

FORM 471 AUTOMATIC REJECTIONS:

SCHOOLS AND LIBRARIES ALERTED TO
ADHERE TO MINIMUM PROCESSING STANDARDS—
AND TO FILE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

With grave concern, the Schools and Libraries Corporation reports that it has already had to automatically reject Form 471 applications as illegible, incomplete, or incorrect. SLC also want to strongly re-emphasize that schools and libraries should not wait until the last minute to file their Form 471s but should file in a timely enough manner to allow for corrections.

It is imperative that applicants fully and carefully follow the very basic Minimum Processing Standards for Form 471, which have been available since early March on the web site and via the toll-free number, 888-203-8100. Applicants should also read carefully the step-by-step instructions that accompany Form 471 itself.

Applicants have been automatically rejected for filing Form 471s that are illegible or incomplete. Some particular problem areas on automatically rejected applications are Items 11, 12, 13, 15, and 16.

The Minimum Processing Standards guidelines are included in the body of this message and are attached as a plain text file. Education and library agencies and organizations are urged to distribute these guidelines to all of their constituents with two strong directives:

--Study carefully and absolutely adhere to the Minimum Processing Standards.

--File your Form 471 at your earliest possible opportunity. Please also urge applicants to use all of the 471 Application Guidance materials now posted in the Reference Area of web site and to seek help in completing their Form 471s from the SLC Client Service Bureau by phone (888-203-8100), fax (888-276-8736), or e-mail (question@slcfund.org).

SCHOOLS AND LIBRARIES CORPORATION
MINIMUM PROCESSING STANDARDS

Form 470

What are the minimum processing standards for the Form 470 so that a form will not be summarily rejected by the SLC Client Service Bureau and returned to the sender?

1. Applications submitted on paper must reflect the correct OMB form number and must be visually equivalent to the official form. 2. Applications must be at least two-thirds legible. 3. Applications and certifications sent by facsimile transmission or by e-mail will be rejected.

The SLC Client Service Bureau will make every effort to work with those applicants submitting their forms by mail to assure they are accurately and completely entered. (See also "Procedures for Processing SLC Applications")

Form 471

On what basis is a mailed-in Form 471 summarily rejected by the CSB and returned to the sender?

(Note: All 471 applications must be submitted on paper, with their signed and dated certifications, and delivered to the SLC, either through the U.S. Postal Service at P. O. Box 4217, Iowa City, Iowa 52244-4217, or through express delivery services at SLC, c/o Sherri Chalupa, 2510 N. Dodge Street, Iowa City, Iowa 52245.)

The following are requirements in order for a Form 471 application to meet minimum processing standards and avoid automatic rejection by the SLC Client Service Bureau:

1. Correct Form. Applications submitted on paper must reflect the correct OMB form number and must be visually equivalent to the official form. (See "Methods to Ease Filing of FCC Form 471",)
2. Completed Certification. The certification for the Form 471 must be completed. It must feature an original signature from the authorized individual (ideally in blue ink, or colors other than black), dated, and submitted with the Form 471 Application.
3. Previously Filed Form 470. If the response to item 7a of Form 471 is marked as "No," the application will be summarily rejected. A Form 471 may not be filed unless it is based on a Form 470 that has already been filed. Form 470 filing is required for all services - both pre-existing services and new services - where discounts are sought.
4. Valid Signature Date. For new services' requests, the signature date of the Form 471 cannot predate the end of the 28-day waiting period associated with the affiliated Form 470.
5. Completed Form. Every item, except for those identified below, must reflect at least one entry for SLC to start processing the application. An "Item" is one of the 33 requests for information in Form 471, starting with "Name of Applicant," and ending with Item 33, "Title or position of authorized person." The following, however, are Items where an applicant may, in certain circumstances, not feature an entry:

-- Item 3 Identifying Numbers: Item 3b is filled in by SLC; some applicants may not have an NCES School or Library Code (Item 3a), and some applicants may not know their Billed Entity Numbers (Item 3c). Therefore, Item 3 is not mandatory.

-- Items 11, 12, and 13 Service Order Characteristics: While applicants may not be ordering service in all three of the service categories eligible for discounts, all relevant components of at least one row in at least one of those Items must be filled in.

-- Items 15 and 16 Services Ordered: Applicants may have only "Shared services" to report or only "Site Specific" services, so neither Item is mandatory, but all relevant components of at least one row in at least one of those Items must be filled in.

-- Items 23 and 24 Technology Plan Certifications: Applicants seeking discounts only for basic telephone service are not required to have technology plans. Therefore, for those applicants seeking support only for basic telephone service and who have checked Item 20 "Yes," these Items are not mandatory. For all other applicants, these Items are mandatory. (Note that, although Item 24 says to check one box, if an application is solely for basic telephone service, Item 24 need not be checked.)

With the exceptions noted, the remaining Items are mandatory for all applicants regardless of the nature of the services being ordered. The information reflected in these mandatory items forms the basis for the certification at the end of the Form 471. By signing the certification, the authorized official is certifying this critical information is true to the best of his or her knowledge. One of the first steps SLC's Client Service Bureau will take upon receipt of an application is to verify that the application features information in each of the mandatory items. If not, the application will be promptly returned to the applicant for completion.

It is possible that an application might meet the "Completed Form" standard so that it does not require summary rejection but still feature inconsistencies or incomplete entries. In that case, an SLC representative will notify the applicant with the additional information the applicant must provide. An applicant must provide responses to the SLC Client Service Bureau queries within 4 business days of the receipt of the query, or the application will be rejected. (See "Procedures for Processing SLC Applications," , for information about the Client Service Bureau's procedures to resolve questions about Forms 471.)

6. Item 17 Attachment. Item 17 is a mandatory item. Its purpose is to indicate that a list is attached to the application, for each service provider, of all the services that service provider is providing to the billed entity. A Form 471 will be considered incomplete and returned to the applicant if those lists are not attached. (Also, see the discussion of the "Pre-Discount Cost Calculation Grid" in "Methods to Ease Filing of FCC Form 471.")

7. Legibility. Applications must be at least two-thirds legible.

8. Hard Copy Submission. Applications and Certifications sent by facsimile transmission or by e-mail will be rejected.

An application rejected for any of the above reasons will be quickly returned to the applicant with an explanation of the rejection.

For Forms 470 filed after March 18 (which means they will not have been filed in time for the 28-day waiting period to pass so that the Form 471 could be filed by April 15 -- the end of the 75-day window), certification of the Form 470 must have been received and accepted by the SLC in order for processing of the Form 471 to begin. For applications submitted during the window, however, this certification need not have been received by the SLC to meet minimum processing standards, but it must be received by April 15 to complete filing within the 75-day window.

Note that meeting SLC's Minimum Processing Standards is just the first step in SLC's review process. Each application will undergo the scrutiny of SLC's Program Integrity Assurance unit to assess compliance with program rules.

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