

Elements of a Technology Plan

The FCC has stipulated that requests for discounts must be based on an approved technology plan. To ensure that schools and libraries are prepared to effectively use the requested services, applicants must certify that their requests are based on approved technology plans that include provisions for integrating telecommunication services and Internet access into their educational program or library services. Most schools and libraries have already developed such plans and may only need to modify these existing plans slightly to conform to program criteria for technology plans.

To qualify as an approved technology plan for a discount and to meet the requirements of the FCC's Fifth Report and Order (FCC 04-190, released August 13, 2004), the plan must contain the following five elements:

- The plan must establish clear goals and a realistic strategy for using telecommunications and information technology to improve education or library services;
- The plan must have a professional development strategy to ensure that staff know how to use these new technologies to improve education or library services;
- The plan must include an assessment of the telecommunication services, hardware, software, and other services that will be needed to improve education or library services;
- The plan must provide a sufficient budget to acquire and support the non-discounted elements of the plan: the hardware, software, professional development and other services that will be needed to implement the strategy; and
- The plan must include an evaluation process that enables the school or library to monitor progress toward the specified goals and make mid-course corrections in response to new developments and opportunities and they arise.

Timeframe

Approved technology plans should cover a period of not more than three years. In view of the rapid development cycle of new technologies and services, schools and libraries should approach long-term commitments with caution. However, long-range planning may be important in the case of some lease-purchase arrangements or very large capital investments that require extended commitments. There may also be cases in which an approved plan is longer than three years to conform to federal, state, or local requirements. Whenever an approved plan is longer than three years, there should be a significant review of progress during the third year.

A technology plan must be written - including all five elements - **at the time the Form 470 is filed** and must be approved before the start of service. **Applicants are now required to formally certify on Form 486** that the technology plans on which they based their purchases were approved before they began to receive service. (See Reviews for Program Compliance below for more details).

Copied from SLD website: <http://www.universalservice.org/sl/applicants/step02/technology-planning/default.aspx>