

Document Retention Requirements

Applicants have long been required to certify in Form 471 and 472 that they will retain worksheets and records supporting their applications for five years. This "requirement," however, was expanded and codified by the FCC as a formal program rule. This has several important implications.

1) The required retention period is defined as five years from the last day of service (e.g., June 30, 2009 for recurring FY 2008 services). This corresponds to the new "administrative limitations period" in which the FCC or USAC can determine that a violation has occurred and can seek the recovery of funds.

2) By making this a rule, rather than simply a procedural requirement, violations will hence forth subject an applicant to a commitment adjustment ("COMAD"). If during an audit, an applicant cannot properly document any required aspect of a funded service, USAC may demand the repayment of all associated funds.

3) Record retention requirements apply to both applicants and service providers.

4) The FCC Order does not specify a full and explicit list of documents, it does provide a rather detailed "illustrative" list that should serve as a strong warning to applicants and service providers alike. In only slightly condensed form, the list reads as follows:

- **Pre-bidding Process.** Beneficiaries must retain the technology plan and technology plan approval letter. If consultants are involved, beneficiaries must retain signed copies of all written agreements with E-rate consultants.
- **Bidding Process.** All documents used during the competitive bidding process must be retained. Beneficiaries must retain documents such as: Request(s) for Proposal (RFP(s)) including evidence of the publication date; documents describing the bid evaluation criteria and weighting, as well as the bid evaluation worksheets; all written correspondence between the beneficiary and prospective bidders regarding the products and service sought; all bids submitted, winning and losing; and documents related to the selection of service provider(s). Service providers must retain any of the relevant documents described above; in particular, a copy of the winning bid submitted to the applicant and any correspondence with the applicant. Service providers participating in the bidding process that do not win the bid need not retain any documents.
- **Contracts.** Both beneficiaries and service providers must retain executed contracts. Contracts must be signed and dated by the applicant (and preferably by the service provider also). All amendments and addendums to the contracts must be retained, as well as other agreements relating to E-rate between the beneficiary and service provider, such as up-front payment arrangements.
- **Application Process.** The beneficiary must retain all documents relied upon to submit the Form 471, including National School Lunch Program eligibility documentation supporting the discount percentage sought; documents to support the necessary resources certification pursuant to section...of the Commission's rules, including budgets; and documents used to prepare the Item 21 description of services attachment.

- **Purchase and Delivery of Services.** Beneficiaries and service providers should retain all documents related to the purchase and delivery of E-rate eligible services and equipment. Beneficiaries must retain purchase requisitions, purchase orders, packing slips, delivery and installation records showing where equipment was delivered and installed or where services were provided. Service providers must retain all applicable documents listed above.
- **Invoicing.** Both service providers and beneficiaries must retain all invoices. Beneficiaries must retain records proving payment of the invoice, such as accounts payable records, service provider statement, beneficiary check, bank statement or ACH transaction record. Beneficiaries must also be able to show proof of service provider payment to the beneficiary of the BEAR, if applicable. Service providers must retain similar records showing invoice payment by beneficiary to the service provider, USAC payment to the service provider, payment of the BEAR to the beneficiary, through receipt or deposit records, bank statements, beneficiary check or automated clearing house (ACH) transaction record, as applicable.
- **Inventory.** Beneficiaries must retain asset and inventory records of equipment purchased and components of supported internal connections services sufficient to verify the location of such equipment. Beneficiaries must also retain detailed records documenting any transfer of equipment within three years after purchase and the reasons for such a transfer.
- **Forms and Rule Compliance.** All program forms, attachments and documents submitted to USAC must be retained. Beneficiaries and service providers must retain all official notification letters from USAC, as applicable. Beneficiaries must retain FCC Form 470 [and] FCC Form 471 and certification pages (if not certified electronically), FCC Form 471 Item 21 attachments, FCC Form 479, FCC Form 486, FCC Form 500, FCC Form 472. Beneficiaries must also retain any documents submitted to USAC during program integrity assurance (PIA) review, Selective Review and Invoicing Review, or for SPIN change or other requests. Service providers must retain FCC Form 473, FCC Form 474 and FCC Form 498, as well as service check documents. In addition, beneficiaries must retain documents to provide compliance with other program rules, such as records relevant to show compliance with CIPA.”

