Schools and Libraries Program News Brief
Universal Service Administrative Co.

August 25, 2017

TIP OF THE WEEK: **After you certify an FCC Form 498, we will send an email to the General Contact on the form to request a copy of a voided check or a bank statement.** Note that you do not have to wait for USAC to contact you; you can upload your documentation as soon as your School or Library Official has certified the form.

Commitments for Funding Years 2017 and 2016

Funding Year 2017. USAC released Funding Year (FY) 2017 Wave 13 Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs) earlier today and is scheduled to release Wave 14 FCDLs on September 1. As of August 25, FY2017 commitments total over $964 million.

Funding Year 2016. USAC released Wave 60 FCDLs on August 22 and is scheduled to release Wave 61 FCDLs on August 29. As of August 25, FY2016 commitments total over $2.90 billion.

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

New Drop-Down Options in EPC for Completing the FCC Form 470

On Saturday, August 26, 2017, a new simplified set of drop-down options will be available to applicants completing the FCC Form 470 who are requesting bids for eligible services in EPC. If you have already filed an FCC Form 470 for FY2018, or plan to do so between now and August 26, 2017, you do not need to refile the FCC Form 470. FCC Forms 470 filed using both the current and simplified drop-down options in EPC will be accepted for FY2018, subject to program rules. Please review the August 22 Special Edition Schools and Libraries News Brief for additional information on these changes and guidelines to help utilize the drop-down menu options.

A few additional pointers:

- Applicants who request bids using the new "Leased Dark Fiber and Leased Lit Fiber" drop-down should state the minimum and maximum capacities for which they are seeking bids in the FCC Form 470 Narrative, as well as the number of Leased Lit Fiber circuits being requested (EPC will prompt applicants to specify the number of Leased Dark Fiber strands for which are seeking bids in a separate field). While applicants are required to upload an RFP when using the "Leased Dark Fiber and Leased Lit Fiber" drop-down, and should specify the details of their bid requests with respect to both services (and any other connectivity solution for which bids are sought) in the

RFP, including the information in the Narrative will ensure that this information is clear to service providers on the face of the FCC Form 470.

- Similarly, applicants that request bids using the "Self-Provisioned Networks and Services Provided Over Third-Party Networks" drop-down should specify the minimum and maximum capacities for which they are seeking bids in the FCC Form 470 Narrative, as well as the number of circuits they are seeking for services provided over third-party networks. As with the "Leased Dark Fiber and Leased Lit Fiber" drop-down, applicants are required to upload an RFP when seeking bids for "Self-Provisioned Networks and Services Provided Over Third-Party Networks," and must address all connectivity solutions for which they are seeking bids in that RFP. Making sure the information is on the face of your FCC Form 470 will ensure that service providers see it and assist them in formulating responsive proposals.
- Use the Narrative field to provide any other information that would be helpful to a service provider considering bidding on your request. For instance, you can request specific pricing options within your minimum and maximum capacity range, describe any disqualification factors that service providers should consider, and provide specific location information for the entities that you are seeking to connect.

BEAR Training Site Available

If applicants wish to train or practice filing and certifying an FCC Form 472, Billed Entity Applicant Reimbursement (BEAR) Form, USAC now offers a [BEAR Training Site](#).

With a few exceptions, the BEAR training site will behave like the live site – generating error messages for missing or inconsistent data, allowing incomplete forms to be saved, providing print functionality, and so on.

Here are the major differences between the behavior of the training site and the live site:

- Links to most external sites and documents have been removed or disabled. For example, the **Need Help?** buttons are not active.
- Because Funding Request Number (FRN) information for the BEAR training site is not stored in our database, you must take an additional step to save an incomplete form or to certify a complete form (see below). This additional step does not occur on the live site.
- BEAR Forms started on the training site, whether incomplete or certified, are discarded at the end of each day.
- Users will be able to see incomplete and certified forms created by other users on the same day because all users use the same login credentials.

We strongly recommend that you do not open tabs or browsers to both the training site and the live site at the same time.

Use the following login credentials to log in to the BEAR Training Site:

- BEN: 145909
- PIN: ocular#
- Email: applicant@usac.org
- Last Name: Smith

To start, click the **New BEAR Form** link at the top of the page.

