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August 28, 2015

TIP OF THE WEEK: Watch for registration to open early next week on the [Trainings & Outreach page](#) for USAC's September 10 webinar on the new portal. The webinar will provide useful information about the benefits of the portal and guide you to sources of specific information about how to create or access an account, update your information, and file program forms.

Commitments for Funding Year 2015

Funding Year 2015. USAC will release Funding Year (FY) 2015 Wave 15 Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs) on September 4. This wave includes commitments for approved requests for all service types and at all discount levels. As of August 28, FY2015 commitments total just under \$1.40 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.

FCC IT Upgrades – Deadline Extensions and System Unavailability

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has issued Public Notice [DA 15-940](#) announcing that it will be performing Information Technology upgrades and improvements from 6:00 pm EDT on Wednesday, September 2, 2015, through the Labor Day weekend. This work should be completed by 8:00 am EDT on Tuesday, September 8, 2015.

Most FCC resources normally accessible through the FCC's web site, including access to all electronic filing systems and electronic dockets, will be inaccessible for the same period. The FCC's web site will remain available, but with reduced content and limited search capabilities. The FCC will remain open and under normal operations during this period, including the headquarters filing window and mail room. FCC telephones will work but voicemail will not, and most FCC staff will not have access to email. The FCC anticipates that all systems will again be available starting at 8:00 am on Tuesday, September 8, 2015, and will issue another Public Notice when the systems are again operational.

Because parties will not be able to make electronic filings, view the contents of any Commission databases, or access other online Commission resources during this window, the FCC is extending the filing deadlines for all regulatory and enforcement filings that fall during this time period. To the extent the due dates for filings to which reply or responsive pleadings are allowed are affected by this Public Notice, the due dates for reply or responsive pleadings shall be extended by the same number of days.

For specific information, please refer to the Public Notice ([DA 15-940](#)) announcing the upgrades.

Webinar Scheduled on New USAC Portal

USAC will conduct a webinar introducing the new portal on Thursday, September 10 from 2:00–3:00 pm EDT. The portal – part of the E-rate Productivity Center or EPC (pronounced "epic") – will become the primary channel for applicants, service providers, and consultant to file program forms, ask questions, and manage their information.

Although USAC has been covering the portal in some depth over the last few months, we want to provide an introduction to the portal for those program participants who are just now starting to prepare

for the FY2016 application cycle. The webinar will provide general information about the benefits of the portal, together with how to find information on specific guidance available on the USAC website.

Early next week, you will be able to register for the September 10 webinar from a link to be provided on the [Trainings & Outreach](#) page on the USAC website.

FCC Form 470 – Requirement to Upload RFPs

In the [August 7 SL News Brief](#) and the [August 14 SL News Brief](#), we discussed the entry of Category One and Category Two services on the FY2016 FCC Form 470. These discussions included specific instructions for uploading Request for Proposal (RFP) documents.

Starting with FY2016, applicants who issue RFP documents are REQUIRED to upload those RFP documents into the online FCC Form 470 before the form is certified and posted to the USAC website. As a reminder, we use "RFP" and "RFP document" generically to refer to any bidding document that describes your project and requested services in more detail than that provided in the data entry fields on the FCC Form 470. An RFP document can be any formal bidding document – for example, an Invitation for Bid (IFB) or Request for Quote (RFQ) – or it could be any document issued as part of your competitive bidding process to provide more information to potential bidders.

In previous funding years, applicants could indicate that their RFP was available from the contact person, the technical contact person, or through a URL. However, for FY2016 and going forward, it is not sufficient to upload an RFP document that simply provides a URL to the actual RFP document or indicates the name of the contact person or the technical contact person as a source for the document. The entire RFP document or documents must be uploaded and available for viewing.

Remember that you can post additional RFP documents after the FCC Form 470 has been certified and posted to the USAC website if you need to do so. However, you cannot remove any RFP documents from your online form after it has been certified.

Non-traditional Eligibility Table Update

The [Eligibility Table for non-traditional K-12 students and facilities](#) has been reformatted to allow space for the newly added category "Special Education Over 21 Years of Age." The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part B is a federal law that lays out children's rights in special education from ages 3-21 years old; however, some states provide education to special education students beyond the age of 21. The eligibility table continues to provide information on Schools and Libraries Program eligibility for students and facilities in Head Start, pre-kindergarten, adult education, and juvenile justice programs.

Eligibility determinations are determined by state law and submitted to USAC for verification by USAC's Office of General Counsel. State Department of Education representatives are encouraged to review their state's eligibility determinations for accuracy. If there are any questions, please call the Client Service Bureau (CSB) at (888) 203-8100.

NOTE: We will conclude our series on data entry for the individual sections of the online FCC Form 470 next week.

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