NEW gTLD PROGRAM: 2026 ROUND

gTLD

String Confirmation Day: Key Milestones and Considerations

Quick Reference Guide for Supported Applicants

9 November, 2026

ICANN

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Resource Guide

Understanding The State of Your Application

Your application is not in contention

Familiarize yourself with the Application Comment and Objection procedures, and note applicable deadlines. Even if your application is not currently in contention, it may still receive application comments or formal objections. Your contention status may also change as the application process progresses. Beginning 17 November 2026, monitor the Application Comment Forum for comments about your application. Continue monitoring TAMS for application-specific messages and requests from ICANN.

Your application is in contention

Consider whether independent legal or financial advice would be helpful in preparing for potential contention-resolution processes and associated costs. Following String Confirmation Day, review your final applied-for string and updated contention status, including if you selected an eligible replacement string. If your application remains in contention, review the applicable contention-resolution procedures, potential costs and upcoming decisions.

What to Expect

Application Comments

Application comments are a mechanism for the public to bring relevant information and issues to the attention of ICANN, applicants, and evaluators. The public will have an opportunity to submit comments on posted applications on the Application Comment Forum at any time following String Confirmation Day. Review any comments about your application and decide whether you wish to respond. If you choose to respond, follow the applicable procedures outlined in Section 4.1 of the Applicant Guidebook.

Objections and Appeals

Members of the public, including other applicants, have the opportunity to file an objection to any application and have it considered before a panel of qualified experts. For an objection to be considered by a panel, it must be filed by a party with standing on specific grounds including string confusion, legal rights, limited public interest, or community. Panel determinations can be appealed.

The Objection and Appeal Procedures will require different payments to be submitted directly to the Dispute Resolution Service Provider (DRSPs) at different times. Costs may apply to both the party filing an objection and the applicant responding to one. Refer to the Section 4.5 of the Applicant Guidebook for details on the procedures, fees, and relevant DRSPs.

GAC Member Early Warnings

A GAC Member Early Warning is an early indication from a GAC member or observer notifying a new gTLD applicant that their application may be considered potentially sensitive or problematic by one or more governments. GAC members and observers may issue Early Warnings in the 104 days following String Confirmation Day. Please see Section 4.2 of the Applicant Guidebook for the details.

Singular/Plural Notification

Strings that represent singular and plural forms of the same word in the same language—irrespective of what language the applicant intends the string to be in—may raise concerns because such similarity can cause confusion to Internet users. Members of the public will have an opportunity to notify ICANN of a singular/plural issue if two applied-for strings represent the singular and plural version of the same word in the same language; or if an applied-for string represents the singular or plural version in the same language of the same word of a delegated TLD, strings being processed from a previous new gTLD round, or a Blocked Name. A Singular/Plural Notification can be submitted in the 30 days following String Confirmation Day.

Contention Resolution

Determining which applications in a contention set will proceed to the Application and Applicant Evaluation phase and potential contracting for the contested string is known as contention resolution. Refer to Section 5.2 of the Application Guidebook for String Contention and Contention Resolution procedures.

Dates to Watch

17 November 2026 | String Confirmation Day

Final strings and updated contention sets are published on String Confirmation Day, which kicks off the Community Input and Objections Period. String Evaluation will be initiated, and applicants may now submit change requests for application or organization information.

27 November 2026 | Refund milestone

The window for a 65% evaluation-fee refund is scheduled to end 10 days after String Confirmation Day (27 November 2026). Review the applicable refund provisions and confirm your eligibility before taking action.

17 December 2026 | Singular/plural notifications

Deadline for singular/plural notifications. Check the official program timeline for updates.

16 March 2027 | Community Input and Objections Period closes

Scheduled close of the Community Input and Objections Period. Check the official timeline for the closing time and any updates.

To Be Announced - First Half of 2027 | Prioritization Draw

Participation is voluntary. Monitor ICANN announcements.

