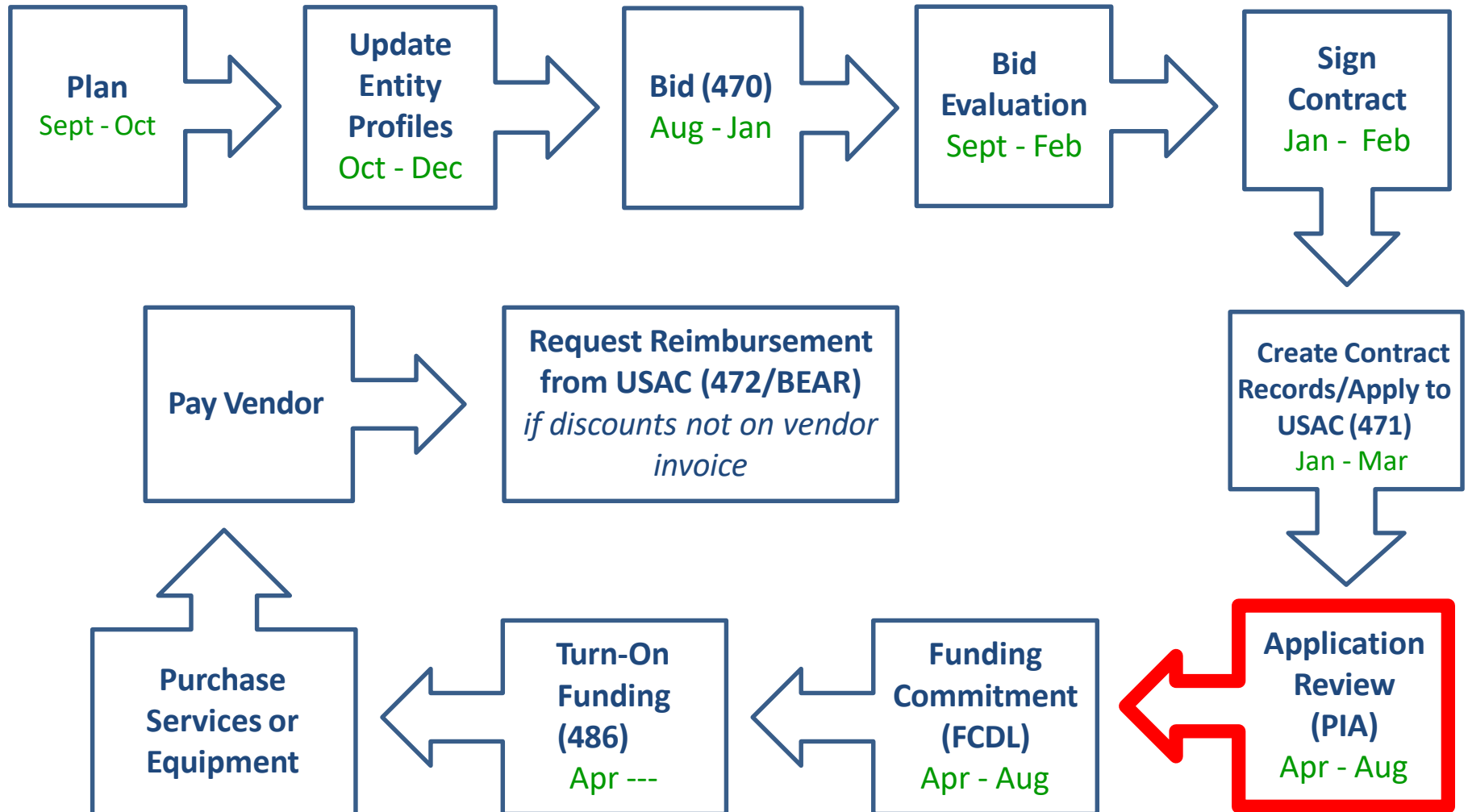# Program Integrity Assurance (PIA) Guide
FY 2023

