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Universal Service  
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# Schools and Libraries Program News Brief

January 19, 2018

**TIP OF THE WEEK:** For applicants who want a better understanding of how to file an online FCC Form 470, we have created a [series of FCC Form 470 instructional videos](#). By watching the videos, you will be able to see how to file the form, how to add a request for proposal (RFP) document to a form after it has been certified, and how to search for and view certified forms and any attached RFP documents.

## Commitments for Funding Year 2017

**Funding Year 2017.** USAC released Funding Year (FY) 2017 Wave 35 Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs) yesterday, January 18 (not today as announced last week). USAC is scheduled to release Wave 36 FCDLs (for some of the hurricane relief applications filed during the Second FY2017 Application Window) on January 20 and Wave 37 FCDLs on January 26. As of January 19, FY2017 commitments total over \$2.11 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).

## RFCDL Reminders

In past funding years, USAC issued Revised Funding Commitment Decisions Letters (RFCDLs) in limited circumstances – generally, to communicate its decisions on appeals and certain applicant and service provider requests. Starting with FY2016, most USAC decisions on post-commitment changes and requests are now communicated through RFCDLs. Note that we use the term "post-commitment" or "PC" to refer to any program activity that occurs after the issuance of an FCDL.

Here is the current list of forms and requests for which USAC decisions will be issued on RFCDLs:

- Appeals related to any form type or request
- FCC Forms 500 – changes to service start dates and contract expiration dates, funding request cancellations and reductions, service delivery deadline extension requests for non-recurring services, and equipment transfer notifications
- Service Provider Identification Number (SPIN) changes
- Service substitutions

Note that FCC Form 486 approvals, denials, and service start date adjustments will continue to be issued on FCC Form 486 Notification Letters.

Because the data from these forms must flow from EPC to our legacy system (where invoices are processed), **applicants and service providers should wait two days after receiving an RFCDL before submitting an invoice.** If you submit an invoice more quickly, you may receive a denial and will then have to submit the invoice a second time.

## USAC Seeks IT Enhancement Feedback

USAC has created a new web page – [Share Your E-rate Technical System Ideas](#) – for program participants to submit their ideas and feedback for improving and/or enhancing Schools and Libraries information systems. Information submitted to USAC through the feedback form on this webpage should only pertain to proposed changes to the E-rate related information technology (IT) systems. It should not include feedback on E-rate program rules or policy issues, or inquiries about specific applications.

To share your thoughts and ideas, go to the web page, enter your name and email address, identify your role in the E-rate program, and describe your idea. You can type directly into the text box provided or copy and paste text from another document. When you are finished, click the **SUBMIT** button at the bottom of the page.

We will display a message on your computer screen confirming receipt of your submission. If we have questions or would like more information about your submission, we may send you a request to the email address you provided, which you may respond to if you choose. The information provided on this form will only be used for internal purposes and will not be shared. If you do not wish to be contacted by USAC or decide to not participate in future E-rate software beta testing, you may send an email to [privacy@usac.org](mailto:privacy@usac.org) with your request to not be contacted.

**Please note that we cannot respond to specific inquiries or requests for assistance through this form.** For these issues, submit a customer service case in EPC or call the Client Service Bureau (CSB) at 888-203-8100.

## State Coordinators - Please Complete Your State's Valid File

Last week, USAC emailed a request to all state coordinators to update their state valid files. Program Integrity Assurance (PIA) reviewers use these files during the review of applications to verify student counts and entity eligibility. Having this data may help to speed the processing of FCC Forms 471.

The valid file attached to each request already features your state's school districts, their associated individual schools, and independent schools, together with their Billed Entity Numbers (BENs). Please review your file and make any necessary corrections, such as:

- updating student counts;
- providing data for schools or school districts that participate in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP);
- adding missing entities; and
- verifying that the entities featured on the file are in fact eligible.

Be sure to preserve the existing file format when you make updates, corrections, or other changes. This will allow us to upload the information directly into our system and thereby speed the review process.

