



Northside Center

for Child Development, Inc.

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March 25, 2003

Letter of Appeal
Universal Service Administrative Company
Schools and Libraries Divisions
Box 125-Correspondence Unit
80 South Jefferson Road
Whippany, NJ 07981

Re: Commitment Adjustment Letter dated January 31, 2003
Funding Year: 1999-2000
Form 471 Application Number: 145762
FCC: CC Docket Nos. 96-45 and 97-21
Funding Request Number: 272219 SPIN: 143007419

On behalf of the Northside Center For Child Development, Inc. ("Worthside"), I respectfully request an appeal to the commitment adjustment of \$109,192.50 for internal connections.

The Harlem Area of New York City, which has been served by Northside for more than fifty (50) years, is a community that has been, and continues today to be, in particular need of the funding provided by the E-rate Program that the Schools and Libraries Division sponsors. Since it was founded in 1946, Northside has developed and earned its reputation of providing the community with the highest quality, comprehensive mental health and educational services.

Indeed, the internet programs and services that have been and continue to be enjoyed by Northside's children would not be available without the support of the Schools and Libraries Divisions, E-rate Program. The Commitment Adjustment proposed by your letter for the 1999-2000 funding year must be reviewed in this context.

We are appealing the proposed adjustment of the entire funded amount for the 1999-2000 period (\$109,192.50), which is based solely on the fact that several inexpensive pieces of hardware ("Hubs") were acquired by Northside during the period but not installed until after the period. The proposed adjustment fails to consider (i) the reasons Northside decided to delay the installation of the Hubs, which were timely acquired and, more importantly, (ii) that all the Internet programs and services Northside proposed to offer based on the E-rate program funding for that period were, in fact, provided on budget and on time.

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What Are Hubs:

The Hubs in question are hardware devices that permit peripheral computer equipment, such as printers, **scanners** and workstations, to be connected. Effectively, Hubs permit an existing network of equipment to be inexpensively expanded.

The E-rate Hubs:

Northside **acquired six** Hubs for the E-rate program, **as specified**, during **the** program year in question. These **Hubs cost less than \$3,800.00, which was less than four (4%)** percent of **the** \$109,192,50 funded in that **year**. Nevertheless, the Commitment Adjustment Letter proposes to **collect the entire** \$109,192.50.

During the program year, Northside was able to **acquire** and **install all the** other E-rate equipment and software and begin **offering all the Internet** programs and services Northside represented it would offer to its children with the funding, **as more fully** described **below**.

In fact, Northside **acquired the** Hubs in question during **the program year; however,** Northside decided to delay the installation of **the Hubs until** later, **as their installation** was not required at that time in order for Northside to begin offering the Internet programs and services discussed. Northside's existing network, **without the need for the expansion** in **that** year that the Hubs would **have and** now do provide, was sufficient for ow child population in **that** year.

E-rate Internet Programs and Services Timely Provided by Northside:

As discussed with Ms. Alicia Mrozowski, a Project Manager with **the Federal Communications** Commission, during a programmatic audit for the year in question, Northside provided **the following** Internet programs and services.

Northside uses the Internet in the classrooms:

- To access information about **holidays**, downloading pictures, recipes, **songs, art** and information that enhance classroom discussions, displays, **and** information.
- To access information that will enhance presentations and **understanding** of **science and social studies topics, particularly topics relating to community** helpers and plants and animals, themes central to **the K-1-2** curriculum. Northside is located **near** the lake **at the north** end of Central Park, and children **go** on **nature walks**. Then they use **the Internet** to download pictures of **swans, ducks, and trees, and to find out more about them**

- To give teachers access to **information** about the **learning disabilities and mental conditions** of the children **they** work with, to **increase** the depth of **their understanding** and to give them alternate **methods of** dealing with children under stress. With the Internet, they have been able to **access** articles **from** around the world that deal with relevant teaching **issues**.

Northside uses the Internet in its Library and Computer Lab in many ways:

- Northside's older children use the **Internet** to do **research** for **school projects** during **our after-school programs**. They use the **Internet** in the **Library** and in the **computer lab** to do research on **school** assignments and to **look up** famous people **they** are interested in.
- **The Internet facilitates creative projects**. **One group** of children has recently **started** a project where they will make their **own rap songs and perform them**. They are using the Internet **first** to find out information about rap **stars** they like, and **writing up** the information they find to **share** with each **other**.
- **The Internet is used** by our staff on an **on-going basis**, to **find out the latest research information regarding education tools in assisting those students with** mental health conditions **of the** children they **treat**; to find information **that** will be accessible to parents about how to understand and deal with **their** children; to **find out** information about upcoming **conferences**; and to contact colleagues **through a mail**.

Teacher training on use of the Internet **has** been provided on an **informal** basis, with **the computer Learning specialist helping out teachers who come to the computer Lab**, as well as **going to their classrooms** when requested to help them **access** information. **In addition, classes for parents** have been provided on Friday mornings to help them with many computer skills, including Internet **navigation**.

Northside offers **Saturday classes**, available to the **surrounding** Harlem Area community for a **series of 8 weeks** in the spring, include **computer** classes for **adults** for three **hours** on Saturday mornings, including such **things** as:

- Operation of a computer **system**
- Use of **computer systems** for problem solving, **data collection, information management, communications, presentations, and decision-making**.
- Use of the Internet and search **engines**.
- use of **word processing, spreadsheets, e-mail, and printing programs**.

As provided in the foregoing, the E-rate *funding* in question was, in fact, spent on the equipment and software Northside requested and the equipment and software were installed in a manner that permitted Northside to offer all the Internet programs and services it specified and for the period specified.

As far as I can determine, the sole basis of the Commitment Adjustment is that several Hubs, costing less than \$3,800.00, that were acquired timely and that did not inhibit or otherwise adversely affect the quality or timing of the Internet programs and services Northside specified, were not installed until after the program year. Accordingly, we appeal the Commitment Adjustment, which provides that the entire funding amount for that year must be refunded. I do not believe the foregoing facts and circumstances substantiate that finding.

Should you require additional information concerning this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me at your convenience. Of course, I would be available to meet with your office to discuss this matter and any questions you may have. We otherwise intend to preserve all our rights to appeal the Commitment Adjustment as provided by statute.

Sincerely,



Paula Magnus

Deputy Director of Finance and Administration

Cc: Thelma Dye, Executive Director

~~FOG, Office of the Secretary, 445 12th Street NW, Washington DC 20004~~

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 FROM: Paula Magnus
 TELEPHONE / EXT: 212-426-3430
 MESSAGE: Appeal Letter for funding year
1999-2000, FRN # 272219 in
Response to Commitment Adjustment Letter from SLD
dated 1/31/03
 CC: Thelma Dye, Northside