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Universal Service
Administrative Co.

Schools and Libraries Program News Brief

February 2, 2018

TIP OF THE WEEK: To designate entities that you believe qualify as Directly Impacted Applicants under FCC order [FCC 17-139](#), follow the guidance in the article titled "Designating Directly Impacted Applicants for Hurricane Relief" from the [January 12 SL News Brief](#). Providing this information in advance of the review of FY2018 applications will assist USAC in the processing of those applications.

Commitments for Funding Year 2017

Funding Year 2017. USAC is scheduled to release Funding Year (FY) 2017 Wave 39 Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs) on February 8 and Wave 40 FCDLs (for some of the hurricane relief applications filed during the Second FY2017 Application Window) on February 9. As of February 2, FY2017 commitments total over \$2.16 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).

Update for Directly Impacted Applicants on Submitting Post-Commitment Requests

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). To allow Directly Impacted Applicants to apply for relief, USAC opened a Second FY2017 Application Window, which closed on Wednesday, December 13, 2017. Directly Impacted Applicants are defined as 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.

In the [January 19 SL News Brief](#), we asked Directly Impacted Applicants who applied in the Second FY2017 Application Window to wait to submit post-commitment requests (e.g., appeals, SPIN changes, service substitutions, and FCC Forms 500) until we could update EPC so that we could process these requests.

EPC has now been successfully updated, and Directly Impacted Applicants can submit their post-commitment requests. If you need assistance or more information in order to file these requests, you can open a customer service case in EPC or call CSB at 888-203-8100.

More Reminders on the Competitive Bidding Process and the FCC Form 470

In [last week's SL News Brief](#), we provided some reminders on the FCC Form 470 and the competitive bidding process. Following are some additional reminders to help you through the process.

How do I count the 28 days?

The day that you certify the FCC Form 470 in EPC – even if you certify it at 11:59 PM EDT – counts as the first day of your 28-day waiting period. Weekend days and holidays also count toward your 28 days.

- EPC calculates the end of your 28-day waiting period and displays it on your FCC Form 470. We refer to this date as the Allowable Contract Date or ACD. You can also find the ACD in the Receipt Notification Letter posted on your **News** tab in EPC shortly after you certify your form.
- If you make a cardinal change to the scope of your project and/or the services you are requesting by adding one or more RFP documents to your existing form, you must restart your 28-day clock. In this case, you must count the 28 days yourself – EPC does not calculate a new ACD for you. (See [last week's SL News Brief](#) for a description of changes that require you to post a new FCC Form 470.)
- Note that you will not be able to create a contract record or finish creating a funding request on an FCC Form 471 if the cited FCC Form 470 has not been posted for at least 28 days.

Do I always have to file an FCC Form 470?

You do not have to file an FCC Form 470 if:

- You are under a multi-year contract that covers your services for the upcoming funding year.
- You have a contract with voluntary extensions, and you and your service provider agree to exercise an extension that covers your services for the upcoming funding year before you file your FCC Form 471.
- You are eligible to purchase from a master contract signed by an organization such as a state agency, statewide network, or consortium if that contract was signed pursuant to an FCC Form 470 posted by that organization.
- You order a commercially available, business-class internet access service that meets [specific requirements](#).

Do I have to file an FCC Form 470 if I have only one service provider in my area?

Yes. If you are receiving services under tariff or on a month-to-month basis, you must file an FCC Form 470 each year. There may be other service providers you are not aware of who could submit viable bids if they had access to the information on the services you need.

How do I describe the services I need?

You can use the narrative field in each of your service requests to clearly describe the services you are requesting. This helps potential bidders understand the size and scope of the project and the services being requested so that they can submit responsive bids. If you need more space or your requests are large and/or complex, you should consider issuing an RFP or similar document so that you can describe your project in sufficient detail.

Note: You cannot specify makes and model numbers from a specific manufacturer in an FCC Form 470 and/or an RFP without adding the words "or equivalent." Moreover, after you close your competitive bidding process, you must evaluate all bids received, including those that provide an equivalent solution.

