

PIA INQUIRY QUESTIONS - LEASED DARK FIBER AND SPECIAL CONSTRUCTION

IMPORTANT: The rules for evaluating the cost effectiveness of dark fiber and self-provisioning options are strict, ever-evolving, and are explained below as they are currently known. Applicants considering bidding and procuring leased dark fiber, self-provisioning fiber, or any type of fiber that contains special construction should carefully review this document, as well as refer to the PIA questions they can expect to receive from USAC. Denial rates for these requests are significantly higher than traditional leased lit fiber with no special construction.

FRN(s) 1799xxxxxx is/are a request(s) for the type(s) of product Dark Fiber IRU Special Construction charges associated with leased dark fiber and special construction charges associated with leased dark fiber must also solicit bids for the needed connectivity via leased lit fiber. Applicants considering seeking support for self-provisioned networks must also solicit bids for the needed connectivity via services provided over third-party networks. Applicants must use an open and fair competitive bidding process that meets the additional competitive bidding requirements for leased dark fiber and self-provisioned networks in order to determine if the requested products and/or services are the most cost effective solution. (For reference, please read USAC’s information at <http://usac.org/sl/applicants/step01/requirements-for-fiber.aspx>). Please read all of the questions, descriptions, and requests below. Please give enough detail, insight, and clarity to help the reviewers fully understand your specific situation. Check the boxes for statements that apply, and where applicable, type the information requested into the text boxes. If your information is too detailed for the text box, or if you need to provide additional documentation, click “Browse” to upload relevant files or documentation.

Please answer the following questions, check all options that apply and/or provide the documentation requested.

#	Question
1	Please provide any and all amendments made to the original RFP(s).
2	Please provide the number of bids received for each requested and equivalent type(s) of product. Please specifically state both the type of product and the number of bids in your response (e.g. # of leased dark fiber bids received was _____. # of leased lit fiber bids received was _____. # of self-provisioned network bids received was _____.)
3	Please provide complete copies of any and all bid responses received in response to the FCC Form 470(s) and RFPs associated with the requested and equivalent type(s) of products.
4	Please provide any other bid documentation such as attendance sheets from open meetings, disqualified bids, reasons for disqualification, notices sent to vendors, etc. .
5	Please provide your bid evaluation matrix(ces) or other documentation created during the bidding process that was used to select your requested type(s) of products.
6	Please provide a description of your bid evaluation process.
7	Please provide a copy of all correspondence between your entity and any service providers or consultants regarding the competitive bidding process and the application process.

8	Please provide vendor documentation supporting the requested amount(s) for the requested products and services in the above FRN(s). This document should include a detailed breakdown of the products and services requested in the FRN such as an invoice level bill or bill of materials.
9	Please provide either a signed and dated contract(s) and/or legally binding agreement(s) for the requested products and services in the above FRN(s) using one of the options listed in item a or b.
a	Please upload a copy of the signed and dated contract.
b	Please upload a signed and dated copy of the State Master Contract.
<p>FRN 1799xxxxxx requests support for special construction related to leased lit fiber, leased dark fiber, or a self-provisioned network. Special construction charges are only eligible for support if the fiber is lit (or self-provisioned networks using other technologies are constructed and used) within the same funding year as the funding request (i.e., by June 30). E-rate funding is only available for eligible schools, libraries, and consortia made up of eligible schools and libraries, to purchase eligible services that will be used for an eligible educational purpose. E-rate supported services may not be resold. Further, the Second E-rate Modernization Order describes a self-provisioned network as one in which an eligible “school or library owns a full network or fiber run, including all the fiber strands and conduit.”</p>	
<p>To confirm compliance with these rules, we need to verify the scope of the fiber installation associated with the above-referenced FRNs, when the fiber will be lit, how the fiber will be used, and whether any fiber installed will be used at any time by a party other than the applicant. Please read all of the questions, descriptions, and requests below. Please give enough detail, insight, and clarity to help the reviewers fully understand your specific situation. Check the boxes for statements that apply, and where applicable, type the information requested into the text boxes. If your information is too detailed for the text box, or if you need to provide additional documentation, click “Browse” to upload relevant files or documentation.</p>	
<p>Please answer all of the following questions and/or provide the documentation requested. For all documentation attached please identify which question it corresponds to.</p>	
#	Question
1	Please refer to the attached document for questions and information needed to process your funding requests. Please respond to the questions and provide information needed in the attached document. When done, attach the document into your response to PIA by using the Add Document button along with any requested documentation.

