The final reviewer checks each step of the Initial Review process to verify that they followed the correct procedures, asked the appropriate questions, and received complete answers. If the final reviewer has any concerns, they will return the application to the initial reviewer for follow-up.

As a result, your initial reviewer may contact you with additional questions to gather the required information that they did not request or receive during Initial Review. Make sure you understand the supplemental information requested and that you respond as quickly and accurately as possible.

Some applications go through a third level of review called Quality Assurance (QA). QA is an additional check to verify the reviewers correctly completed all parts of the application review. As with Final Review, the QA reviewer may return applications to the initial reviewer for follow-up.

The review process is not linear. If a QA reviewer returns an application to an initial reviewer, the status on the progress bar at the top of your FCC Form 471 may move to the left – that is, to an earlier review status. If you do see such a movement, monitor your email in case an initial reviewer attempts to contact you.

USAC Seeks Feedback on User Experience-Related IT Enhancements

The Share Your E-Rate User-Experience System Ideas form is available for program participants to submit their ideas and feedback for improving and/or enhancing the user experience of E-Rate information systems. Please share your feedback to help us continue to improve the program.

We may ask you for additional information about any suggestions you submit to us. However, if you do not want USAC to contact you, simply notify us by email.

We have also posted a list of the User Experience-Related System Enhancements that contains the user-submitted suggestions we have implemented, organized by the date USAC deployed the enhancement. We will continue to update the list as we deploy new system enhancements.

If you have specific inquiries or requests for assistance related to the information systems, please create a customer service case in EPC or call CSB.

Back