If you have questions or need assistance updating your valid files, please use the contact information contained in our original email request.

Your updated file should be returned to us by February 26, 2018.

## **Guidance for Directly Impacted Applicants on Submitting Post-Commitment Requests**

While USAC is currently issuing funding waves for Second FY2017 Application Window applications and is accepting FCC Forms 486, please note that our systems will be unable to process other post-commitment changes and requests until early February 2018.

In the [November 9, 2017 SL News Brief](#), we discussed emergency relief provided under [Order FCC 17-139](#) to certain schools and libraries impacted by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria (Hurricanes). As part of this relief, Directly Impacted Applicants – schools and libraries that are located in counties designated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as eligible for individual disaster assistance and that certify that they have incurred substantial damage to E-rate eligible services as a result of one or more of the Hurricanes – could apply for targeted support to replace products and services needed to restore their pre-Hurricane level of functionality. To allow Directly Impacted Applicants to apply, USAC opened a Second FY2017 Application Window, which closed on Wednesday, December 13, 2017.

USAC issued the first funding wave for these Second FY2017 Application Window applications on Saturday, January 6, 2018. We will issue additional waves over the coming weeks. After you receive your FCDL notification in EPC, you can submit your FCC Form 486 and – when you are ready – you or your service provider can submit invoices for these services.

However, our systems will be unable to process other post-commitment changes and requests – such as appeals, SPIN changes, service substitutions, and FCC Forms 500 related to the Second FY2017 Application Window applications – until early February 2018. Please wait to submit these requests until we provide notice in the SL News Brief that our systems are ready to receive them. At that time, follow the guidance below to submit service substitutions, and use the links at the top of your landing page to submit your other post-commitment changes and requests.

When you prepare these post-commitment requests, enter the prefix **H2017** at the beginning of the nickname you provide for your request. This **H2017** prefix helps us identify your request as a Hurricane relief request and allows us to process it accordingly.

We appreciate your patience.

## **How to Request Service Substitutions for Directly Impacted Applicants**

Directly Impacted Applicants also have increased flexibility in requesting service substitutions.

Directly Impacted Applicants who received commitments or have pending FCC Form 471 applications from the first FY2017 application window may now request service substitutions for services or products that have been disrupted, destroyed, or rendered unusable by the Hurricanes, even if the substituted services and/or products do not have the same functionality as the original requested services or products. This will allow Directly Impacted Applicants to be able to request service substitutions from one category of service to another category of service.

Directly Impacted Applicants will still need to ensure that the service substitution: (a) does not violate any contract provision; (b) does not violate state or local procurement rules; (c) does not result in an increase in the percentage of ineligible services or functions; and (d) is within the scope of an FCC Form 470.

To request a service substitution under this relief, Directly Impacted Applicants should file a customer service case. Do not use the Service Substitution request option in EPC – instead, follow the guidance below:

- Open a customer service case in EPC.
- **Title** the case "H2017 Service Substitution."
- Choose "Post Commitment Changes" as the **Topic** and "Service Substitution Questions" as the **Subtopic**.
- For each FRN, include the FCC Form 471 application number, dollar amounts, and the original (FROM) and requested (TO) services.
- Make the following certifications:
  1. The recipients of service on all funding requests on the service substitution request are physically located in counties designated by FEMA as eligible for individual disaster assistance due to damage caused by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and/or Maria;
  2. The service substitution is for replacement of previously funded E-rate eligible product or service that has been disrupted, destroyed or rendered unusable by the Hurricanes;
  3. The substitution does not violate any contract provision or state or local procurement law;
  4. The substitution does not result in an increase in the percentage of ineligible services or functions; and
  5. The requested change is within the scope of the controlling FCC Form 470.

If you have already submitted a service substitution using the customary process in EPC, please resubmit your request using a customer service case as described above.

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USAC | 700 12th Street NW | Suite 900 | Washington, DC 20005

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