According to SLD, the top five missing documents identified during site visits and audits are:

- Discount verification (NSLP, survey, etc.)
- Asset listing not maintained or updated
- Signed and dated contracts
- Consultant agreement or LOA
- Bid evaluation/ Award schedule

SLD now recommends that applicants maintain their documentation in an E-rate binder and has published a suggested table of contents which is included in the materials that follow.

**UNIVERSAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATIVE FUND
SCHOOLS & LIBRARIES
DOCUMENTATION CHECKLIST**

SUGGESTED DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENT	Completed
I. TECHNOLOGY PLAN	
1. Clear goals and a realistic strategy for using telecommunications and information technology to improve education and library services. The Plan should cover the dates of the funding year and include E-rate funded equipment and services, as well as equipment and services necessary to support E-rate funded equipment and services.	
2. An assessment of the telecommunication services, hardware, software, and other services that will be needed to improve education or library services.	
3. A professional technical development strategy to ensure beneficiary (school or library) staff know how to utilize these E-rate and supporting technologies to improve education or library services.	
4. A technology budget covering the amounts necessary to acquire and support the non-discounted elements of the Technology Plan, e.g., hardware, software, professional development, and other services necessary to implement both the technology and development strategies	
5. An evaluation process that enables the school(s) or library(ies) to monitor progress in achieving specified Technology Plan goals and objectives, as well as the implementation of changes or corrections to the Technology Plan strategy in response to new developments and opportunities as they arise.	
II. PROGRAM COMPLIANCE	
1. If receiving discounted services from the service provider, maintain copies of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Vendor invoice or reconciliation worksheet (supported by vendor invoices) supporting billing/payment for the undiscounted portion of the E-rate expenditure. b. Proof of payment for the undiscounted portion (e.g., cancelled check) c. Supporting documentation sufficient to evidence that what was approved per the Funding Commitment Letter was actually procured. d. If feasible and obtainable, copies of the invoice submitted by the service 	

SUGGESTED DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENT	Completed
<p>provider to the Schools and Libraries Division and supporting invoice or reconciliation worksheet (obtained from the service provider) supporting the E-rate reimbursement for the beneficiary.</p>	
<p>2. For each Billed Entity Applicant Reimbursement (“BEAR”) form submitted to and reimbursed by SLD, maintain copies of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Vendor invoice or reconciliation worksheet supporting the claim submitted to SLD. b. Proof of payment (e.g., cancelled check) for the total E-rate eligible amount (discounted and non-discounted portion) paid to the service provider. c. Documentation verifying reimbursements as a result of the BEAR form have been received from the service provider and deposited (i.e., copy of remittance advice or vendor payment, bank statements, etc.). d. Copies of any written communication with the vendor concerning attempts to get reimbursements. 	
<p>3. Reconciliation of the discounted (based on the approved percentage per the Funding Commitment Decision Letter) and non-discounted portion to equal 100% of the E-rate eligible and funded equipment and/or services cost.</p>	
<p>4. If E-rate eligible service and/or installation or equipment costs are included as part of a larger contract or service/equipment billing, support for the allocation of E-rate eligible amounts and reconciliation of that total to the total amount billed to the beneficiary by the service provider.</p>	
<p>5. If E-rate eligible services or equipment provided by a single service provider are allocated to multiple units (schools or libraries), support for the allocation reconciled to the amounts and locations identified in the approved Application (Form 471).</p>	
<p>6. For internal connections equipment purchased with E-rate funds maintain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. An Asset Register or other appropriate asset listing which documents the make, model serial number, purchase date and specific location of each item of E-rate funded equipment. b. A Replacement Log reflecting the replacement or upgrading of any E-rate funded equipment. 	
<p>7. Proof that all E-rate funded internal connections have been received and installed by the cut-off date (i.e., service provider sign-off, dated test data results, etc.).</p>	
<p>8. Proof that E-rate funded services were provided within the allowable contract period/Funding Year.</p>	

SUGGESTED DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENT	Completed
III. CONTRACTS	
1. Copies of all signed and executed contracts related to E-rate eligible and funded equipment or services, identifying the contract term (start and end dates) and signed and dated by both parties (beneficiary and service provider).	
2. Notice of Award for all (E-rate eligible and funded) Contracts.	
3. Copies of all bids received and documentation supporting the award decision.	
4. Documented bidding policies and procedures and evidence of compliance with state and local procurement/bid requirements.	
5. Request for proposals and responses relating to E-rate eligible/funded contracts.	
6. Copies of all change orders or documentation for verbal change orders.	
IV. OTHER	
1. All correspondence with SLD or service providers relating to funding (including copies of the Application and other documentation submitted as part of the funding process) and funding reimbursement.	
2. Documented policies and procedures governing the Application and E-rate funded procurement, expenditure and reimbursement processes.	
3. Detailed listing by Funding Year, of all E-rate funded equipment and services provided by item, description of equipment or service, cost and location (see also item III. 6.).	
4. Proof of notification and refund of any amounts due back to SLD as a result of identified over-claims, errors resulting in over-payments or any other situation in which funds are required to be returned.	

