March 6, 2015

FY2015 WINDOW COUNTDOWN	

FY2015 FCC Forms 471 filed to date	**9,718**

TIP OF THE WEEK: **Remember that program documents must be retained for at least 10 years after the last day of service delivered in a particular funding year.** We suggest that you collect the documents related to your competitive bidding process now and store them in a way that will allow you (or your successor) to easily identify and retrieve them if needed.

Commitments for Funding Years 2014 and 2013

Funding Year 2014. USAC will release Funding Year (FY) 2014 Wave 44 Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs) on March 11. This wave includes commitments for approved Priority 1 (Telecommunications Services and Internet Access) requests at all discount levels. As of March 6, FY2014 commitments total over $2.14 billion.

Funding Year 2013. USAC will release FY2013 Wave 84 Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs) on March 12. This wave includes commitments for approved Priority 1 requests at all discount levels. As of March 6, FY2013 commitments total over $2.14 billion.

On the day the FCDLs are mailed, you can check to see if you have a commitment by using USAC's Automated Search of Commitments tool.

Preparing to File FCC Form 471

For applicants who have not yet started an FCC Form 471, we are providing the following reminders about the materials and other information they will need to prepare and file this form.

The FCC Form 471 is now online and applicants cannot file this form on paper.

Billed Entity information

In the Basic Information section of the online FCC Form 471, applicants provide the name, address, and other contact information for both the Billed Entity and the contact person. The information on the Billed Entity already exists in our database and cannot be changed online; the information on the contact person can be changed, and can be the same as or different from the Billed Entity information. If you are using a consultant, you can designate the consultant as the contact person if you wish.

To verify that the Billed Entity information in our database is correct, go to the Search Tools page and click on Search for BEN Information.

- Select an Entity Type.

- Provide *one* of the following to perform a search:
  - Enter the first few characters of the Billed Entity's name followed by the percent sign ("%") or
  - Enter the Billed Entity's zip code or
  - Select a state or territory from the dropdown menu.
- NOTE: Some browsers may read the "Select State/Territory" text as an entry in that field and not allow a search. If you are having trouble with your search, choose the compatibility mode setting for your browser or switch to a different browser.

If the name or address of the Billed Entity is incorrect, you must contact the Client Service Bureau (CSB) to make a correction. You can do this in any one of the following ways:

- Call CSB at 1-888-203-8100 and make your request.
- Fax your request to CSB at 1-888-276-8736.
- Email your request to CSB using Submit a Question. Choose "Entity Number" from the Topic Menu and "Other" from the Specific Inquiry menu, then provide the necessary information.

If your Billed Entity does not exist in the USAC database, you can ask CSB to create an entity number. To submit a request, first refer to the guidance on Entity Numbers posted on the USAC website. If you need to create more than two new entity numbers, you should use the fax or email options above to submit your request. Remember to include all of the required information specified in the Entity Numbers guidance.

- NOTE: You may be asked for evidence of your authorization – e.g., a letter on school or library letterhead, a consultant letter of agency – to request a new entity number or a correction to an existing entity.

Category of service and service type

For FY2015, Category One (formerly Priority 1) services include the following service types:

- Telecommunications Services
- Internet Access
- Voice Services

Voice Services are subject to a phase down of 20 percentage points starting with FY2015. For example, if your E-rate discount for FY2015 for Telecommunications Services and Internet Access is calculated to be 90 percent, your discount for Voice Services will be 70 percent for FY2015. For more information, please refer to the February 9, 2015 SL News Brief.

For FY2015, Category Two (formerly Priority 2) services include the following service types:

- Internal Connections
- Managed Internal Broadband Services
- Basic Maintenance of Internal Connections (BMIC)

For FY2015, discounts for Category Two services are capped at 85 percent. If your E-rate discount for Category One services is calculated to be 90 percent, your discount for Category Two services will be 85 percent.

Discount Calculation section

In the Discount Calculation section of the FCC Form 471, you provide certain information about individual schools and libraries.

