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**Saint Margaret Mary Catholic School**

**Office of the Principal *\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_***

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October 26, 2017

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this appeal to revise a 471 e-Rate form for 2017, for St. Margaret Mary School. [Form 471 #171047904; FRN #1799109670]

I am the sole person who inherited the e-Rate when our computer teacher, technology coordinator and e-Rate filer, Alice Fleming, suffered a brain bleed right before school started last August, 2016. Alice was incapacitated by the event for the entire school year. Alice had everything for the 2016-17 year pretty well set. I have never dealt with the e-Rate before, so I had to get things changed over to me, get through a PQA, go through all of Alice’s files, and try to do the next right thing, while being the principal for 528 elementary students.

It’s my fault that the Form 471 had the incorrect *service requested* listed***.*** I remember Alice telling me in the Spring of 2016 that we would no longer get any coverage for our phone service, as had been the case in the past. I think I was so focused on not putting anything in about phone, but messed up by putting the incorrect phrasing in about the Internet**.** As a new person, I was not familiar with the RAL process where this correction could have been made.

The only PIA review received about the Form 471 for 2017 was to verify the number of Free/Reduced students. The *service requested*wasn’t a topic of concern for PIA during the review, maybe because it was a continuation of a contract and previous FRN’s were funded. The FRN was obviously for Transport and Internet service but the service requested was incorrect.

The Nebraska State Erate Coordinator, SuAnn Witt at the Nebraska Department of Education, provided this information from the Bishop Perry Order that she felt applied to my situation.

Pg 7, Item 13 & 14:

13. The rest of the petitioners assert a waiver is appropriate for one of two reasons: either someone on the applicants’ staff made a mistake or had a family emergency that prevented them from filing on time or the delay in the filing or receipt of the application was due to circumstances out of the applicants’ control. Specifically, in the first group, some of these appeals involve applicants whose staff members inadvertently failed to file the application forms in a timely manner.37

14. Based on the facts and circumstances of these specific cases, we find that good cause exists to waive the deadline for filing the FCC Form 471 found in section 54.507 of the Commission’s rules.40 Under Bureau precedent deadlines have been strictly enforced for the E-rate program,41 including those pertaining to the FCC Form 471. We nevertheless find that good cause exists to waive the deadline in these cases. Generally, these applicants claim that staff mistakes or confusion resulted in the late filing of their FCC Form 471s. We note that the primary jobs of most of the people filling out these forms include school administrators, technology coordinators and teachers, as opposed to positions dedicated to pursuing federal grants, especially in small school districts. Even when a school official has learned how to correctly navigate the application process, unexpected illnesses or other family emergencies can result in the only official who knows the process being unavailable to complete the application on time. Given that the violation at issue is procedural, not substantive, we find that the complete rejection of each of these applications is not warranted. Notably, at this time, there is no evidence of waste, fraud or abuse, misuse of funds, or a failure to adhere to core program requirements. Furthermore, we find that denial of funding in these cases would inflict undue hardship on the applicants. In these cases, the applicants have demonstrated that rigid compliance with USAC’s application procedures does not further the purposes of section 254(h) or serve the public interest.42 We therefore grant these appeals and remand them to USAC for further processing consistent with this Order.

Alice was unable to return to St. Margaret Mary’s, and we had to hire a new computer teacher. No one was hired to do the work that Alice did with the e-Rate, so it continues to be me. I’ve taken workshops offered by the Nebraska Department of Education and was able to reach out to them to help me navigate this.

Thank you for your consideration of this appeal.

Sincerely,



Mrs. Peggy Grennan,

Principal