Guide to E-Rate Binder Table of Contents

1. USAC Forms & Certifications

- 1.1. Form 470 & delivery confirmations
- 1.2. Form 471 & delivery confirmations
- 1.3. Form 472 & delivery confirmations
- 1.4. Form 479 (*Consortium members & consortium leaders only*)
- 1.5. Form 486 & delivery confirmations
- 1.6. Form 500 & delivery confirmations

2. USAC Letters

- 2.1. Form 470 Receipt Notification Letter (RNL)
- 2.2. Form 471 Receipt Acknowledgment Letter (RAL)
- 2.3. Form 471 Out Of Window Letter (OOW)
- 2.4. Funding Commitment Decision Letter (FCDL)
- 2.5. Form 486 Notification Letter
- 2.6. Form 500 Notification Letter
- 2.7. BEAR Notification Letter
- 2.8. Quarterly Disbursement Reports (QDR)
- 2.9. Other USAC letters

3. Technology Plan & Approval Letter

- 3.1. Written Technology Plan with Creation Date
- 3.2. Approved Technology Plan
- 3.3. Approved Technology Plan updates
- 3.4. Certified Technology Plan Approver Letter (or screen print if approval is maintained online)
- 3.5. Professional Development Training Log (**Sample Available**)
- 3.4. Technology Plan Training Sign In Sheet (**Sample Available**)

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/ Service 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 documentation (state website printout, matching records, etc.)
- 5.5. Discount eligibility calculation documentation (**Sample Available**)
- 5.6. [Item 21 Attachment](#) (online or paper) (**Samples Available**)

There have been many requests for USAC to provide guidance with respect to what documents should be retained. Here is a guide that may be helpful. In addition, retaining this type of information will be very helpful if USAC requests this information in the future. This guide is not mandatory or intended to serve any other purpose than to respond to requests for guidance.

E-Rate Binder Table of Contents Guide

- 5.7. Product Service Eligibility (warranties, product descriptions, network diagrams etc.)
- 5.8. Budget (Final approved, 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

7. Service Delivery & Inventory Management

- 7.1. Inventory/Asset Registry (**Sample Available**)
- 7.2. Schematic of equipment
- 7.3. Receipt of service/ product and installation log (work orders)
- 7.4. Replacement Log (replacement or upgrades)
- 7.5. Maintenance Log
- 7.6. Equipment transfer log

8. Invoicing & Payments

- 8.1. Customer Bills
- 8.2. Reconciliation Worksheet
- 8.3. Service Certifications
- 8.4. Proof of Payment of discount and non-discount amounts (cancelled checks, bank statements)
- 8.5. Reimbursement from vendor verification (BEAR only)
- 8.6. Miscellaneous (memos to vendors, notes to file, emails)

9. Change Requests & Appeals

- 9.1. Appeal Request (**Checklist Available**)
- 9.2. Appeals Delivery Receipt (proof of postmark, fax confirmation)
- 9.3. Service Substitution Request (**Sample & Checklist Available**)
- 9.4. SPIN Change Request (**Checklist Available**)
- 9.5. Documentation of Funds Returned to USAC
- 9.6. Invoice Deadline Extension Request
- 9.7. Service Deadline Delivery Request
- 9.8. Transfer of Equipment Notification

10. Miscellaneous

- 10.1 PIN mailer (For the authorized user)
- 10.2 Site Visit documentation
- 10.3 Audit documentation

Audit Fact Sheet

The Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) routinely perform audits of beneficiaries of the Schools and Libraries Support Mechanism (the E-rate). The purpose of these audits is to ensure that beneficiaries and service providers receiving financial support under the Schools and Libraries Support Mechanism are complying with FCC rules and regulations. Many of the audit sites are randomly selected, and the selection process is designed to provide a wide variety of entities with regard to applicant size, discount percentage, and geographic location. Selection for an audit is not necessarily an indication that USAC believes problems exist with your funding requests or commitments.