FRN(s) 1799xxxxxx is/are a request(s) for the type(s) of product dark fiber IRU special construction. Applicants that seek bids for dark fiber IRU special construction must also seek bids for leased lit fiber and evaluate all responsive bids received to determine the most cost-effective solution. We have determined that additional information is required to evaluate the cost-effectiveness of the requested services relative to the other bids received. (For reference, please read USAC’s information at <http://usac.org/si/applicants/step01/requirements-for-fiber.aspx>). Please read all of the questions, descriptions, and requests below. Please give enough detail, insight, and clarity to help the reviewers fully understand your specific situation. Check the boxes for statements that apply, and where applicable, type the information requested into the text boxes. If your information is too detailed for the text box, or if you need to provide additional documentation, click “Browse” to upload relevant files or documentation.

Please answer the following questions, check all options that apply and/or provide the documentation requested.

#	Question
1	Please provide a copy of the cost comparison documents used to determine which option is the most cost effective option over a specific period of time.
2	Please provide an explanation of how the total cost of the requested type(s) of products were compared with the equivalent type(s) of products and provide any supporting documentation that was created during the cost comparison process.
3	Did you consider cost associated with network equipment needed to light the fiber and maintenance and operation in your cost comparison?
a	If yes, please indicate the dollar amount you estimated for network equipment and maintenance and operation costs.
b	If no, please explain why.
4	Please provide the specific period time over which each option was compared based on the anticipated use of assets and provide any supporting documentation that was created during the bidding process.

USAC’s Program Integrity Assurance (PIA) team is currently reviewing your FCC Form 471 application, and we have identified an issue that we need you to help us resolve. What is the issue? On your form, FRN 1799xxxxxx is requesting charges associated with the special construction of leased lit fiber, leased dark fiber, or a self-provisioned network. Special Construction charges must be cost effective and reasonable to be considered eligible for funding. (For reference, please read USAC’s information at <http://usac.org/si/applicants/step01/requirements-for-fiber.aspx>). Please read all of the questions, descriptions, and requests below. Please give enough detail, insight, and clarity to help the reviewers fully understand your specific situation. Check the boxes for statements that apply, and where applicable, type the information requested into the text boxes. If your information is too detailed for the text box, or if you need to provide additional documentation, click “Browse” to upload relevant files or documentation.

#	Question
1	Were the values provided on the FRN for route feet and cost per foot correct? Please note: The route feet and cost per foot provided should only include the new fiber build. It should not include the distance or cost of any existing infrastructure.

a	If No, please provide the revised value for route fee and cost per foot and an explanation of why the incorrect value was entered on the FCC Form 471. Proceed to question 2. Please note: The remaining questions should be answered based on the revised values provided here.
2	Please provide a detailed breakout of the total special construction charges requested on this FRN. This is commonly referred to as the bill of materials for the special construction project.
3	Please provide the details of the fiber route(s) being constructed and the cost breakdown of the Network Equipment and Labor in the format shown in the attached document. Please Note: The total cost per foot for all 3 types of plant mix/fiber installation (aerial, buried which is direct bury of the fiber with no conduit placement, underground which is buried in conduit) should equal the overall average cost per foot you indicated on your FCC Form 471 or in Question 1a. Sample Document: Attachment.xlsx
4	Please provide a kmz or .json map file of the route being constructed. If you do not have a copy of this file, please contact your service provider. Note: When your selected service provider decided to submit a bid for your requested services, they probably mapped out the route they are suggesting to be constructed on one of the mapping websites such as Google Maps, Map Quest, etc. That mapped out route should be available in either a .kmz or .json file. Please request this file from your service provider and upload it here.
NOTE	Based on your response to the attachment in question #2, please provide the following information only for the applicable portions (aerial, direct buried and/or buried with conduit) of the build below.
5	Please indicate the cost per foot for the Aerial portion of the fiber build.
	Please provide a further breakout of this cost: (Summation of the following must equal the amount listed in Question 4.)
a	What is the average cost per foot for the Fiber Material? (E.g., cost per foot of only the fiber cable.)
b	What is the average cost per foot for the Fiber Placement? (E.g. cost of attaching only the fiber cables on to the poles.)
c	What is the average cost per foot for the Structure Material (all outside plant materials except fiber cable this could include anchors, j-hooks or guywires)?
d	What is the average cost per foot of the Structure Placement (E.g., adding of new poles, anchor or guywires that will be owned by applicant)?
e	What is the average cost per foot for the Pole Make Ready? (E.g., on carrier owned poles, any enhancement that needs to be done to accept new fiber such as addition of guy or anchor, or clearing of attachment points for new cable. This also includes the cost of placing new poles that will be owned by the pole owner.)
6	Please indicate the cost per foot for the Direct Buried portion of the fiber build.
	Please provide a further breakout of this cost: (Summation of the following must equal the amount listed in Question 5.)
a	What is the average cost per foot of the Fiber Material? (E.g., cost per foot of the fiber cable that will be directly placed into the ground (no conduit).)
b	What is the average cost per foot of the Fiber Cable Placement? (E.g., labor cost per foot of placing the fiber cables in to the ground.)
c	What is the average cost per foot for the Buried Conduit (e.g., in direct bury installations conduit that is necessary for special portions of the builds such as railroad crossings, road crossings or in bores under waterways (rivers, creeks, streams, ponds))?

