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Universal Service  
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## Schools and Libraries Program News Brief

September 15, 2017

**TIP OF THE WEEK:** Make sure you have an approved FCC Form 498 and a valid Personal Identification Number (PIN) if you intend to file BEAR Forms for FY2016 services. Review the [August 11 SL News Brief](#) for more on the FCC Form 498, and the information below for more on the PIN request process.

### Commitments for Funding Years 2017 and 2016

**Funding Year 2017.** USAC is scheduled to release Funding Year (FY) 2017 Wave 17 Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs) on September 22. As of September 15, FY2017 commitments total over \$1.22 billion.

**Funding Year 2016.** USAC is scheduled to release Wave 63 FCDLs on September 19. As of September 15, 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).

### Training Announcement for First Fall Applicant Training in Washington, D.C.

The USAC Schools and Libraries Division will hold its first training session for E-rate applicants on Tuesday, October 10, 2017 in Washington, D.C. The training is open to all program participants. During the training you'll have the opportunity to ask questions and hear directly from members of the USAC Schools and Libraries team on key topics important to successfully participating in the program.

[Click here](#) for more information and to register for the training. Look for announcements of additional training dates and locations in the near future.

### E-rate Deadline Relief for Hurricane-Affected Areas

USAC refers to the federal disaster declarations specified on the [FEMA Disaster site](#) when providing relief for certain programmatic deadlines under the E-rate program. You can search this site by state or tribal government for specific information. Generally the disaster declarations are on a county-by-county basis on the state web pages.

For those areas affected by Hurricanes Harvey and Irma and covered by federal disaster declarations, the following changes are already in place for E-rate applicants. Please note that other federal disaster

declarations can occur for areas impacted by other disasters, so the [FEMA Disaster site](#) is the best source of information for the areas where USAC can provide deadline relief.

Applicants in the affected areas will have an additional 30 days to respond to the following:

- Pending Program Integrity Assurance (PIA) questions about their FCC Forms 471 that are in the review process.
- New Program Integrity Assurance (PIA) questions about their FCC Forms 471 that are in the review process.
- Any other pending USAC requests for information and/or documentation, for example, for invoice review or FCC Form 486 review.
- Any other new USAC requests for information and/or documentation, for example, for invoice review or FCC Form 486 review.

We will also confirm that applicants are able to respond to our requests before we establish their response deadline, so they may have more than 30 days to respond.

- We will not restart the deadline clock until we have made a successful contact with the applicant.
- If we are able to make a successful contact with an applicant, they can indicate that they are not yet able to respond. We will ask for an estimate of the date when they believe they will be able to respond and we will contact them again on or after that date.
- If an applicant is able to respond to questions, they should just respond either in EPC or directly to the reviewer. They can contact their reviewer (for PIA requests, invoice requests, etc.) if they have questions. If they do not have their reviewer's contact information, they can open a customer service case in EPC or call CSB at (888) 203-8100 for assistance.

## **Monthly Webinar for September: Navigating the E-rate Invoicing Process**

Join us next Tuesday, September 19, 2017 at 3:00 PM EDT for a webinar on invoicing in the E-rate program. This webinar will focus on the invoicing process for both applicants and service providers. Participants will see descriptions of each step in the invoicing process and learn about additional resources available on the USAC website, including form walkthroughs and user guides. We have also set aside some time at the end of the webinar for questions from participants.

[Click here](#) to register for the webinar. You can also visit USAC's [Webinar page](#) to register, and to get more information on the equipment and setup you will need to participate successfully in the webinar.

## **How to Request a PIN**

Applicants must be able to access the [online BEAR Form](#) in USAC's legacy system to complete and certify an invoice. To access the BEAR Form, each user must have a Personal Identification Number (PIN). (Service providers access the [online SPI Form](#) directly from the USAC website without a PIN.)

In the past, if an applicant filed a paper form, our system would check to see if the applicant already had a PIN in our system. If not, the system would generate a PIN and send it to the applicant in a secure mailer. However, because we no longer accept paper forms, PIN generation is now a manual process.

## **Existing PINs**

Applicants who already have a PIN do not need to request a new one but can continue to use their current one.

PINs are assigned based on the last name of the user and the Billed Entity Number (BEN) under which the invoices will be filed by that user. If you have multiple users in your organization – or multiple clients if you are a consultant – each unique last name/BEN combination will require a separate PIN.

You can change your existing PIN to a different PIN by following the instructions under the [Change PIN](#) function on the [Applicant PIN](#) page. Note that each PIN must be unique in the system, so if you receive an error message, try a different combination of characters.

If you know you have a PIN but have forgotten it, you can ask the Client Service Bureau (CSB) to "regenerate" your PIN.

- Open a customer service case in EPC by clicking the **Contact Us** link at the top of your organization's landing page. In your request, include your first and last name, the Billed Entity Number of the organization for which you will be submitting BEAR Forms, and your mailing address.
- You can also call CSB and provide the same information over the phone.

The regeneration process will create a new PIN for the same user, and we will mail that PIN to the address we already have on file. You cannot change your mailing address through this process; if you or your organization has moved or you wish to use a different address, we must create a new PIN for you.

## **New PINs**

To create a new PIN, open a customer service case in EPC.

- Download the [New PIN Template](#) from the [PIN page](#) on the USAC website.
- Complete a line on the template for each PIN you are requesting. Avoid adding a space at the beginning or end of each of your entries, and double-check your entries for accuracy.
- Attach the completed template to your customer service case and click **Submit**.

We will first verify that you are an authorized user on the organization's account in EPC. If you are, we will create a new PIN for you and mail it to you in a secure mailer at the address you provided in the [New PIN Template](#). It usually takes two or three weeks for you to receive your PIN after you submit your request.

The following can slow down the PIN process:

- If you already have a PIN, the system will not create a new one. If you believe you have a PIN, please use the PIN regeneration process described above. If you are not sure, you can call CSB and they can check to see if you already have a PIN.
- If you add a space before or after your entry in any field – especially your last name – the system will not create a PIN.
- We will send the secure mailer to the address you provided in the template. An incorrect address will delay your receipt of the PIN.

We recommend that you request a new PIN or regenerate an existing PIN now, so that you will have it available to complete and certify BEAR Forms well in advance of any deadline.

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