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ALA American Library Association

October 20, 1999

Ms. Magalie R. Salas, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W., Room TW-A325
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: CC Docket No. 96-45

Dear Ms. Salas:

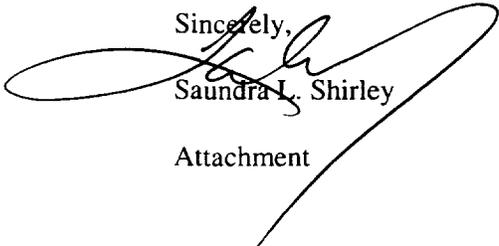
On October 13, 1999, Sandra L. Shirley and Claudette Tennant of the American Library Association (ALA) met with Irene Flannery and Elizabeth Valinoti of the Common Carrier Bureau.

This discussion addressed and reiterated the need to resolve major data access and verification problems of libraries and library consortia applying for the Universal Service Program. Libraries encounter tremendous difficulties in obtaining National School Lunch Program (NSLP) data from schools/school districts -- data that must be used to determine discount rates. Additionally, during the application process, libraries are often told that their data are incorrect or does not match the data collected by the Schools and Libraries Division (SLD), and are required to verify the NSLP data.

To address these issues, ALA recommended and requested, during this meeting: 1.) that the SLD post the discount rates on its website (the SLD already collects data from states to determine discount rates.); and 2.) that these posted rates are accepted as verified discounts rates for FCC Form 471. For many libraries and library consortia applying for the program, the data access and verification problems cause inordinate delays and unfair treatment in the application process. It is impossible for libraries to verify NSLP data since they do not collect or maintain the data. Therefore, libraries and library consortia are forced to deal with unreasonable hurdles in their attempt to successfully complete the application process. The letter to Ms. Flannery setting forth these issues in more detail is attached. Recommendations and requests were made in the context of pending matters, CC Docket 96-45.

This notice is being filed in accordance with § 1.1206(b)(2) of the Federal Communications Commission's rules. Please contact me if you have any question about this filing.

Sincerely,


Sandra L. Shirley

Attachment

cc: Ms. Irene Flannery
Ms. Elizabeth Valinoti, Esquire

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