On-Tech

E-Rate Funding—Guaranteed

Form 486 Questions and Answers

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Introduction

On-Tech is a technology consulting firm focused on managing the E-Rate process for schools and libraries. We provide a full range of E-Rate services for applicants, including: handling the entire application process; consulting on construction projects to ensure maximum E-Rate funding; and reviewing proposals to ensure E-Rate compliance. In addition, On-Tech obtains E-Rate funding for school and library construction projects. On-Tech is not associated with any service provider.

Dan Riordan has been involved with the E-Rate since 1997, when he was trained by the New Jersey Department of Education to offer assistance to school districts in completing the application. Since then, he has worked on the E-Rate as a trainer, a district technology coordinator, and now a consultant.

When to File the 486

The deadline to file the Form 486 is October 29th if you were approved before the start of the funding year. If you were approved after July 1st, the deadline is 120 days from the date you were approved.

The earliest date you can file a Form 486 is the day you received your Funding Commitment Decision Letter (FCDL). And that is the day you should file it. It only takes a few minutes, and lots of funding is lost by people who forget to file. And if you want to receive discounted bills, the discounting cannot start until the form is filed.

If you file before July 31st of the funding year, you will need to check the box in Block 2 requesting an Early Filing waiver.

If you file a Form 486 late, funding will not be denied, but it will be reduced. The Service Start Date will be adjusted to 120 days before the form was filed, and funding reduced proportionately. So if you file 3 months late, you'll lose a quarter of your funding. File 6 months late and you'll lose half your funding.

Filing Tips

We'll go through an actual Form 486, but here are a few tips:

1. File online. Most errors are caught by the online application, and it autofills some information for you.
   a. Use Internet Explorer. Other Web browsers will work generally, but they are not supported.
   b. Do not use your browser's "Back" button. If you need to go to a previous page, use the "Previous" button.
   c. If you need to save information on the current page, click the "Next" button. Note that the "Previous" button will discard your changes.
   d. Disable your pop-up blocker, at least for the USAC site (usac.org and universalservice.org).
2. Except in rare circumstances, the start date will always be July 1st of the current year. The only place you can really go wrong on this form is to put in the wrong day or month.
3. File early, if for no other reason than to be able to submit a second 486 if something is wrong with your first one.

Version

You should not file on paper. But if you do decide to file a paper Form 486, make sure you have the right version. The form changed recently, so before you submit a form, make sure it says "December 2013" at the bottom of every page

Form 479

If the Billed Entity is not the Administrative Authority for all of the entities listed in Block 4, then the Administrative Authority(ies) must complete a Form 479 and send it to the Billed Entity, and the Billed Entity must retain the form.

The most common use of a Form 479 is in a consortium. So if a consortium of separate libraries files a single application, the Billed Entity on the Form 471 must collect a Form 479 from each library.

In the case of a library without its own budget, the application is filed as a consortium with the municipality as the lead, so the municipality should collect a Form 479 from the library. An argument could certainly be made that in this case the library is not an Administrative Authority, but the argument can be avoided by completing a Form 479.

Undertaking Compliance

On the Form 486, there are three CIPA certification options: 1) compliant, 2) not compliant, and 3) undertaking compliance.

In order to use the "undertaking compliance" certification, a library must be completing a Form 486 for Internet Access and/or Priority Two funding for the first time since Funding Year 2000. Once a Form 486 for non-telecommunications services has been filed, a library can never again use the "undertaking compliance" certification. (The only exception being if the following year local or state procurement law prevents compliance, in which case the applicant can again use this certification.)

An applicant certifying that actions are being taken to comply with CIPA should have documentation of those actions. An example might be a draft Internet Safety Policy being considered by the board or evidence that the selection process for a filter has started.

More Resources

On-Tech
www.on-tech.com/erate

This handout and other E-Rate information and links are available at our Web site.

blog.on-tech.com

For a more informal discussion of the E-Rate, visit our blog. You can search for a topic of interest to you and get an insider's view.

If you have specific questions, contact us.
    Email: info@on-tech.com
    Phone: 732-530-5435

Schools & Libraries Division (SLD)
www.usac.org/sl

This Web site is a wealth of information, and the information is official. Start by pointing at the light blue "Schools and Library Applicants" button, and selecting the relevant step.

File online at: http://www.sl.universalservice.org/menu.asp

Download paper forms at: http://www.universalservice.org/sl/tools/required-forms.aspx