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August 5, 2016

TIP OF THE WEEK: If you are planning to file a BEAR Form for any funding year and you don't have a Personal Identification Number (PIN), call the Client Service Bureau at (888) 203-8100 for assistance. Because invoicing will be conducted in the legacy system rather than in the E-rate Productivity Center (EPC), you will need a PIN if you don't already have one.

Commitments for Funding Years 2016 and 2015

Funding Year 2016. USAC will release Funding Year (FY) 2016 Wave 7 Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs) on August 6. This wave includes commitments for approved applications for all service types and at all discount levels. As of August 5, FY2016 commitments total over \$150.4 million.

On the date the FCDLs are issued, you can access your FCDL notification from the **Notifications** section of your landing page in the E-rate Productivity Center (EPC).

Funding Year 2015. USAC will release FY2015 Wave 60 FCDLs on August 11. This wave includes commitments for approved requests for all service types and at all discount levels. As of August 5, 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. FCDLs for FY2015 will continue to be printed and mailed to applicants and service providers, and emailed to service providers who have signed up to receive electronic notifications.

Update on Service Provider .FSP Files

Service providers who [sign up for electronic notifications](#) can receive some of the information contained in certain program letters in an electronic file. For FCDLs, the names of these files feature the extension *.fsp. We therefore refer to these files as .FSP files.

For FY2015 and previous funding years, these files are generated through our legacy system and emailed to service providers, one file per Service Provider Identification Number or SPIN (also called a service provider 498 ID). For FY2016 and future funding years, these files are created and attached to the FCDL notification in the service provider's organization account in the E-rate Productivity Center. (See below for the process of generating and viewing FCDL notifications.)

Many service providers have had difficulty uploading the .FSP files for FY2016 into their systems. USAC has reviewed the FY2016 files and – with the assistance of some external service provider testers – modified the FY2016 file formats so that they can be successfully uploaded.

We plan to deploy the modifications to the .FSP files tonight, before we run Wave 7 for FY2016. After the wave runs and the results are verified, we will re-run the .FSP files for FY2016 Waves 1 through 6 and

create new FCDL notifications for service providers whose SPINs were featured on commitment decisions in those waves. Service providers can then upload those modified files into their systems.

NOTE: The original FCDL notification will be deleted from your list of notifications. However, it will still be available as a news item in your News feed.

For service providers to access the modified .FSP files for Waves 1 through 6:

- Log in to EPC.
- Go to the **Notifications** section of your landing page and perform a search for FCDL Notifications. If we have created a new FCDL notification for one or more of the affected waves, a new notification line will appear in your list of search results.
- In the right-hand column of each notification, the text "Generate Notification" will appear. When you click on that text, the FCDL notification is generated and the text changes to "View Notification."
- Click on the "View Notification" text. You will then see the FCDL as an item in your **News**.
- Scroll down below the text of the FCDL to locate the modified .FSP file.

We have also replaced the current description of the .FSP files on the USAC website with an [updated version](#) that contains the current values for the fields in .FSP files for FY2016 and for previous funding years.

FY2017 FCC Form 470 Reminders

The FCC Form 470 for FY2017 became available in EPC on July 1. Applicants who are ready to open a competitive bidding process for FY2017 can file and certify an FCC Form 470 at any time.

For those of you who are filing the FCC Form 470 in EPC for the first time – or for those applicants who need a reminder of the differences between EPC and the legacy filing system – we are providing the guidance below.

If you do not have an EPC account or you have not filed program forms in EPC before, we suggest that you review the basic information about EPC on the [FY2016 filing window page](#) on the USAC website and call our Client Service Bureau (CSB) at (888) 203-8100 if you need help.

The FCC Form 470 must be filed online in EPC.

There is no longer a paper version of the FCC Form 470. Also, any necessary instructions are built into the online experience. There are user guides available inside EPC and on the USAC website to help applicants complete their forms, along with a series of instructional videos. To review the guidance materials on the USAC website, refer to the section titled "One: Request Bids for Services (FCC Form 470)" on the [Apply for E-rate](#) page.

You no longer need a Personal Identification Number (PIN) to file the FCC Form 470. By logging in to the EPC system, you have already identified yourself to us. Note, however, that you will need your PIN to certify an FCC Form 472, Billed Entity Applicant Reimbursement (BEAR) Form, so if you already have a PIN, keep it handy.

Some information must be completed in your organization's profile in EPC before you can file a program form.

Your billed entity information – including address and contact information, attributes for the schools in a school district or libraries in a library system, and other pertinent data – is pulled into program forms that you file from your organization's profile in EPC. You should review this information for accuracy and make any necessary changes before you file your form.

If you need help locating or creating a school in your school district or a library in your library system, call CSB. Consortia should also verify that their members are featured in the consortium's profile before the consortium certifies the FCC Form 470.

If you issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) and/or RFP documents, they must be uploaded to the FCC Form 470.

If you are issuing an RFP or one or more RFP documents, you are required to upload those documents to your FCC Form 470. 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. It is not sufficient for you to upload a document that contains a link to another website where the RFP can be accessed (for example, a procurement portal). The actual RFP itself (along with all subsequent addendums) must be made publicly available through USAC's website by uploading the RFP in EPC.

In addition, RFP documents issued **AFTER** an FCC Form 470 is certified and posted **MUST** be uploaded to that certified FCC Form 470. To add an RFP document to a certified FCC Form 470, pull up the form in EPC, choose "Related Actions" from the left-hand menu, and then choose "Add an RFP Document." Note that you cannot add an RFP document if you did not indicate on the certified form that you had an RFP. Like the original RFP, you must upload the actual addendum. Uploading a document with a link to another site is not sufficient.

Before you submit your form, you can review and print a PDF version of your draft form. You can then review the PDF and make any necessary edits before the form is certified.

Applicants certify the form online before it is posted to the USAC website.

Before FY2016, applicants could post an FCC Form 470 and start their 28-day waiting period without certifying their form. In EPC, the FCC Form 470 is not posted to the USAC website until it is certified. If the user who creates the form does not also have the necessary rights (permissions) to certify it, EPC will create a task for users within the organization who do. Users with partial rights to the FCC Form 470 can complete the form but cannot certify the form. Users with full rights to the FCC Form 470 can both edit and certify the form in EPC.

Your receipt notification will appear in your EPC News feed immediately after you certify your form.

USAC no longer issues paper FCC Form 470 Receipt Notification Letters (RNLs). Instead, your RNL will appear right away in the **News** tab in your EPC account. If you notice any ministerial or clerical errors you need to correct, you can submit the corrections through EPC.

Service providers will be able to view filed FCC Forms 470 either through EPC or through the USAC website.

EPC has a search and download function that will allow service providers with accounts to search for certified FCC Forms 470. The form data from the search results can also be downloaded as a set of

.CSV files. Service providers will also be able to view PDF versions of FY2017 FCC Forms 470 along with any associated RFP documents from the FCC Form 470 tools on the [Search Tools](#) page on the USAC website.

FCC Forms 470 filed for past funding years are still available on the USAC website.

If you need to locate an FCC Form 470 filed for a funding year before FY2016, go to the [Apply for E-rate page](#) on the USAC website, go to the menu labeled "Previous Funding Years" under the "Start Your Form 470" button, choose "View Posted Form," and click "GO." You can then choose the appropriate funding year, click "Next>>," and enter your search criteria.

If you are ready to file your FY2017 FCC Form 470, go to the [E-rate Productivity Center](#) and click the Log In button near the top of the page.

Last Week in "File Along with Me":

- What to Do When You Get Your Funding Commitment. [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](#)

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