Presented by Julie Tritt Schell
PA E-rate Coordinator
for the Pennsylvania Department of Education
March 2023

You are here in the E-rate process:

Plan	→	Update Entity Profiles	→	Bid (470)	→	Bid Evaluation	→	Sign Contract
Sept - Oct		Oct - Dec		Aug - Jan		Sept - Feb		Jan - Feb

Pay Vendor → **Request Reimbursement from USAC (472/BEAR)** *if discounts not on vendor invoice*

Create Contract Records/Apply to USAC (471) Jan - Mar

Purchase Services or Equipment ← **Turn-On Funding (486)** Apr --- ← **Funding Commitment (FCDL)** Apr - Aug ← **Application Review (PIA)** Apr - Aug

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What is PIA?

- PIA = Program Integrity Assurance Review
- Stage of application process where USAC reviews every application for the following compliance:
  - Eligible Entities
  - Competitive Bidding
  - Eligible Services/Equipment
  - Appropriate Discount Level
  - Category 2 Budget Caps
  - Contract Signing
- All PIA "inquiries" are issued via applicants' EPC portals
  - Applicants must submit responses to the PIA inquiries via the EPC portals as well

PIA Review Inquiries

- The 471 main contact will receive an email notification that a PIA reviewer has questions about their application
  - The e-mail will list the 471 # and the general subject of the inquiry (e.g. Eligibility of Services or Discount Rate), but will <u>not</u> contain the actual PIA questions.
  - Before clicking on the link in the e-mail, you must first sign into EPC
    - https://forms.universalservice.org/portal/login
  - Then click on the link in the PIA e-mail to be taken to the PIA Inquiry Page
    - The 471 main contact will also see the PIA Inquiry under **Tasks**

- PIA e-mail notification will look like…

PIA E-mail Notifications

Universal Service Administrative Co.

E-rate Review Information

Today's Date: 02/02/2022
Response Due Date: 02/17/2022
Contact Name: ████████████████
Applicant Name: ████████████████ DISTRICT
FCC Form 471 Application Number: ████████

Dear Applicant

We are in the process of reviewing your Funding Year 2022 FCC Form 471 application(s) and we need additional information to complete our review. Please respond to the information requests below. Please note that EPC allows you to begin working on your answers and save your work for later by clicking "Save and Close." We advise you to provide responses to all of the questions before submitting your answers. Click "Submit" only when you have answered all the questions in their entirety.

- Eligibility of the Entities

Click here to respond to inquiries

USAC Homepage

After signing into EPC, click this link to go directly to the PIA inquiry

If you have any questions as you work through your responses to the PIA review inquiries, please feel free to contact me via the phone number or e-mail address provided below. Please do not use e-mail to submit your responses to the PIA review inquiries. USAC will not review responses to PIA review inquiries sent to the reviewer's email address. All PIA responses must be submitted in EPC. Again, please be sure to provide complete responses to all of the PIA questions. If you need additional time to prepare your response, you may request an extension. Click the "Request Extension" button, located at the top of the "Review Inquiries" page in EPC. Your first extension request will be automatically granted, and you will receive an additional seven days to respond. Be sure to meet the response due date and provide all of the information requested, otherwise your application(s) may receive reduced funding or a funding denial. Note: Your State E-Rate Coordinator is copied on this correspondence for informational purposes only.

Yvette Pinales
E - Rate Reviewer
833-205-1185 Ext.58704

PIA Inquiry Page

Step 1) Click "Respond to Inquiries" which will then turn the Inquiry Name the color blue and make it an active hyperlink.
Step 2) Click on the <u>hyperlink</u> to see the actual PIA questions.