- If you provide a specific manufacturer's name in the narrative field, it must be to indicate compatibility ("compatible with our existing Brand X equipment") or equivalency ("Brand X or equivalent").
- If you are requesting basic maintenance or managed internal broadband services, you can specify makes and models to be maintained if you already have the equipment. However, if you are also requesting the equipment on your FCC Form 470, be sure to make that clear on your form.

How general or specific should my descriptions be?

Phrases like "as needed" and "district-wide" in the narrative are examples of descriptions that are too broad for service providers to understand the scope of your project. Rather than "as needed," describe the circumstances where your needs might change during the course of a day or a year. Rather than "district-wide," provide a list of all the individual schools in your district and their needs based on the size of their student bodies, locations, and so on.

On the other hand, a description such as "Internet access not to exceed 100 Mbps" in the narrative may be too narrow, because you will be limited to bids for internet access of no more than 100 Mbps. If you might want to purchase a faster service, you should specify a range that includes higher speeds. In this example, by specifying 100 Mbps, you cannot increase your speed – even if the cost does not increase – during the funding year or for the life of the contract, if it is longer than one funding year – without posting a new FCC Form 470 and opening a new competitive bidding process.

What numbers should I provide in the "Quantity" fields if I am not sure what I will need?

First, describe your project or services in sufficient detail that potential bidders understand what you are trying to accomplish. Again, if the narrative field does not provide enough room, consider putting a high-level description in that field and issuing an RFP and/or RFP document(s) that will provide the necessary details.

To indicate to potential bidders the size and scope of your project in the form itself, provide your best estimate of the number of items you are seeking in the "Quantity" field. Bidders are free to propose a higher or lower number in their bids based on their assessment of your needs, and you will not be held to the number you enter as an upper limit when you file your FCC Form 471 if the bids are clearly responding to your needs as you have described them in the narrative and your RFP document(s).

How do I respond to questions from potential bidders?

Applicants – and consultants that act on behalf of applicants – should respond to bidder inquiries in a timely manner so that competitive bidding deadlines can be met.

- Applicants could, for example, post questions received from potential bidders along with their answers on a website or in an RFP document attached to their certified FCC Form 470. Potential bidders would then have access to the same information.
- Remember that service providers also have a responsibility to respond to posted FCC Forms 470 and RFPs with specific requests for information necessary to prepare responsive bids. Generic emails that do not pose questions related to applicant service descriptions or emails that clearly appear to be "spam" do not require a response from the applicant – especially if the applicant

has indicated in the FCC Form 470 and/or RFP a specific procedure or mechanism for submitting questions.

As a service provider, how do I submit a bid?

First, review the FCC Forms 470 you are interested in – especially the narrative sections and any attachments (what we refer to as "RFP documents"). Applicants who have specific requirements on preparing and submitting bids should provide that information there. If there are no specific requirements provided, you can contact the contact person or the technical contact person identified on the form for information. Do not submit bids or questions about requirements directly to USAC.

You can search for individual FCC Forms 470 and download summary information from FCC Forms 470 in EPC or from the USAC website. Form data is updated immediately in EPC, and updated overnight on the USAC website.

To access FCC Forms 470 in EPC:

- From the **Actions** tab in EPC, choose **Search and Export Certified FCC Forms 470**.
- Choose the search criteria you want and then click **Continue**.
- Click the form number of an individual form to view that form, or click the **Export Search Results** button to download summary information on your search results.

To view an individual FCC Form 470 and its RFP documents on the USAC website:

- From the **FCC Form 470 Tools** section of the [Tools](#) page, choose [View an FCC Form 470 \(FY2016 and later\)](#).
- Choose your search criteria and then click the **Search** button. Note: If you choose to export your data to HTML, scroll down the search page to locate your search results.
- Click the form number to view an individual form or the RFP document name to view an RFP document.

To download summary information from FCC Forms 470 from the USAC website:

- From the same location, choose [Download 470 Information \(FY2016 and later\)](#).
- Choose your search criteria and then click the **Search** button. You can choose to export your data to file formats HTML, XLS, or CSV.

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