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Guidance for the Online FCC Form 471 Alternative Data Entry Process for Basic Maintenance Funding Requests

In order to simplify the entry of funding requests for Basic Maintenance of Internal Connections (BMIC) without sacrificing data integrity, USAC has developed an Alternative Data Entry (ADE) process for applicants to use. The ADE process is NOT mandatory and may be used if you believe it best fits your situation. If you have already submitted your application for BMIC, you do not need to do anything.

Current process

USAC believes that this ADE process will save larger applicants considerable data entry time for BMIC requests; however, anyone can use it. Currently for BMIC entries, applicants must list eligible equipment by type of internal connections, type of product being maintained, quantity, make, model, a cost allocation if the equipment is not 100 percent eligible, and monthly and one-time eligible and ineligible costs. The applicant then indicates how the estimated BMIC costs should be allocated among the individual entities sharing the equipment.

Alternative Data Entry process (ADE)

Applicants who choose to use ADE will enter one line for each recipient of service (individual school or library outlet/branch) in their BMIC funding request. Each line will represent the total cost of the BMIC request for that recipient of service without requiring item-by-item information in the dropdown and entry fields. Specific guidance on how to enter information using ADE is provided below.

- The use of ADE is optional. Applicants can still enter BMIC requests on an item-by-item basis.
- If you have submitted your FCC Form 471, you do not have to submit a new form or a RAL correction to change your existing form.
- If you decide to use this process, you must indicate in your BMIC funding request narrative that you are using ADE. Use the phrase, "I am using the ADE process to enter my costs."

Document retention

If you choose to use ADE, you must keep clear and accurate records of the BMIC work actually performed and costs incurred. During the invoice review process, USAC may ask for documentation that provides details of the basic maintenance activities performed and that verifies that the equipment maintained was eligible.

USAC may also audit a certain number of BMIC invoices based on ADE funding requests, and applicants using ADE should be prepared to provide documentation that verifies the equipment that was maintained and what maintenance was performed at what costs and when.

How to prepare for ADE

Data entered using ADE will be on an entity-by-entity basis. BMIC is considered a recurring service; therefore the annual cost for an entity must be divided by 12 for the system to calculate the annual cost correctly.

You may find it easier to enter data as described below if you prepare a spreadsheet of your entities, alphabetized by entity name and with the monthly eligible (and ineligible) BMIC costs for each entity. If there are one-time eligible and ineligible costs associated with the BMIC request or the equipment is not 100 percent eligible, you would also have to include that information.

Entering data using ADE

On your Category Two application, create a new funding request.

- In the Key Information, choose Basic Maintenance of Internal Connections from the list of service types.
- In the Narrative Section, indicate that you are using the ADE process.

- After you create the funding request, click "Add Line Item."

For each line, choose/enter the following for the first individual school or library on your list:

- Under Type of Internal Connections Being Maintained, choose Miscellaneous from the dropdown menu.
- Under Type of Product Being Maintained, choose Installation, Activation and Initial Configuration from the dropdown menu.
- Enter the total quantity of the equipment covered at the entity.
- Under Unit, choose Hours from the dropdown menu.
- Under Make of Covered Equipment, choose Other from the dropdown menu.
- Under "Other" Make, enter "Various Eligible E-rate Equipment."
- Under Model of Covered Equipment, enter "Various."
- Enter the appropriate Total Monthly Recurring Eligible Cost.

When you have finished, the entry screen should look like this:

If everything is correct, click Save.

Then click Manage Recipients to identify the school or library.

Click the individual school or library name in the left-hand column to move it into the right-hand column. We suggest you indicate that the costs are shared equally based on number of schools as shown below.

You can then repeat the steps above to add as many line items as you need.

Data entry tip

You can use the Item 21d template for Basic Maintenance of Internal Connections to prepare most of your data in advance, using the ADE method or otherwise, and then upload the template into your online form.

- Follow the instructions for the Item 21d template before you choose/enter any data.
- After you select the appropriate dropdowns and entered the appropriate data in the first line, you can use the Fill Down command – one column at a time – to create as many duplicate lines as you need. (Choose the appropriate entry in the first column, then hold down the Shift key and click on the final cell in that column you want to fill with the first entry, then use Ctrl+D to fill down. Repeat for subsequent columns.)
- After you upload the template, you will still need to indicate the individual school or library receiving BMIC services in each line as described above.

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