Beneficiary audits may be performed by USAC internal audit staff, the FCC Office of Inspector General, or by a firm under contract to USAC or the FCC. Please feel free to contact the USAC Internal Audit Department at (202) 776-0200 if you have any concern as to the proper identity of any individual contacting you regarding a review. Typically a beneficiary will be contacted two to three weeks prior to the start of an audit to assure that the appropriate personnel and documentation will be available. The anticipated duration of an audit can vary depending on the quantity, size and dollar value of the applications involved.

During the audit, we will gain an understanding of and document your administration of the E-rate and your technology plan. Therefore, it will be necessary that the applicable administrative and technology personnel be available during the first few days of the audit. The process will include, but will not be limited to, verifying compliance with the following requirements:

- An approved technology plan exists, as certified.
- The calculation of the discount percentage was performed accurately.
- The beneficiary has the adequate resources, as certified, to make effective use of the discounted services for which funding has been approved.
- Competitive bidding requirements were established and adhered to in accordance with program guidelines (if applicable).
- The applicant selected the most cost effective service provider (if applicable).
- Services rendered were consistent with what was represented on the application.
- The services for which discounts were approved were provided to the correct recipient and correct location.
- The services obtained were used for the purposes for which funding was provided as certified on the application.
- The applicant is in compliance with any other laws and regulations applicable to the service being funded.
- The amounts submitted to USAC for disbursement were accurate and supported by appropriate documentation, such as vendor invoices and cancelled checks, and were for services received within the proper funding period.
- The audit is likely to include physical site verifications. We will coordinate with you to visit a selected number of schools and/or libraries to verify that the supported services exist, are operational and are being used in accordance with requirements.

The applicant will be provided the results of the audit prior to a report being issued and will have an opportunity to have their comments attached to the report.

Being Prepared - FCC rules require the retention of application-related documents for a period of 5 years. The USAC auditors recommend that applicants have the following documents for each funding commitment subject to audit:

- RFPs issued
- Copies of all bids received (winning and losing)
- Contracts for supported services
- Documentation verifying date of receipt of equipment
- Invoices for supported services
- Technology Plans and letters certifying Technology Plans
- Documentation supporting discount calculations
- Policies and meeting notices regarding the application and the procurement process.
- Verification of payment of applicant's portion of invoicing
- Fixed asset records indication
- Location of supported assets

Overview

As part of its expanded outreach initiative, USAC is conducting site visits of a significant number of recipients of E-rate funding. These visits will provide USAC an opportunity to see E-rate funds in use, assess USAC's outreach and education efforts, observe best practices in the field, and ensure that program funds are being used in compliance with regulatory requirements.

The site visits provide USAC with valuable feedback about ways to improve the program, to identify "best practices" for use by other program participants, and to verify the receipt and function of invoiced schools and libraries products and services while ensuring that program funds are being used in compliance with FCC rules. Under this initiative, USAC plans to visit approximately 700 sites per year selecting an average of 60 school and library sites each month.

Participants in the program rely on USF support for public safety, better communication between faculty and parents, distance learning opportunities, preparing for state-mandated tests, and for technologies that allow students with disabilities and disadvantaged students to participate in classrooms in the same fashion as other students.

BearingPoint, Inc. was selected to conduct the site visits on behalf of USAC. BearingPoint will interview people at the applicant site involved with administration of the Schools and Libraries Program to get a better sense of their experiences and will examine applicant documentation, and physically check delivery, installation and maintenance of equipment and services related to a specific invoice. Under FCC regulations, USAC and BearingPoint have an obligation to report any instances of potential noncompliance with FCC rules.

The purpose of these visits is to:

- Solicit suggestions on ways for USAC to improve its outreach and education efforts.
- Provide USAC knowledge on how E-rate funds are being used.
- Identify "best practices" to publicize for possible use by other program participants.
- Educate applicants regarding program rules and answer questions.
- Verify the receipt and function of invoiced E-rate products and services.

Under this initiative, USAC selects approximately 80 school and library sites for visits each month. The selection will be based on recent invoice activity. USAC will take the information gathered from the site visits into account when designing future outreach and education efforts and will explore administrative changes to make the application process run more smoothly. {Ed. Note: One section of the SLD web site states that there will 60 visits per month and another page on the SLD web site states there will be 80 visits per month.}

Expanded Outreach Process

The purpose of this initiative is to better understand how the Schools and Libraries support is used by the applicants. During each visit, USAC representatives plan to review documentation and the different methods applicants use to manage the process. The representatives will also check the physical equipment and services to see how they are being used and maintained. The visits have two main components: office outreach and site outreach.

