

STINSON MEMORIAL PUBLIC LIBRARY DISTRICT

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April 29, 2014

Ms. Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
Office of the Secretary
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554
VIA FCC ELECTRONIC COMMENT FILING SYSTEM

Re **CC Docket No. 02-6**
Petition for Waiver
FCC Form 471 No. 993110
Applicant: Stinson Memorial Public Library District, BEN 136801

Dear Ms. Dortch,

With this letter Stinson Memorial Public Library District ("Stinson") requests a waiver of the FCC Form 471 filing window deadline for Funding Year 2014 under the schools and libraries universal service support mechanism (E-Rate).

Background

Stinson serves the residents of Union County, Illinois, where the median household income is only about \$41,900 (compared to about \$53,000 for the entire U.S.). Nearly 20% of the our county's residents live below the poverty level.

A service area with only about 14,000 residents presents special challenges for a library, and our receipt of E-Rate funding is critical for the financing of the communications technology services we need to provide library services for our county's youth and adults.

The past few months have been difficult for the library and for me personally. My mother has been very ill, and in the first quarter of 2014 I've spent more time at the hospital than at work. I've been doing my best to manage our library while I care for my mother, but I did end up filing the 2014 FCC Form 470 fewer than 28 days before the end of the filing window. As a result, I was forced to file our Form 471 funding application several days after the 2014 E-Rate filing deadline.

Analysis

Stinson filed its FCC Form 471 on 4/9/2014, within 14 days of the filing window deadline. To the best of our knowledge, our E-rate funding application is otherwise in full compliance with all FCC rules and USAC requirements.

In *Academy for Academic Excellence*¹, the Wireline Competitions Bureau (“Bureau”) found that in cases where a delayed Form 471 filing came as a result of circumstances beyond the control of the applicant, the complete rejection of these applications was not warranted, given that the violation at issue was procedural, not substantive. The Bureau found further that rigid adherence to filing procedures would not further the purposes of section 254(h) of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 or serve the public interest.

In *Acorn Public Library District*², the Bureau found that a delayed Form 471 filing of not more than 14 days after the filing window deadline was not likely to impede USAC’s ability to administer the E-Rate program. The Bureau found that the violation at issue was procedural, not substantive, and the Bureau found further that complete rejection of these applications is not warranted. The Bureau also found that (in the absence of any evidence of waste, fraud, or abuse, misuse of funds, or a failure to adhere to core program requirements and) because the FCC Form 471 was filed within 14 days after the filing window deadline, it was in the public interest to waive the FCC Form 471 deadline.

And in *Academy of Math and Science*³, the Federal Communications Commission reiterated that filing of Form 471 late but within 14 days of the filing window deadline is a special circumstance which justifies the grant of a waiver. The Bureau has applied this precedent in several subsequent orders⁴.

Finally, we note that denial of our funding request would impose severe hardship upon Stinson, and the effect of such denial would be a profound adverse impact upon the services we provide for our patrons. The consequences of a denial of funding would not further the purposes of section 254(h) of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 or serve the public interest.

¹ See *Academy for Academic Excellence Order*, 22 FCC Rcd 4747 (2007).

² See *Acorn Public Library District Order*, 23 FCC Rcd 15474 (2008).

³ See *Academy of Math and Science Order*, 25 FCC Rcd 9256 (2010).

⁴ See *Argos Public Library Order*, 25 FCC Rcd 16109 (2010); *Al-Noor School Order*, 26 FCC Rcd 5792 (2011); *Beaver Area Memorial Library Order*, 26 FCC Rcd 10317 (2011); *All Saints Elementary School Order*, 26 FCC Rcd 13107 (2011); *Bais Chaya Mushka Order*, 27 FCC Rcd 195 (2012); *Anderson Elementary School Order*, 27 FCC Rcd 5319 (2012); *Acadia Parish School Board Head Start Program Order*, 27 FCC Rcd 11033 (2012); *Abbotsford School District Order*, 27 FCC Rcd 15299 (2012); *A.C.E. Charter High School Order*, 27 FCC Rcd 15907 (2012); *Ashtabula Area City Schools Order*, 28 FCC Rcd 4051 (2013); *Academy of Accelerated Learning Order*, 28 FCC Rcd 6947 (2013); *Allenstown Public Library Order*, 28 FCC Rcd 11198 (2013); *Albert Wisner Public Library Order*, 28 FCC Rcd 16900 (2013).

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Request for Waiver

For the reasons stated in this letter, Stinson respectfully requests that the Federal Communications Commission grant a waiver of the FCC Form 471 filing window deadline for Stinson's Funding Year 2014 E-Rate funding application.

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Lisa Livesay
Director