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Records / FCC Forms 471

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#231016505

[📇] | **REQUEST EXTENSION** | **RESPOND TO INQUIRIES** | **SUBMIT MODIFICATION REQUES...**

Summary   Funding Requests   **Review Inquiries**   Deferral History   Discount Calculation   Entity Information   News   Related Actions

Pending Inquiries

Read	Notice	Name	Outreach Type	Assigned By	Title	Phone #	Assigned Date	Due Date	Extn.	Status
✕	🕓	Category Two Budget	Modification Notification	Victoria Morales	E - Rate Reviewer	833-205-1185 Ext.58650	3/9/2023 5:06 PM EST		0	No Response Needed
✕	🕓	Eligibility of Products and Services	Regular 15-Day	Victoria Morales	E - Rate Reviewer	833-205-1185 Ext.58650	3/9/2023 3:26 PM EST	3/24/2023	0	Response Needed

2

Shows the date by which your PIA answers must be submitted. If you need additional time, click "Request Extension" at the top of the page.

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PIA Questions Page

Read the questions carefully and upload or provide an answer as appropriate. When **all** questions have been completed, click "Submit."

Your response to PIA's questions:

#	Question	Response
1	Please provide vendor documentation which supports the funding request amount of $6,300.00/month. Note: Any vendor documentation (e.g. contracts, vendor quotes, vendor bills, invoices, etc.) provided should clearly identify any ineligible charges that were cost allocated out of your request. Also, please be sure to explain any discrepancies between the amount requested and amount supported.	UPLOAD Drop file here
2	If you are requesting additional dollars to accommodate expected growth or increased usage, please provide any relevant documentation that you used when determining the estimate for expected growth or increased usage.	UPLOAD Drop file here
3	If you would like to provide any additional information about these issues that have not been addressed above: Use the text box to type information, or upload additional documentation using the "Browse" button.	

+Add Document

DELETE UPLOADED FILES

SAVE & CLOSE   SUBMIT

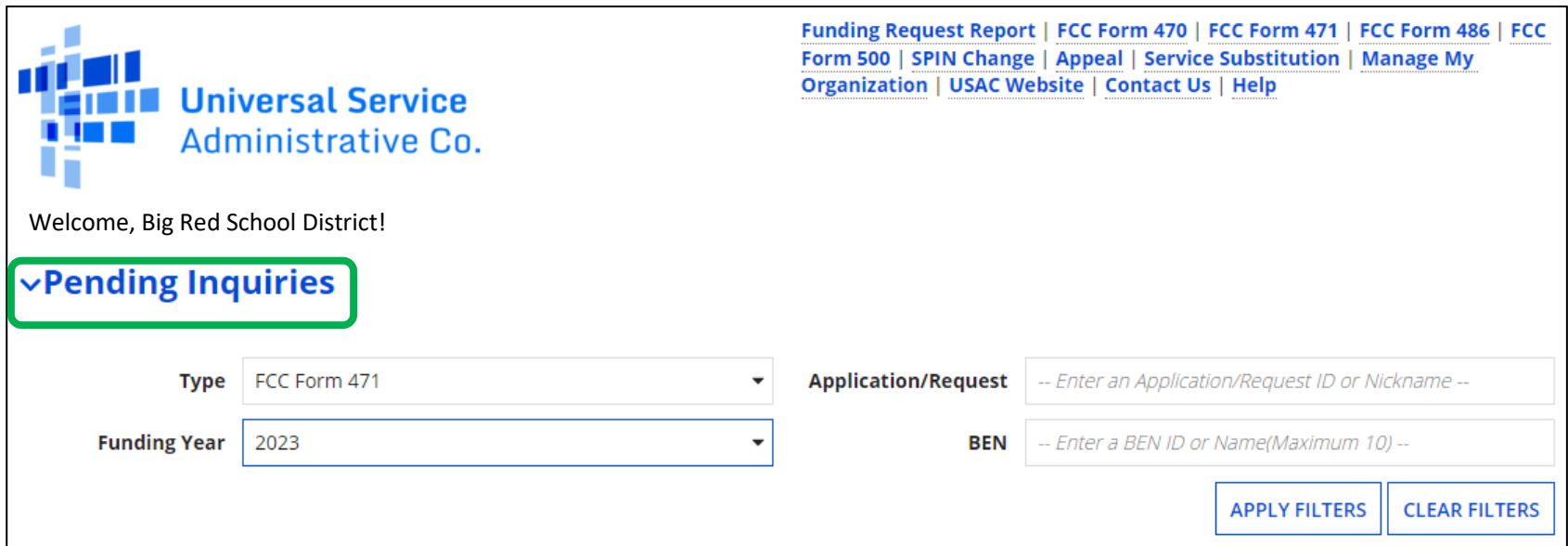You can use the last text box to provide additional information/details that are relevant to the PIA review

To add additional documents, click "Add Document."