- For specific information about entering information for schools and school districts, refer to the online filing guide [Discount Calculations for Schools](#). Discounts are calculated on a school district basis; individual schools in a school district use the discount calculated for the school district as a whole.
- For specific information about entering information for libraries and library systems, refer to the online filing guide [Discount Calculations for Libraries](#). Discounts are calculated on a library system basis; individual library outlets/branches in a library system use the discount calculated for the library system as a whole.
- Consortia may have individual schools, school districts, individual libraries, and/or library systems as members. Consortia should refer to the two online filing guides above as appropriate for information on entering the information of their members.

If you need to update name or address information for any of the individual schools and/or libraries – or if you need USAC to create entity numbers for new schools and/or libraries – contact CSB as described above.

- Urban or rural status

The urban or rural status of a school district or library system depends on the statuses of the individual schools in the school district or library outlets/branches in the library system.

- A school district is eligible for a rural discount if a majority (*i.e.*, more than 50 percent) of its individual schools are considered rural. Otherwise the school district is eligible for an urban discount.
- A library system is eligible for a rural discount if a majority (*i.e.*, more than 50 percent) of its individual library outlets/branches are considered rural. Otherwise the library system is eligible for an urban discount.

More information on urban and rural status is available in the [December 23, 2014 SL News Brief](#). This issue also contains information on how to update address information if the urban or rural status of a school or library cannot currently be determined. Applicants can also indicate the urban or rural status of an entity when they complete the discount calculation information in the online FCC Form 471.

Funding Requests section

In the Funding Request section of the FCC Form 471, applicants provide information about the specific products and services for which discounts are sought. For more information on eligible products and services, refer to the [FY2015 Eligible Services List](#) (ESL). (Note that the order releasing the ESL precedes the ESL itself.)

- Establishing FCC Form 470

On each FCC Form 471 funding request, you must include the establishing FCC Form 470 application number. The establishing FCC Form 470 formed the basis of the competitive bidding process that resulted in the selection of the service provider identified on that funding request.

- If a funding request is for a multi-year contract or a contract with voluntary extensions, you may have to look in your records from a previous year to find the correct FCC Form 470 application number.
- If you are eligible to purchase from a state master contract or state replacement contract, you may have to ask the state agency that ran the competitive bidding process for the correct FCC Form 470 application number.

NOTE: Certain commercially available, business-class Internet access services are exempt from the competitive bidding rules, including the requirement to post an FCC Form 470. However, such services must meet all of the requirements set forth in the *E-rate Modernization Order* to qualify for this exemption. For specific information on these requirements, please review the November 7, 2014 SL News Brief.

- Service and contract information

If you have signed a contract or other legally binding agreement, make sure you have a copy of this document when you start filling out this section of the form. You must provide a number of relevant details, such as the date the contract was awarded, the contract number, and the date the contract expires. A contract or other service documentation from your service provider can also help you prepare the description of services you must provide.

If you don't have a contract, you will still need information about your services, such as the dates the services for that funding year will start and end.

Certifications & Signature section

In this section you certify your compliance with program rules and complete the certification of your FCC Form 471. You must certify your form either online or on paper.

- Applicant financial resources

Applicants must be able to pay the non-discount share of their funding requests (that is, the part of the cost of eligible services that will not be paid by USAC) and the costs of the resources necessary to make effective use of the discounted services – such as computers, electrical capacity, and staff training – that are not themselves eligible for discounts.

Remember that the funds to pay your non-discount share cannot come directly or indirectly from your service provider(s).

As part of the necessary resources certification in the Certifications & Signature section of the online form, the system will calculate and enter your total non-discount share for that form by totaling the data you provide in your funding requests. You must then calculate and enter the total cost of the necessary resources. Be sure to read this certification carefully so that you understand it.

- Certifying your form

Although the FCC Form 471 must be filed online, you can certify your form either online or on paper.

- If you have a Personal Identification Number (PIN) already assigned to you, you can certify online.
- If you do not have a PIN, you can print the certifications on paper, sign and date them, and then send them to USAC.

- If you exit the form prior to certification, you can return to your submitted form later by clicking the Certify button on the FCC Form 471 main page. You will need your application number and security code if you exit your submitted form and return at a later time to certify it.

We suggest that you review the FCC Form 471 Instructions if you have not already done so to become familiar with the form requirements.

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