Block 1

- You can enter any combination of letters and numbers in the **Applicant Form Identifier** field.
- Always enter "143666666" in the **Service Provider Identification Number** field. When you continue to the next field, the Service Provider Name will change to "SLD Interim."
- We have created two 498 IDs to use in the **Applicant FCC Form 498 ID** field. Click the down arrow to the right of the field and choose one. (As a reminder, applicants may have more than one 498 ID.)
- You can edit the pre-populated information in Items 4 and 5 if you wish.
- Item 6 will update automatically as you complete line items in **Block 2**.

Block 2

- Use FRNs from the [list of training site FRNs](#) to create your line items. The FCC Form 471 number goes in column 7 and the corresponding FRN in column 8.
- You can enter any dollar amount you wish in column 12.
- There is a specific discount level approved for each FRN on the list. That discount will populate automatically in column 13 after you enter the FCC Form 471 number and FRN for that line item.
- You can add as many line items as you wish.

Block 3

- You must check all five of the certifications, and also check the **Signature** box.
- You can review the terms and conditions for using a Personal Identification Number (PIN) by clicking the **Terms and Conditions** link at the top of the form.
- Note that the fields in Items 18, 19, 19a, 19c, and 20 are editable, but the fields in Items 16, 17, and 19b are not.

Error messages

Error messages generally occur near the fields containing the error or inconsistency. However, a final validation occurs when you attempt to save an incomplete form or certify a form. The results of that validation – the "validation warning message" referred to below – appear in red in a box at the top of the form. You cannot continue until you fix the errors identified in the box.

To save an incomplete form:

On the training site, you will receive a validation warning message when you attempt to save an incomplete form. To save a form successfully on the training site, follow these steps:

- Click the **Save** button. The system will check for the FRN(s) you have entered and return a validation warning message.
- Scroll to the bottom of the form and click the **Accept** button.
- Scroll to the bottom of the form and click the **Save** button a second time.
- The system will then save your incomplete form and allow you to access it after you return to the **Home** page or log in again on the same day. (Remember that a form saved on the training site will be discarded at the end of the day.)

To certify your form:

On the training site, you will receive a validation warning message when you attempt to certify a form. To see the correct certification message as it will appear on the live site, follow these steps:

- After you have completed all required information, click the **Certify and Submit** button. The system will check for the FRN(s) you have entered and return a validation warning message.
- Scroll to the bottom of the form and click the **Accept** button.
- Scroll to the bottom of the form and click the **Certify and Submit** button a second time.
- The certification message will now display correctly at the top of the form.

To print your form:

After you certify your form, a **PRINTABLE PAGE** icon will appear in the upper right-hand corner of the form. Click that icon to print a copy of your form.

To search for a certified form:

- Click the **Track Form** option at the top of the **Home** page.
- Enter either the **Invoice ID** (assigned by the system) or the **Applicant Form Identifier** (created by the user) and click the **Search** button.
- Remember that all forms certified on the training site are discarded at the end of each day, so this function will only locate your form on the same day you certify the form.

For more information on entering line items – and for specific information on entries in other fields on the form – you can refer to the [BEAR Form User Guide](#).

Filing an FCC Form 486 for FY2017 FRNs that Also Require a SPIN Change

Applicants will soon be able to file a Service Provider Identification Number (SPIN) change request in EPC for FY2017 FRNs. However, USAC will not yet be able to successfully process those requests. Because of this, some applicants may be hesitant to file an FY2017 FCC Form 486 if they also need to request a SPIN change for one or more of their FRNs.

Applicants in this situation who **have not** yet received an FCDL should work with their PIA reviewer to effect a SPIN change in time for their FCDL to reflect the correct SPIN. Applicants in this situation who **have** already received an FCDL can proceed as follows:

- Certify your FCC Form 486 if services have started and you can truthfully make all of the certifications. NOTE: You should file FRNs that do not require a SPIN change on a separate FCC Form 486.
- File an invoice check for the FRNs on the FCC Form 486 that require a SPIN change. The invoice check procedure allows applicants to review any invoice submitted to USAC by the named service provider on the FRN before USAC can pay it. To initiate an invoice check:
  - Open a customer service case in EPC and include "Invoice Check" in the case nickname.
  - We suggest that you choose "Post Commitment Changes" and "SPIN Change Questions" for the topic and subtopic to more clearly identify your request.
  - Be sure to include a list of the affected FRNs along with your Billed Entity Number, entity name, funding year, FCC Form 471 number(s), and SPIN(s).
  - Include a short explanation of the reason for the invoice check.
- When the ability to file a SPIN change is enabled for FY2017, file your SPIN change request. You can include a note requesting that the invoice check be removed from the FRN(s) once the SPIN change has been successfully processed.

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