d	What is the average cost per foot of the Trenching (e.g., cost of digging trench, cost of machinery needed for trenching and any permitting cost to lay new fiber)?
7	Please indicate the cost per foot for the Buried with Conduit (Underground) portion of the fiber build.
	Please provide a further breakout of this cost: (Summation of the following must equal the amount listed in Question 6.)
a	What is the average cost per foot for the Fiber Material? (E.g., cost of the actual fiber cables that will be pulled through the conduit.)
b	What is the average cost per foot for the Fiber Placement? (E.g., cost placing or pulling the fiber through the conduit.)
c	What is the average cost per foot for the Structure Material (E.g., Cost of conduit, handholes, vaults, markers, etc.)?
d	What is the average cost per foot of the Structure Placement (E.g., labor and permitting for placement of all structure materials)?
<p>What is the issue? On your form, FRN 1799xxxxxx is requesting charges associated with the special construction of leased lit fiber, leased dark fiber, or a self-provisioned network. Special Construction charges must be cost effective and reasonable to be considered eligible for funding. In order to determine the reasonableness of this request, we have additional questions. (For reference, please read USAC's information at http://usac.org/si/applicants/step01/requirements-for-fiber.aspx). Please read all of the questions, descriptions, and requests below. Please give enough detail, insight, and clarity to help the reviewers fully understand your specific situation. Check the boxes for statements that apply, and where applicable, type the information requested into the text boxes. If your information is too detailed for the text box, or if you need to provide additional documentation, click "Browse" to upload relevant files or documentation.</p>	
#	Question
1	Did you explore any alternative routes for the fiber build requested in the FRN referenced above?
a	If yes, please provide the cost estimates and route specifics for these alternative routes explored.
b	If no alternatives were explored, please explain how the chosen route was identified as the most cost effective route.
2	Please identify and explain in detail the most expensive items on the construction invoice/bill of materials? For example, if labor is the most expensive line item provide details such as - the size of the labor crew - the number of hours of estimated work - Was there a minimum number of hours for which the crew had to be hired that exceeded the labor hours required for the build
3	Were there unique construction issues (e.g., a directional bore requirement because of rocky soil or a surface that could not be plowed; expensive make ready for pole attachments; bridge crossings; waterway crossings; railroad crossings; historic preservation issues or environmental issues) that caused the cost per foot to be inflated? If so, please provide a detailed explanation of these issues.

USAC's Program Integrity Assurance (PIA) team is currently reviewing your FCC Form 471 application, and we have identified an issue that we need you to help us resolve. What is the issue? FRN(s) 1799xxxxxx is/are requesting charges associated with special construction. On your application, you indicated the following values but we are unable to determine if these are correct. Route Feet: xxxxxx Cost per Foot: \$x.xx (For reference, please read USAC's information at <http://usac.org/sl/applicants/step01/requirements-for-fiber.aspx>). Please read all of the questions, descriptions, and requests below. Please give enough detail, insight, and clarity to help the reviewers fully understand your specific situation. Check the boxes for statements that apply, and where applicable, type the information requested into the text boxes. If your information is too detailed for the text box, or if you need to provide additional documentation, click "Browse" to upload relevant files or documentation.

1	Please provide the following information related to your Special Construction project: a. Total Project Plant Route Feet b. Average Cost per Foot of Outside Plant