Finding Pending Inquiries in EPC

- In addition to the PIA inquiry e-mail notification, any user for the school/library can access the inquiry on their EPC Landing Page
- "**Pending Inquiries**" section at the top of the page
  - Click on the down arrow to expand
  - Type = **FCC Form 471**
  - Funding Year = **2023**
  - Then click 'Apply Filters' to see pending PIA inquiries

Confused by PIA Inquiry Questions?

- If you receive a PIA inquiry and are confused, you may e-mail your PIA reviewer using the contact information provided at the bottom of the initial PIA inquiry e-mail.

If you have any questions as you work through your responses to the PIA review inquiries, please feel free to contact me via the phone number or e-mail address provided below. Please do not use e-mail to submit your responses to the PIA review inquiries. USAC will not review responses to PIA review inquiries sent to the reviewer's email address. All PIA responses must be submitted in EPC. Again, please be sure to provide complete responses to all of the PIA questions. If you need additional time to prepare your response, you may request an extension. Click the "Request Extension" button, located at the top of the "Review Inquiries" page in EPC. Your first extension request will be automatically granted, and you will receive an additional seven days to respond. Be sure to meet the response due date and provide all of the information requested, otherwise your application(s) may receive reduced funding or a funding denial. Note: Your State E-Rate Coordinator is copied on this correspondence for informational purposes only.

Sartoris Ward
E-Rate
833-205-1185 Ext.72556
sartoris.ward@usac.org

- You also may contact your state E-rate coordinator, Julie Tritt Schell, if you are unsure how to answer a question
  - If you do, please provide a copy of the actual PIA questions

Deadline to Reply

- PIA inquiries typically provide applicants with 15 days to respond.
  - You are encouraged – strongly – to respond as soon as you receive the e-mail. The sooner you respond, the sooner you'll receive your E-rate FCDL.
- If you haven't responded to the PIA inquiry within 7 days of the initial request, PIA will send you a reminder
- If you haven't responded after 15 days, USAC may act on the information they already have to make a funding decision (which typically means denial)

Requesting an Extension

- Applicants can request a single, 7-day extension of the original deadline if you need more time. To do so, access your PIA Inquiry in EPC, click **Request Extension** at the top of the page.

- The first extension request will be automatically granted. If you still need more time, you <u>must</u> have a good reason to need extra time, and PIA will review your extension request before making a decision.

Records / FCC Forms 471

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REQUEST EXTENSION   RESPOND TO INQUIRIES   SUBMIT MODIFICATION REQUES...

Summary   Funding Requests   **Review Inquiries**   Deferral History   Discount Calculation   Entity Information   News   Related Actions

Pending Inquiries

Read	Notice	Name	Outreach Type	Assigned By	Title	Phone #	Assigned Date ↓	Due Date	Extn.	Status
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To See What Was Submitted...

To see the responses submitted, locate your Form 471, then click 'Review Inquiries' in the toolbar. Under Submitted Inquiries, it will display each inquiry. Click on the Name to see your responses/documents.