During the office outreach, the site reviewer will meet at the main office with the person responsible for managing the program in the area/district. The site reviewer will gather information regarding training, document management, the application process, and on the program in general. The site reviewer will review invoices, equipment information, and the documentation process.

During the site outreach, the site reviewer will meet with the technology contact that is responsible for the physical equipment provided by the program at the site where the equipment is located and the services are provided. The site reviewer will be checking the physical equipment and equipment locations, as well as conducting teacher/librarian interviews regarding the use of technology.

Expanded Outreach Preparation Tips

During the site visit, BearingPoint will concentrate on equipment and services related to a specific invoice. BearingPoint will conduct the following activities during the site visit:

- Speak with your E-rate contact to walk us through the processes used to manage the E-rate program and related documentation
- View the equipment and services purchased through E-rate funding
- Observe students or patrons using the equipment and services
- Interview a teacher or a librarian to better understand how E-rate-funded technology is used
- Identify any outstanding issues that you may have
- Collect feedback and suggestions on the E-rate program
- Review program-related documentation

Preparation Documents

A. Documentation Lists

Applicants must retain the records used to file FCC forms for a period of five years after the last day of service delivered. In addition, applicants should maintain records of assets, compliance with other programs, and other business records as part of normal business practice.

Applicants selected for site visits should have available, at a minimum, records demonstrating compliance with program rules and worksheets and other documentation prepared and compiled as part of the application process. Following are lists with examples of the kinds of documents BearingPoint will ask to review during a site visit.

B. General Documentation

- Evidence of E-rate documentation retention, such as electronic files, paper chronological files, notebooks, or folders
- Evidence of competitive bidding (filing a Form 470, reviewing and evaluating bids, 28-day waiting period, signed contracts)
- Copies of maintenance agreements and logs for maintenance of E-rate equipment, if available
- Evidence of training for teachers/librarians (such as training logs or other available documentation), if available
- Teacher/librarian and student/library patron use of technology (such as a sign-in sheet for the computer lab), if available
- Evidence of "sufficient resources." Although computers, training, software, internal connections, maintenance, and electrical capacity may not be eligible for E-rate discounts, they may be necessary to make effective use of E-rate eligible products and services. Applicants must be able to

show that they have these resources or have budgeted funds needed to purchase them, and to pay the non-discount portion of the charges for eligible services.

C. Invoice-Specific Documentation

- Contracts with service providers, including any addenda or modifications
- Asset registers, inventory lists, depreciation schedules or other documentation that includes identifying information, such as make, model, serial number, delivery and installation date, equipment location
- Bills from service providers for E-rate products and services
- Documentation of payment of non-discount portion, such as canceled checks, bank statements, or account statements
- If applicable, documentation related to a SPIN change, service substitution, or service delivery extension request

Questions and Answers about Site Visits

Q: Is this an audit of my E-rate discounted equipment?

A: The site visits are not audits, but part of what is primarily an outreach initiative. However, BearingPoint and USAC have an obligation to report any instances of potential noncompliance with the statute or FCC rules.

Q: When will I be visited?

A: USAC will randomly select approximately 80 school and library sites for visits each month beginning in mid-January 2005.

Q: How was I selected?

A: Selections are based on a number of factors, but primarily on recent invoice activity.

Q: Whom do I contact for questions about my upcoming site visit?

A: Please contact the Site Visit Coordination Team by [email](#) or by phone at 1-800-248-7758.

Q: Whom should I contact if I have general questions about site visits?

A: Please contact the Site Visit Coordination Team at 1-800-248-7758, or through [email](#).

Q: What if I have questions about the E-rate program, but not about site visits?

A: Contact the USAC Client Service Bureau by [email](#), 1-888-203-8100 or visit the SLD section of this web site.

Q: What will USAC do with the information gathered at the site visits?

A: In general, USAC will take the information gathered from the site visits into account when designing future outreach and education efforts, and will explore administrative changes to make the application process run more smoothly. USAC will also follow up on any specific issues identified by the applicant during the site visit and forward as appropriate any observations on potential instances of waste, fraud and abuse.

Q: When will I know if I “passed” my site visit?

A: Generally, USAC will issue a letter to the applicant within 45 days of the site visit. This letter will either ask for additional information or documentation or inform the applicant that no further action is necessary.

