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May 13, 2016

**TIP OF THE WEEK:** The E-rate Productivity Center (EPC) will be unavailable from 3:00 –5:00 am EDT this Sunday, May 15 for hardware maintenance and from 12:00 am – 2:00 am EDT on Tuesday, May 17 for software maintenance. If you have activities to complete in EPC, please plan your work outside of these time periods.

## Actions that Schools and School Districts Should Take NOW

Near the close of the application filing window each year, the Client Service Bureau (CSB) is flooded with requests. We are asking schools and school districts to plan ahead and, at a minimum, get all of these actions completed now in order to be able to complete and certify their FCC Forms 471 by the time their filing window closes for FY2016 at 11:59:59 pm EDT on May 26.

### Best times to call CSB at (888) 203-8100

CSB is open from 8:00 am – 8:00 pm EDT on weekdays and 12:00 pm – 4:00 pm EDT on Saturdays.

**The following times are our busiest – call outside these times to get a faster response:**

- **Weekdays from 11:00 am – 12:30 pm EDT**
- **Weekdays from 2:30 pm – 4:00 pm EDT**

Completing each of the actions below – if you have not already done so – is vital to your success.

### 1. Get an account in EPC.

Independent schools and school districts need accounts in the E-rate Productivity Center (EPC).

If in the past you used the same entity number for two roles – for example, a school district that is also a consortium leader – you now need a separate entity number for each. Call CSB at (888) 203-8100 if you need entity numbers created.

### 2. Get an FCC Registration Number for your organization.

Every entity doing business with the FCC must have an FCC Registration Number (FCC RN). You do not need an FCC RN for each school in a school district, only for the school district itself.

To get an FCC RN, go to the [FCC's CORES website](#), click "REGISTER," and provide the information requested.

### 3. Get an entity number for each entity in your organization.

If you are a school district, you need an entity number for each school and non-instructional facility (NIF) in your school district. All of your schools and NIFs must be associated with your organization – that is, they must be listed in the **My Entities** section of your school district's landing page.

As above, if in the past you have used the same entity number for two or more roles (for example, a NIF and a school district), you will need separate entity numbers for each role. Only an independent school can use the same entity number for both of its roles as the billed entity and the recipient of service.

Call CSB if you need entity numbers created. CSB can also locate entities that have been incorrectly associated with another organization or not associated with any organization.

#### **4. Get an account administrator.**

The account administrator manages your organization's account. You must have an account administrator to create additional users and to assign rights (permissions) to file and certify forms. The account administrator must be someone from your organization.

You must go through several steps to create an account administrator. Call CSB now if you do not have an account administrator, and be prepared to follow the steps CSB gives you. Your account administrator (and any other user) will not be able to take any actions until he or she has logged in to EPC successfully and accepted the terms and conditions of EPC use.

#### **5. Check the applicant type for your organization.**

Entities were migrated over from our old system into EPC depending on how they filed their FY2015 program forms. For example, some schools were migrated as NIFs or school districts.

If your applicant type is incorrect, we strongly recommend that you call CSB to correct it before you file your FCC Form 471. For example, if last year you used the entity number for one of your schools or NIFs to file your FY2015 FCC Form 471 as the billed entity, that entity number may have been migrated over as a school district, which will make it more difficult to file your FY2016 FCC Form 471 correctly.

#### **6. Update each entity profile in your organization with complete information.**

For you to certify program forms and for EPC to calculate urban/rural status and discounts, the profile information for each of your entities must be complete and correct. You can complete or update this information yourself; you do not need CSB's help. At a minimum, the necessary information includes:

For organizations:

- Correct name, address, and telephone number
- FCC RN
- Attributes (e.g., public or private)

For schools, whether independent or part of a school district:

- Correct name and contact information
- Urban/rural status (You can provide this status if it is missing or incorrect.)
- School subtype and other information, specifically:
  - Number of full-time students
  - Number of part-time students
  - Your approved Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) percentage if you participate in CEP

- The total number of students eligible for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), if you do not participate in CEP
- Peak number of part-time students – the greatest number of part-time students that attend the school at any point during the day
- Endowment information
- Alternative discount mechanism information.

If you have all of the information above correct and complete, you will have a much easier time filing your FCC Form 471.

## Changes to the EPC and Apply Online Pages

This week, USAC is rolling out some changes to the web content around application filing. Our team has heard from many of you that critical information is hard to find and that certain tasks that make sense to legacy users, such as "Apply Online," are very confusing to new users. So we've recreated the "E-rate Productivity Center" page as the "Apply for E-rate" page. This redesigned page maps directly to the [E-rate Application Process flowchart](#).

Now, you can access:

- All previous and current funding year links from one page,
- See the entire application process broken down into four easy steps, and
- Access resources such as filing guides and videos associated with each step.

Explore the new [Apply for E-rate](#) page now.

We've also made some changes to the [FY2016 Filing Window](#) page. Go here to learn filing date updates, access all EPC filing guidance, and explore our blog.

We hope these improvements help you, but we also welcome any additional feedback you may have on these pages.

## FY2016 FCDL Notifications by Email

When USAC starts to issue commitment waves for FY2016, the contact person will receive an email notification of the Funding Commitment Decision Letter (FCDL) directly from EPC. The sender email address is **portal@usac.org**. This is in addition to the item posted in the organization's **News** feed.

Please add this email address to your safe senders list so that you do not miss your FCDL notifications.

We will post additional information on service provider notifications on our website in the near future.

## Last Week in "File Along with Me":

- What's on your receipt acknowledgment letter (RAL). [Read More](#)

"File Along with Me" is a blog that covers the E-rate Program application process step-by-step, and serves as a schedule you can follow to manage your application. Ready to join us? [Read the Blog](#)

## Commitments for Funding Year 2015

**Funding Year 2015.** USAC will release Funding Year (FY) 2015 Wave 50 on May 19. This wave includes commitments for approved requests for all service types and at all discount levels. As of May 13, FY2015 commitments total over \$3.26 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.

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