What To Watch For

- Check the 2026 Round news and announcements page for program-wide updates, and monitor TAMS for application-specific messages and requests from ICANN.
- Look for additional information on how to access and use the Application Comment Forum, including a user guide and training resources, beginning on String Confirmation Day, 17 November 2026

Financial Support and Continued Eligibility

Can I seek additional funding?

Yes. Supported applicants may seek additional funding or investment. To continue receiving ASP financial benefits, supported applicant organizations must continue to meet the ASP Handbook eligibility requirements, including financial need and applicable ownership and control requirements. The eligibility criteria include USD 5 million thresholds for annual revenue and cash and cash equivalents.

What about changes to my organization or application?

If your financial circumstances, ownership, control or other information provided in your ASP application changes in a way that may affect your eligibility, submit an inquiry in TAMS to notify ICANN. For changes to your gTLD application, review the Application Change Request FAQs for applicable procedures. Please note, submitting an inquiry to notify ICANN of changes affecting your ASP eligibility does not replace any applicable gTLD application change request requirements.

ICANN may review your continued eligibility throughout the application process. If you no longer meet the eligibility requirements, you may lose access to subsequent ASP financial benefits. Your gTLD application may still continue, subject to applicable requirements and fees.

How does the auction bid credit work?

ICANN has set a level of bid credit at a maximum of 35%, not to exceed a monetary value of USD 1.75 million per application. The bid credit provides up to a 35% discount applied to the amount due to be paid by the winning supported applicant, as well as to any deposit that may be required according to the final auction rules. In the case that the winning price (second highest price) auction dues exceed USD five million (the threshold indicating Financial Need to qualify for support), the bid credit applied will be reduced in a phased approach. The applicable percentage decreases for winning prices above USD 5 million. See Applicant Guidebook section 5.6.5 for the calculation and conditions. The bid credit does not eliminate the need to plan for auction costs.

Preparation Checklist

For All Supported Applicants

- ☐ Confirm your final applied-for string and application information.
- ☐ Review the Community Input and Objections procedures, deadlines, and potential costs.
- ☐ Learn how to access and monitor the Application Comment Forum.
- ☐ Review the four formal objection grounds and relevant procedures.
- ☐ Keep application records and supporting documents organized and up to date.
- ☐ Check 2026 Round Information and announcements for program updates; monitor TAMS for notifications about your application.
- ☐ Submit an inquiry in TAMS to notify ICANN of material changes to your ASP application information that may affect your eligibility for support.
- ☐ Check the Applicant Journey Pages for frequent updates

If Your Application is in Contention

- ☐ Confirm your updated contention set.
- ☐ Review contention-resolution procedures and any applicable communications restrictions.
- ☐ Understand potential costs, financial benefits, and eligibility conditions.

Find Information and Support

Use the resources below to learn more about upcoming processes, monitor your application, and find additional support.

Understand the Process

- Community Input, Objections, and Appeals guidance
- 2026 Round Applicant Journey
- 2026 Round timeline
- Applicant Guidebook: Community Input, Objections, and Appeals (Module 4)
- Applicant Guidebook: Auction Bid Credit (Section 5.6.5)

Monitor Your Application

- Application Publication and Statistics (APS)
- Program news and announcements

Understand Your Financial Support and Responsibilities

- Application change request FAQs
- Can a supported applicant obtain additional funding or investment without jeopardizing its supported applicant status?
- ASP Handbook (See Section 4.6: Restrictions)
- ASP Terms and Conditions

Find Additional Assistance

- Dispute Resolution Service Providers (see objection guidance)
- ICANN Global Support
- Independent pro bono service providers and mentors

Independent service providers and mentors are not endorsed or contracted by ICANN. Applicants should contact them directly to discuss services and terms.

Quick Feedback

Help us improve future resources for supported applicants! Click here to answer one quick question about how helpful you found this guide.

Have a Question?

If you have questions about your application or the information in this guide, submit an inquiry through TAMS.

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