

E-rate Newsletter for MI Libraries

E-rate News, Tips and Tricks

April 13, 2009

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Has anyone collaborated with a non-erate eligible entity (like county government) to bring broadband services to their library and share the cost using a cost allocation technique with the e-rate program? Please call the Hotline at 1-888-307-6569 and let us know. We want to share this opportunity with everyone.

We are here to answer any questions about e-rate. Just call the E-rate Hotline at 888-307-6569.



MI Broadband Summit!

If you have not made your reservation for the MI Broadband Summit you will want to very soon. Seats are going fast for the MI Broadband Summit hosted by the Library of Michigan and the American Library Association. The Summit will be held on Wednesday, May 20, 2009 at the Kellogg Center in East Lansing.

This event will provide Michigan Libraries with a full day of access to the latest information from the rapidly changing world of telecommunications services and the opportunities (and risks) that always come along with innovation. We will decode the tech-jargon and discuss how these new technologies can improve library services.

For further information go to www.michigan.gov/techforlibraries.

Respond to PIA Questions

After the submission of the Form 471 application the next step is for USAC to review that application for correctness and eligibility. The team who handles this part of the E-rate process is called the Program Integrity Assurance (PIA) Group. Typically these reviewers develop questions in regard to the elements posted on your Form 471. These questions concern issues including the category of service, verification of Free and Reduced Lunch counts and proof of the correct dollar amount that you have requested, to name a few.

These series of questions have a time limit of 15 days although an extension may be requested if additional time is needed. Answer these questions quickly and with correct detail. These reviewers want you to succeed and will work with you.

How's your E-rate binder doing?

Unless you've already gotten a Funding Letter, many of you are currently going through PIA (Program Integrity Assurance). This is a good time to re-check your E-Rate binder for completeness. As stated below, you should keep copies of all emails and faxes between you and your SLD reviewer. Remember, you can download the PDF version of the Binder's [Table of Contents](#) from the SLD's Reference Area on their website and you should have a separate Binder for each Funding Year.

Continuing from last month - the next three chapters of the binder are shown below...

4. Competitive Bidding, Vendor Evaluation & Contracts

- 4.1. State and Local Procurement Regulations (printout or website reference)
- 4.2. RFP/ Public Notice/ Advertisement
- 4.3. All Vendor responses & Bids received (winning and losing)
- 4.4. Bid Evaluation criteria, Evaluation Matrix & Bid ratings (Sample Available)
- 4.5. Notice of Award letters
- 4.6. Miscellaneous documents (memorandums, board minutes, notes to file)
- 4.7. Signed and Dated Contracts/Svc Agreements/Notice of Award Letters
- 4.8. Contract Amendments/Addendums/Extensions
- 4.9. State Master Contracts (printout or website reference)
- 4.10. Vendor Correspondence

5. PIA Review

- 5.1. Letter of Agency (LOA) consortium (Sample Available)
- 5.2. Consultant agreement or LOA
- 5.3. Responses to PIA inquiries (email, faxes, case numbers)
- 5.4. Entity eligibility docs (state website printout, matching records, etc.)
- 5.5. Discount eligibility calculation documentation (Sample Available)
- 5.6. Item 21 Attachment (online or paper) (Samples Available)
- 5.7. Product Service Eligibility (warranties, product descriptions, network diagrams etc.)
- 5.8. Budget (Final, Superintendent Letter, draft budget, Grant Letters)

5.9. Request to Cancel Services

6. CIPA (Children's Internet Protection Act)

- 6.1. Undertaking Actions to comply with CIPA (e.g., public notice, public meeting or hearing minutes, etc.)
- 6.2. Filtering Documentation (purchase, installation, use)
- 6.3. Internet Safety Policy

Remember that an up-to-date E-Rate Binder is your best tool for demonstrating compliance.

Call our helpline if you need help.

How to use the Data Retrieval Tool

The Data Retrieval Tool (DTR) is a valuable tool that details the entire erate process on an annual basis in spreadsheet format. To that end it permits you to verify the status of your forms, the services that you have requested and the dollars that have been awarded to your library to name a few.

The following are the steps to obtain the DTR.

1. Go to www.universalservice.org/sl
2. In the left hand column click on the link "Search Tools"
3. Click on Data Retrieval Tool
4. Click on Data Retrieval Tool again but this time on the center top of the page.
5. For Step 1: Enter the Funding Year that you want to study. e.g. FY 2008 means that it covers July 2008 - June 2009
6. Enter your six digit Billed Entity Number (BEN)
7. Unclick school, school district and consortium so only library is checked
8. Click "Select Data Points"
9. For Step 2: Click "all" scroll to the bottom and click "Build Data File!"
10. For Step 3: Click "Download Data File"
11. Next you can either open or save the file - you choose
12. Here is the spreadsheet. It is rather long because it lists every criteria that had been developed throughout the entire Funding Year. Read through it and hide the columns that are not of interest to you and focus on the columns of interest.

You will find a lot of information that will provide you with the status of your funding throughout the erate year!