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July 22, 2016

TIP OF THE WEEK: Now that the second filing window has closed, applicants should review their FCC Forms 471 for accuracy (see below). Remember that you can submit RAL modifications to correct any incorrect information if USAC has not yet issued a funding decision on your application.

A Note on Ongoing EPC Issues

On Wednesday, July 20, USAC received a letter from several service providers laying out their ongoing challenges with EPC and asking that we take specific actions in response. The issues relate to user account access, changes to electronic files, and invoicing. We understand the seriousness of any issue that impacts service providers' ability to play their essential role in the E-rate program. We are committed to resolving these issues as expediently as we can and in a manner that provides as much predictability and transparency as possible. We also continue to take full responsibility for the challenges resulting from the EPC implementation.

USAC is fully dedicated to working with our community on any future system changes and providing a simpler, faster, and more accurate application and commitment funding process for all of our stakeholders.

We will continue to conduct service provider calls and will conduct individual outreach to those with known issues, including the signatories to the letter, but we also want to make sure we are able to be responsive to all, so if you are a service provider experiencing EPC-related problems, please contact us at 1-888-203-8100.

Commitments for Funding Years 2016 and 2015

Funding Year 2016. USAC will release Funding Year (FY) 2016 Wave 5 Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs) on July 23. This wave includes commitments for approved applications for all service types and at all discount levels. As of July 22, 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.

- 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 appear in a new tab in the spreadsheet.
- 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.

Funding Year 2015. USAC will release FY2015 Wave 58 FCDLs on July 26. This wave includes commitments for approved requests for all service types and at all discount levels. As of July 22, FY2015 commitments total over \$3.31 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.

Remember that FCDLs for FY2015 will continue to be printed and mailed to applicants and service providers. Service providers who have signed up to receive electronic notifications will continue to have electronic notification files emailed to them.

Next Steps Related to the FY2016 Library/Consortium Filing Window

The filing window for libraries and consortia has now closed. Below are a few reminders for those applicants who have recently filed FCC Forms 471.

Review the information on your FCC Form 471.

We want to call attention to a few fields that you should double-check for accuracy:

FCC Form(s) 470 you cited on a funding request. Applicants who cited an FY2016 FCC Form 470 filed and certified their form in EPC. However, applicants with multi-year contracts or who started their competitive bidding process before the FY2016 FCC Form 470 was available in EPC may have cited a form from a previous funding year. Check to be sure that each 15-digit application number you provided was for the correct FCC Form 470 that was posted for the correct service type and for which you waited at least 28 days before you chose your service provider. Also, for FCC Forms 470 not filed in EPC, make sure they are certified.

You can check the status of an FCC Form 470 filed for a previous funding year with the [Search FCC Form 470](#) tool, and you can certify an uncertified form with the [Certify FCC Form 470](#) tool.

FCC Registration Number. Check this 10-digit number to make sure it is correct, especially if this is the first year you have filed E-rate program forms.

Costs and cost allocations. Check your math. The pre-discount costs of your funding requests should match the information in your contract(s) or other documentation you used to prepare your form.

If you notice any incorrect information, you can [submit a RAL modification](#).

Gather your documentation.

As part of your application filing process, you may have produced, accessed, or received a number of documents. You may need to refer to one or more of these documents at various times during the application process, for example, to prepare for a PIA review or an audit, or to file an FCC Form 486, an invoice, or an appeal. If you collect and store this documentation in a manner that allows you – or your successor – to easily access and produce these documents, you can respond much more quickly to information requests.

You have already provided some of this information to USAC – your RFP document(s) in your FCC Form 470, your contract information in your profile – but you should keep your own copies as well.

Some documents that might be easier to find and store now but that might be more difficult to locate later include (this list is not exhaustive):

- Competitive bidding

- Request for Proposal (RFP) and RFP documents
- Public notice of RFP issued (if required by your state or local procurement laws)
- Winning and losing bids
- Questions and answers provided to potential bidders – emails, supporting documents, or other correspondence produced as part of the competitive bidding process
- Completed bid evaluation matrices or other documents that show how the bids received were evaluated and the winning bid chosen
- Contracts and/or legally binding agreements, with evidence of board approvals (if required by your state or local procurement laws)
- If there is a restriction that prevents services and costs from being made public, a copy of the precise cite to the law, statute, local rule, or court order identifying the restriction.

- Category Two budget calculations (libraries)

- Square footage for each library branch
- Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) locale codes for each branch

- Discount calculations (consortia)

- If you have filed multiple FCC Forms 471, check the list of entities that are sharing the services on each of the applications to make sure they are correct.

- Supplemental documentation

- Consulting agreements or letters of agency
- Draft and/or final budgets
- Receipt Notification Letter (RNL) modifications submitted
- RAL modifications submitted
- Questions received from PIA and your responses.

We suggest you take the time now to organize and file all documents related to your application in a manner that will allow you to easily locate and retrieve them for any future needs. For guidance on how to organize your documentation, review the [E-rate Binder Table of Contents](#) and the [Samples and Examples](#) on the USAC website.

Prepare for PIA review.

If you have all of your documentation in order, you should be in good shape for PIA review. Remember to respond promptly to any PIA requests for information or documentation. You can ask for additional time to respond if you need it.

Reminder on Incomplete Responses to PIA Questions

In order to prevent applicants from submitting incomplete responses to PIA questions, we now require all fields in the applicant's response to be completed before the response can be submitted. Specifically,

all text boxes in the response must be filled in. If they are not, you will receive the message "A value is required" and you will not be able to submit your response.

If you are responding to your questions and a text box does not apply to you, please enter "does not apply" or "N/A" in that box. This will allow you to submit your response as long as the questions that do apply to you have all been answered and/or the appropriate documents have been uploaded.

For more information, you can refer to the final article in the [July 15 SL News Brief](#).

SPECIAL NOTE: Some applicants are receiving a message that begins "Error Evaluating UI Expression" when they try to access their PIA questions. We are working to fix this problem, and we should have that fix in place sometime next week. If you are getting close to your response deadline and you still cannot access your PIA questions, please request an extension on the Review Inquiries page (from the left-hand menu on your FCC Form 471 in EPC). Your first extension request will be granted automatically.

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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