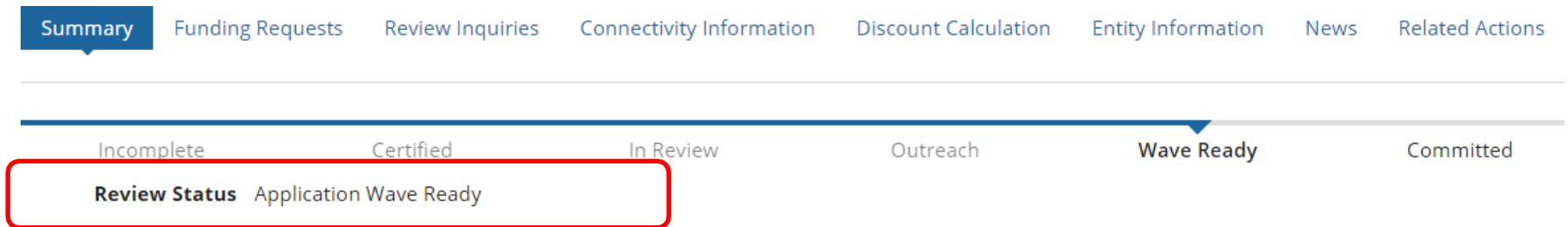| Summary | Funding Requests | **Review Inquiries** | Deferral History | Discount Calculation | Entity Information | News | Related Actions |

Pending Inquiries

Read	Notice	Name	Outreach Type	Assigned By	Title	Phone #	Assigned Date ↓	Due Date	Extn.	Status

No Pending Inquiries.

⌄Submitted Inquiries

Name	Outreach Type	Answered By	Assigned Date ↓	Answered Date
Requested Discount	Regular 15-Day	Al Arauz	2/1/2023 2:18 PM EST	2/22/2023 11:39 PM EST
Requested Discount	Regular 15-Day	Al Arauz	2/1/2023 2:18 PM EST	2/17/2023 12:13 PM EST

Checking Your Form 471 Status

1. Search for Form 471 in EPC:
   - Bottom of EPC Landing Page under FCC Forms
   - Under Records on top toolbar
2. At the top of the page, a bar will show the progress of the Form 471
3. Below that, it will show the Application Review stage of the Form.

Summary	Funding Requests	Review Inquiries	Connectivity Information	Discount Calculation	Entity Information	News	Related Actions

Incomplete	Certified	In Review	Outreach	Wave Ready	Committed

Review Status   Application Wave Ready

To see a more detailed status, use the FRN Status Tool (FST):

https://data.usac.org/publicreports/FRN/Status/FundYear

Various Statuses

- 471 Status Descriptions:
  - **In Review:** USAC received your certified 471 and is reviewing it
  - **Outreach:** USAC requires additional information and requires a response from you
  - **Wave Ready:** USAC has completed the PIA review and will issue a decision soon
  - **Committed:** USAC has issued a Funding Commitment Letter (FCDL)

- Detailed Review Status Descriptions (from FST):
  - **Awaiting Initial Review:** Application has not yet been assigned to a PIA reviewer
  - **Assigned to Initial Review:** Application has been placed in a PIA reviewer's queue
  - **15 Day Notice**: PIA has sent questions to the 471 contact that require a response from you
  - **Final Review**: Application has gone through initial review and may either proceed to Wave Ready Status, QA Status, or may be returned for additional review
  - **Application Wave Ready**: PIA is complete and will likely be included in the upcoming funding "Wave"

What Happens Next?

- After PIA review, the application likely will move to "Wave Ready" status which likely means that the application will be funded in an upcoming wave
  - First "wave" will likely be late April
- After an application has been "funded" in a wave, USAC will e-mail a Funding Commitment Decision Letter (FCDL)
  - All FCDL notifications will also appear in EPC
  - Landing Page > Notifications > FCDL > Funding Year
  - Click on "View Notification" to see FCDL details

Notifications

Notification Type	Funding Commitment Decision Letter ▾		Status ❓	● All
Funding Year	2022 ▾			○ Generated
				○ Not Generated

	Notification	Description	Issued Date	Generated By	Generated On	
🔍	Funding Commitment Decision Letter	FCC Form 471 - 221029393	6/23/2022	EPC System	6/23/2022 4:13 PM EDT	View Notification
🔍	Funding Commitment Decision Letter	FCC Form 471 - 221018521	6/23/2022	EPC System	6/23/2022 4:12 PM EDT	View Notification