July 15, 2016

TIP OF THE WEEK: LIBRARY AND CONSORTIUM APPLICANTS: Your FY2016 application filing window closes at 11:59 pm EDT on July 21.** Review the information provided below, contact us with any questions, and do not wait until the last minute to file your FCC Form 471.

USAC Has Moved

Please note our new address:

Universal Service Administrative Co.
700 12th Street NW, Suite 900
Washington, DC 20005

All of our telephone and fax numbers will remain the same.

Commitments for Funding Year 2016

Funding Year 2016. USAC released Funding Year (FY) 2016 Wave 3 Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs) on July 9 and Wave 4 FCDLs on July 15. These waves include commitments for approved applications for all service types and at all discount levels. As of July 15, FY2016 commitments (Waves 1 through 4) total over $77.8 million.

To learn how to generate and view your FCDLs, you can watch the FCDL videos – one for applicants and one for service providers – on the Funding Commitment Decision Letter video page. You can also follow the instructions in the June 3 SL News Brief.

FY2016 wave information will be available from two of the tools on USAC's Search Tools webpage.

- **Search Commitments for FY2016.** Click the FY2016 Wave Report link in the "Funding Tools" section of the Search Tools page. Each time a wave runs, the information for that wave will be appear in a new tab in the spreadsheet.
- **FY2016 FCC Form 471 "Current" View.** The current view of an FCC Form 471 is created after the form goes through the commitment process. To see the current view of a form, go to the View/Download FCC Forms 471 for FY2016 tool and choose "Current" in the Form Version dropdown menu. Note that forms that have not been through the wave process will not show up in the search results.

FY2016 Filing Window for Libraries and Consortia Closes on July 21, 2016

Now that we are approaching the close of the FY2016 application filing window for libraries, library systems, and consortia, we would like to provide a few reminders for those applicants who are still working on their applications.

1. Don't wait until the last minute to start your FCC Form 471.

Although the Client Service Bureau (CSB) is poised to take the actions necessary to help you get your application certified before the window closes, some issues cannot be quickly resolved. The sooner you encounter issues that prevent you from filing and let us know (see below), the sooner we can help you work through them successfully.

2. Verify that your billed entity has an organization account in the E-rate Productivity Center (EPC) and that you have an account administrator.

The E-rate Productivity Center (EPC) is the location where you will file many of your program forms, including the FCC Form 471. If your organization does not already have an EPC account and an account administrator for that account, call CSB **TODAY** at (888) 203-8100 to get your account set up.

- Your organization account contains a profile of your organization – name, address, contact information, and other details that will be populated when you start a program form.
- Your account administrator can set up other users and their permissions for updating information and for completing and/or certifying program forms.

For more information on organization accounts and account administrators, refer to the [January 6 SL News Brief](#).

3. Check the status of your billed entity.

Unless you are applying as an independent library – a library that is not part of a library system and that controls its own administration and finances – the billed entity number of your organization in EPC is not eligible for discounts.

In previous funding years, a library system could file program forms using the billed entity number (BEN) of its administrative building or one of its branches. Similarly, a consortium could file program forms using the BEN of a non-instructional facility (NIF) or one of its members. However, in EPC, the organization account is set up at the level of the BEN of the "parent" entity – the library system or the consortium.

If in previous funding years you applied as an independent library, your library may have been designated as a library system in EPC. If in previous funding years one of your library branches applied as the head of a consortium, your library branch may have been designated as a consortium in EPC.

Before your start your FCC Form 471, make sure your BEN is set up as an independent library, a library system, or a consortium, as appropriate.

- The profile of a library system must include profiles for all of the library branches that are a part of that system. CSB can help you locate or create entity number for library branches that are not currently included on your library system profile.
- The profile of a consortium must feature a list of all the members of the consortium. You can search in EPC for any members that are missing from your consortium and add them to your consortium's profile. Again, CSB can help you if you cannot find and/or add missing members.

For more information on entity numbers in EPC, refer to the October 16, 2015 SL News Brief.

4. Be sure your profile information in EPC is complete.

Because EPC populates certain information from your profile into the program forms you file, that information must be complete. Specifically:

- For independent libraries, library systems, and consortia:
  - Enter in your profile the details of all of the contracts you will cite on funding requests. You must create the contract record for each of your contracts in your profile; this information cannot be entered directly in your FCC Form 471.

- For independent libraries and library systems:
  - Check the address and contact information for your library or libraries, and make any necessary updates.
  - Identify the main branch of the library and the public school district in which the main branch is located. (For independent libraries, identify your library as the main branch.) This allows the system to calculate the library system discount, which applies to all library branches in the library system.
  - Provide the square footage of each library branch. This allows the system to calculate the correct Category Two budget for each branch. If a library meets the definition of an urban library – which results in a higher Category Two budget – you must also provide the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) locale code.
  - Answer the Internet connectivity questions for your library or libraries. Again, this information must be provided in your profile; it cannot be entered directly in your FCC Form 471.

- For consortia:
  - Verify that your list of member organizations is complete.

Note: When you start an FCC Form 471, you will be asked to identify which members should be included – in general, the members that are sharing the services featured on that form. The system will calculate the discount level for all services on that form by averaging the discounts of the members you list for that form.

For more information on:

- updating entity profiles, refer to the April 22 SL News Brief.
- determining the main branch of a library system, refer to the February 6, 2015 SL News Brief.
- IMLS locale codes, refer to the January 30, 2015 SL News Brief.
- Category Two budgets, refer to the April 8 SL News Brief.

5. Start your FCC Form 471 now and continue to the section where you enter funding requests.

As long as your organization is in the correct status (see above), we strongly encourage you to start your FCC Form 471 and work through the discount calculation section. If the system is not able to calculate your discount, call CSB right away to work through and correct any problems.

CSB Extended Hours

We will be open additional hours next week to take care of any last-minute questions.

CSB hours through the close of the library/consortium window will be:

Monday, July 18: 8:00 am – 10:00 pm EDT
Tuesday, July 19: 8:00 am – 10:00 pm EDT
Wednesday, July 20: 8:00 am – 10:00 pm EDT
Thursday, July 21 at 8:00 am – Friday, July 22 at 12:30 am EDT

Please feel free to call us at (888) 203-8100 as soon as you have questions.

Update on Answering PIA Questions

In order to make sure that we have all the information necessary to make a funding decision on your FCC Form 471, Program Integrity Assurance (PIA) reviews your application and, if they need more information, sends you a list of questions and requests a response.

For a complete description of this process, refer to the April 27 SL News Brief. Note that, although the contact person identified on the FCC Form 471 is the only one who will receive a notification in his or her **News** feed that there are PIA questions to answer, any full- or partial-rights user can go to the specific FCC Form 471 in EPC and click "Review Inquiries" in the left-hand menu to access the PIA questions.

In some cases, applicants submit partial responses to the PIA questions or submit answers to only some of the PIA questions. When this has happened, the applicant has been unable to return to the PIA questions and complete its response.

We have now modified the process so that applicants will receive an error message if they try to submit a response before all of the questions have been answered. If an applicant tries to submit an incomplete response, each field where an answer has not been supplied will be outlined in red. Only when answers have been provided to all PIA questions will the applicant be able to successfully submit its response.

Applicants do not have to complete the entire process in one sitting. They can answer some of the PIA questions, save their work, and then return to complete any missing or incomplete answers after they have found the necessary documentation or other information that will allow them to continue. To return to their work, they must first go to the appropriate FCC Form 471 in EPC and then click "Review Inquiries" in the left-hand menu.

Last Week in "File Along with Me":

"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

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