

submit evidence of FCC registration of the C-band downlink prior to the release of Federal funds.

(d) Any FCC authorization required for the project must be in the name of the applicant for the PTFP grant.

(e) If the project is to be associated with an existing station, the FCC operating authority for that station must be current and valid.

(f) For any project requiring new authorization(s) from the FCC, the applicant must file a copy of each FCC application and any amendments with the Agency.

(g) If the applicant fails to file the required FCC application(s) by the closing date, or if the FCC returns, dismisses, or denies an application required for the project or any part thereof, or for the operation of the station with which the project is associated, the Agency may reject and return the application.

(h) No grant will be awarded until confirmation has been received from the FCC that any necessary authorization will be issued.

§2301.13 Public comments.

(a) After the closing date, the Agency will publish a list of all applications received.

(b) The applicant shall make a copy of its application available at its offices for public inspection during normal business hours.

(c) A copy of the application will be available in the PTFP offices for public inspection during normal business hours.

(d) Any interested party may file comments with the Agency supporting or opposing an application and setting forth the grounds for support or opposition. Any opposing comments must contain a certification that a copy of the comments has been delivered to the applicant. Comments must be sent to the address listed in §2301.8(a).

(e) The Agency shall incorporate all comments from the public and any replies from the applicant in the applicant's official file for consideration during the evaluation of the application.

§2301.14 Supplemental application information.

(a) The Agency may request from the applicant any additional information that the Agency deems necessary to clarify the application. Applicants must provide to the Agency additional information that the Agency requests within fifteen (15) days of the date of the Agency's notice. Applicants must submit a copy of the requested information for each copy of the application submitted by the closing date.

(b) Applicants must immediately provide to the Agency information received after the closing date that materially affects the application, including:

(1) State Single Point of Contact and State Telecommunications Agency comments on applications;

(2) FCC file numbers and changes in the status of FCC applications necessary for the proposed project;

(3) Changes in the status of proposed local matching funds, including notification of the passage (including reduction or rejection) of a proposed state appropriation or receipt (or denial) of a proposed substantial matching gift;

(4) Changes that affect the applicant's eligibility under §2301.3;

(5) Changes in the status of proposed production, participation, or distribution agreements (if relevant to the proposed project);

(6) Changes in lease or site rights agreements; and

(7) Complete failure of major items of equipment for which replacement costs have been requested or changes in the status of the need for the equipment requested.

(c) Applicants must place copies of any additional information submitted to the Agency in the copy of the application made available for public inspection pursuant to §2301.13.

(d) Neither the Department nor the Agency will discuss the merits of an application when it is under review.

§2301.15 Withdrawal of applications.

(a) Applicants may request withdrawal of an application from consideration for funding without affecting future consideration. Withdrawn applications will be returned by the Agency.

(b) A request that the Agency defer an application for consideration in a subsequent year will be treated as a request for withdrawal.

Subpart C—Evaluation and Selection Process

§ 2301.16 Technical evaluation process.

(a) In determining whether to approve or defer a construction or planning grant application, in whole or in part, and the amount of such grant, the Agency will evaluate all the information in the application file.

(b) PTFP grants are awarded on the basis of a competitive review process. The evaluation of the applications is based upon the evaluation criteria provided under § 2301.17.

(c) The competitive review process may include the following: evaluation by PTFP staff; technical assessment by engineers; an evaluation by outside reviewers, all of whom have demonstrated expertise in either public broadcasting or distance learning; and rating by a national advisory panel, composed of representatives of major national public radio and television organizations.

(d) In acting on applications and carrying out other responsibilities under the Act, the Agency shall consult (as appropriate) with the FCC, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, state telecommunications agencies, public broadcasting agencies, organizations, and other agencies administering programs that may be coordinated effectively with Federal assistance provided under the Act; and, the state office established to review applications under Executive Order 12372, as amended by Executive Order 12416.

(e) Based upon the evaluation criteria contained in § 2301.17, the PTFP program staff will prepare summary evaluations. These will incorporate the outside reviewers' recommendations, engineering assessments, and program staff evaluations.

§ 2301.17 Evaluation criteria for construction and planning applications.

(a) For each application that is filed in a timely manner by an applicant, is materially complete, and proposes an

eligible project, the Agency will consider the evaluation criteria listed in § 2301.17(b):

(1) The criteria in paragraphs (b)(1), *Applicant qualifications*, (b)(2), *Financial qualifications*, of this section are qualifying criteria. Applications meeting the minimum qualifications on these criteria will be considered for further review.

(2) The remaining four criteria listed in § 2301.17(b) will be weighted in the evaluation as follows:

(i) Criteria in paragraph (b)(3), *Project objectives*, and (b)(4), *Urgency*, of this section will be given the most weight in the evaluation.

(ii) The remaining criteria in paragraph (b)(5), *Technical/Planning qualifications*, and (b)(4), *Special consideration*, of this section will be given less weight and are listed in descending order.

(b) *Evaluation criteria*—(1) *Applicant qualifications*: Documentation that the applicant has or will have the ability to complete the project, including having sufficient qualified personnel to operate and maintain the facility, and to provide services of professional quality.

(2) *Financial qualifications*: Documentation reflecting the applicant's ability to provide non-Federal funds required for the project, including funds for the local match and funds to cover any ineligible costs required for completion of the project; and to ensure long-term financial support for the continued operation of the facility during the Federal interest period.

(3) *Project objectives*: The degree to which the application documents that the proposed project fulfills the objectives and specific requirements of one or more of the categories set forth in § 2301.4, documents the applicant's ability to implement the proposed project and adequately justify the need for Federal funds in excess of fifty (50) percent of total project costs (see § 2301.6(b)(2)), if requested for equipment replacement, improvement, or augmentation projects; and, in the case of planning, adequately justifies the need for Federal funds in excess of seventy five (75) percent of total project costs (see § 2301.6(a)(2)), if requested.