HATS-Helping Applicants to Succeed Initiative

As part of its expanded outreach initiative, USAC conducts site visits to Universal Service Fund (USF) support recipients in order to observe best practices in the field, assess USAC's processes and procedures, identify outstanding issues and provide outreach and education efforts.

USAC Site Visit Outreach – Helping Applicants To Succeed (HATS) Initiative

In September 2006, a new component was added to site visits program called HATS (Helping Applicants to Succeed). The purpose of this new site visit initiative is to assist applicants who have experienced various difficulties with the Schools and Libraries Program over the last few years. In addition, the new initiative will provide targeted training and outreach that may help applicants become more successful in the future. The links to the right contain helpful information for schools and libraries regarding site visits associated with this initiative.

BearingPoint, Inc. was selected to conduct the new HATS site visits on behalf of USAC. BearingPoint will interview people at the applicant site involved with administration of the Schools and Libraries Program. Under FCC regulations, USAC and BearingPoint have an obligation to report any instances of potential noncompliance with FCC rules.

HATS Mission

The objective of the Helping Applicants To Succeed (HATS) Initiative is to visit applicants who have faced challenges with the Universal Service Fund Schools and Libraries program and provide targeted training and outreach that may help them become more successful in the future. The HATS Initiative will also provide USAC with the opportunity to collect valuable feedback from those visited in order to improve the program for all applicants.

The goals for each site visit include the following:

1. Helping the applicant understand the causes for his/her funding denials
2. Providing the applicant with resources that may eliminate those application errors or program compliance issues in the future.
3. Helping the applicant make sure that the entity's students/patrons receive the fullest value from the Universal Service Fund Schools and Libraries program

HATS Process

The Site Reviewers will come to the site visit equipped with the applicant's funding and Selective Review histories, provided by USAC.

To effectively accomplish the goals of the HATS Initiative, the Site Reviewers will discuss the applicant's experiences with the Universal Service Fund School and Libraries program to provide USAC with a clearer picture of its situation. Site Reviewers will examine the particular issues that led to the PIA Selective Review or funding denial, in order to help prevent future problems. Throughout the discussion, the Site Reviewers will highlight common errors and misconceptions, and share recent program changes and new regulations, new tools available to applicants, application best practices, and ways to avoid application pitfalls.

The Site Reviewers will also discuss the applicant's questions, concerns and challenges faced when applying for Universal Service Fund support. The feedback collected through the HATS Initiative will greatly assist USAC to improve the Schools and Libraries program, its processes, and training and outreach programs designed to help applicants receive funding. Throughout the course of the conversation, Site Reviewers will seek to collect feedback to the following questions:

1. How can USAC help you?
2. How can USAC improve the application process?
3. How can USAC improve its training materials?
4. How can USAC better communicate information to you and other applicants?
5. What suggestions do you have for improving the program?

At the end of the site visit, applicants will have the opportunity to assess the value derived from the site visit through a survey reflecting the issues discussed throughout the visit.

HATS Questions

Ask questions about site visits by email, phone or fax:

Site Visit Questions

Phone: (800) 248-7758

Fax: (703) 940-0203

Submit a Question

Phone: 1 (888) 641-8722

Fax: 1 (888) 637-6226

Frequently Asked Questions

How was I selected? USAC has identified potential applicants based on a random sampling of entities who have repeatedly been subject to PIA Selective Reviews and/or USAC funding denials. An entity's selection has no bearing on its current application decisions or status.

How long will the visit last? Visits will typically last approximately four hours. There is no set time limit, and much of the exact length of the visit will depend on the applicant's understanding of the application process, and their willingness to provide feedback regarding their experiences and their suggestions.

Do I need to prepare anything in advance? No. You do not need to have anything prepared for the visit. The Site Reviewers will not require any documentation or access to classrooms, equipment or administrative files. Since part of the site visit process may include a "walk-through" of the USAC website, the applicant may wish to have a workstation nearby that may be viewed by multiple people.

Who can attend the site visit? Anyone may attend the site visit. Those who will benefit most by attending are those individuals who actively participate in the Universal Service Fund Schools and Libraries program application process.

What will USAC do with the information? Feedback collected during the site visit process will be used by USAC for a number of purposes, including:

- Identifying those areas of the application process that have proven challenging to applicants.
- Improving USAC's outreach, training and communication efforts.
- Improving USAC's administration of the Universal Service Fund Schools and Libraries program.