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Universal Service  
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## Schools and Libraries Program News Brief

— SPECIAL EDITION —

December 14, 2017

### E-rate Funding Year 2018 Application Filing Window Opens January 11, 2018

Dear E-rate Participant:

I am pleased to announce the Funding Year (FY) 2018 FCC Form 471 application filing window opens Thursday, January 11, 2018, at 12:00 noon EST and closes on Thursday, March 22, 2018, at 11:59 PM EDT. This filing window is more in keeping with those used in prior funding years.

Applicants can begin preparing now for the successful filing of their FY 2018 funding applications by taking the following steps:

- **Install Browser Updates:** Google Chrome is the preferred browser for EPC, but no matter which browser you use, be sure the latest version is installed on your computer.
- **Establish Account and User Rights:** If this is your first year participating in the E-rate program, call our Client Service Bureau at 888-203-8100 to create your account in the E-rate Productivity Center (EPC). If you already have an EPC account, log in and review, update and/or assign user *rights* for persons who will need access for FY 2018.
- **Update Your EPC Profile Now:** To ensure a smoother filing process, **EPC profiles will lock on January 10, 2018, at 11:59 PM EST.** You will not be able to make changes to your EPC profile after that date. So, please log in to your EPC account now to make any necessary changes to your profile. Specifically, you should:
  - Ensure that the entity type for each of your schools, libraries, and non-instructional facilities (NIFs) is accurate.
  - Confirm the names and addresses for all of your entities and NIFs, and let USAC know if any have closed or if you expect to add any new entities for the upcoming funding year.
  - Schools should carefully review their student counts, including National School Lunch Program (NSLP) information.
  - Libraries should confirm their square footage, as well as the school district in which their main branch is located.
  - All applicants should review the "Connectivity" questions in their profile if they have made changes to their network or have a different opinion on the sufficiency of their network.

Note that USAC has already updated EPC profiles with the data from approved FY 2017 applications, so you may notice some updated information when you log in to your account.

- **Proceed With Competitive Bidding:** If you have not started the competitive bidding process by filing your FCC Form 470, please begin now. Remember that you must wait 28 days after filing the FCC Form 470 before entering into an agreement and filing your application. Waiting for the filing window to open is not necessary. USAC's website at <http://www.usac.org/sl/applicants/step01/default.aspx> provides step-by-step instructions for completing the FCC Form 470 and conducting the competitive bid process.

As always, representatives at USAC's Client Service Bureau are available to help you at 888-203-8100. Alternatively, you can also open a customer service case in EPC to receive assistance.

This will be the 20th application filing window for the E-rate program, and I have had the honor of working with many of you since the first filing window opening in 1998 – some since the beginning and others more recently. During this time, we have faced many challenges, but we have always worked together and found solutions. Looking ahead, you should continue to expect us to solicit your candid feedback and insights. In 2018, we plan to regularly request your ideas for ways in which we can improve our E-rate information technology systems and program participant trainings, including topics that you would like to see addressed in our face-to-face trainings and webinars. Although we cannot always accommodate every request, we will carefully consider all of your feedback.

Like all of my colleagues at USAC, I know that you share my passion to ensure that students and library patrons across the country have access to the broadband connections they need. I am excited to be working with all of you in my new role leading the E-rate program, and you have my full commitment that USAC will continue to administer the E-rate program in a way that benefits from your participation and feedback.

Sincerely,

Catriona Ayer  
Acting Vice President, Schools and Libraries Division

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