

**Before the
Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C. 20554**

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In the Matter of:

_____))
Schools and Libraries Universal
Service Support Mechanism
_____))

CC Docket No. 02-6

**COMMENTS ON REVISIONS ON FCC
FORMS 470 AND 471 (DA 13-1590)**

**Reply Comments Submitted by:
Kellogg & Sovereign[®] Consulting, LLC**

Kellogg & Sovereign Consulting, LLC is an E-rate management firm that has managed E-rate applications on behalf of schools and libraries at their request for the previous 16 years. At present our firm assists 310+ applicants in thirteen states. These applicants range in size from a total of 14 students to consortium applicants with over 100,000 students/patrons. Applications vary from the most basic application to complex statewide consortium applications.

Our diverse client base provides us with the ability to see a wide range of applications for schools and libraries and gives us an understanding of the various needs from a broad perspective.

We applaud the FCC's efforts to implement changes in all required forms in order to meet the rules encompassed by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA) and specifically, Forms 470 and 471 of the E-rate program.

As is stated in DA 13-1590, "The proposed changes to the forms include:

- *Inquiring about broadband connectivity based on individual funding requests;*
- *Requesting additional information about the current number of broadband connections, their type, and the speeds;*

- *Consolidating telecommunications and Internet access services into one field on the FCC Form 470 so applicants are no longer required to specify whether they are seeking telecommunications or Internet access services; and*
- *Adding a check box for “Federal Entity” applicants on the FCC Form 471.”*

While we agree that updates are necessary, timing is critical when changes will affect 40,000 or more school districts and libraries who are already posting these very forms for FY 2014-2015. The timing is even worse considering the fact that there is a different NPRM posted with even more changes proposed to the entire application process.

We are in agreement with the comments posted by SECA as follows:

“... with the recent release of the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FCC 13-100) for Modernizing the E-rate Program for Schools and Libraries, this is not the most convenient time to propose major changes to these forms. Changes proposed or at least considered in the new E-Rate 2.0 NPRM are likely to require significant changes in Forms 470 and 471 (or their new equivalent versions) well before the next OMB revision date.”

Like SECA, we believe that “any revisions to these two forms should be made so as to avoid, or at least minimize, transitional impacts on both applicants and USAC. Most specifically, every effort should be made to avoid changes in data fields that would require USAC IT system modifications.”

In addition to the challenges that USAC would have implementing required programming changes in a timely manner, many applicants have developed their own computer programs that download pertinent information contained within the massive USAC database to keep current with the status of applications, funding, invoicing, and disbursements. These systems are tied to the specific USAC data fields as they exist now.

Applicants depend on this information to provide accurate information to guide them as they prepare technology plans and develop RFP’s for the FY 2014-2015 bidding period. Any changes in the USAC database could cause a domino effect resulting in hundreds of hours of programming modifications by all these entities and delay the posting of their FY 2014-2015 applications.

As for the proposed additional data collection sheet, we find it difficult to see where the addition of another form to Block 5 would meet the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA). Like SECA, we oppose this change in particular:

- “1. We note that the E-Rate 2.0 NPRM seeks “comment on how to best collect data on the speed and quality of schools and library connections.” Thus this change in data collection effort appears pre-mature — particularly to the extent that it would require changes to USAC’s IT system.*
- 2. The proposed new page is not simply an equivalent replacement for the current Block2 since the page must apparently be completed for every broadband or connectivity FRN. It would cause many applicants to complete multiple speed and connection tables in lieu of the single current Block 2 table. This requirement seems out of line with the “streamlining” goal of a modernized E-rate program.”*

Based on the applications filed by Kellogg & Sovereign Consulting for applicant schools and libraries in 2013-2014 on average the requirement to complete *Block 5 Item 24, “Description of Broadband and other Connectivity Services Ordered for Schools and Libraries from this funding request”* for every Block 5 FRN requesting one of the services listed would result in a minimum of 3-7 extra pages per P1 application. Additionally, if this page were to be added, then detailed definitions that are easily understood by applicants responsible for completing these forms would be required for each of the separate types of service.

Another issue is that this change might result in even more FRN’s being necessary due to the fact that at present many applicants combine one or more of the technologies listed on the proposed Item 24 when they are provided by the same service provider. An example would be including circuits of different bandwidths for a Wide-Area-Network (WAN) request – 1Gbps circuit for the head end of the network and multiple 100 Mbps circuits to individual school buildings

Additionally, specific technology continually evolves so it would be far better to collect this information on the Online Item 21 Attachments, and require every applicant to file them online instead of on the Form 471 itself. By having applicants complete the Online Item 21 Attachments it would be easier for USAC to update the specific technologies as they evolve rather than having to continually update the FCC Form 471.

Like SECA, we believe that the proposed Item 24b questions are likely to confuse many applicants plus there are so many options under each question that the data collected from the answers to the questions would not provide any defensible measurable data.

- “3. The proposed Item 24b questions are likely to confuse many applicants (particularly because “spaces” is not defined in the instructions), and will be unduly difficult for consortia.”*

The past history of form revisions leads us to believe as does SECA that the typical time for revisions of forms to be accomplished is 5 to 6 months. This means that if a decision is made that these forms must be changed, the earliest the Form 471 would be ready for posting would likely be December or January making a March deadline difficult.

Additionally, we agree with SECA that: *“This would not be much of a problem if the Form 471 remained basically unchanged. But as proposed, major data field changes could lead to delays in the window opening as USAC updated its online Form 471 filing system. Further, from an applicant perspective, the approval would come well after USAC completes its 2013 fall applicant training schedule.”*

Since timely funding of applications is already problematic for USAC, it would not seem wise to pursue changes to the Forms 470 and 471 as detailed in this request at this time.

Conclusion

We appreciate the opportunity to submit comments to the Commission in regards to the proposed Revisions to FCC Forms 470 and 471 and sincerely appreciate the time that is devoted by Commission staff to the review and careful consideration of all comments submitted.

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