

[Back](#)



Universal Service
Administrative Co.

Schools and Libraries Program News Brief

February 23, 2018

TIP OF THE WEEK: If you requested and received your single, 120-day extension of the October 30, 2017 invoice deadline for FY2016 recurring services, you must submit any remaining invoices by this coming Tuesday, February 27 (see below). USAC cannot approve a second extension of this deadline.

Commitments for Funding Year 2017

Funding Year 2017. USAC is scheduled to release Funding Year (FY) 2017 Wave 43 Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs) on March 1 and Wave 44 FCDLs (for some of the hurricane relief applications filed during the Second FY2017 Application Window) on March 2. As of February 23, FY2017 commitments total over \$2.20 billion.

On the date that FCDLs are issued, you can access your FCDL notification from the **Notifications** section of your landing page in EPC.

February 27 Invoice Deadline for FY2016 Recurring Services

Applicants and service providers can request a one time, 120-day extension of the deadline to file invoices for a Funding Request Number (FRN). Those applicants and service providers who requested and received an extension of the October 30, 2017 deadline to file invoices for FY2016 recurring services must submit any remaining invoices by 11:59 PM EST on Tuesday, February 27. USAC cannot approve a second invoice deadline extension request for an FRN.

- If you submit an invoice on or before the February 27 deadline and USAC rejects the invoice or reduces the requested amount, you have 60 days from the date of USAC's decision to file an appeal. If USAC approves your appeal, you will have an additional 30 days from the date of the appeal decision to resubmit the invoice.
- Remember that the invoice deadline is 120 days after the last date to receive service or 120 days after the date of the FCC Form 486 Notification Letter, whichever is later. If your FCC Form 486 Notification Letter is dated after June 30, 2017 (or if USAC has not yet issued your letter), your original invoice date would be later than October 30, 2017 – and you can request a one time, 120-day extension of that calculated invoice deadline. Invoice deadlines calculated from an FY2017 FCC Form 486 Notification Letter issued after June 30, 2017 appear on the [FRN Extension Table](#).

- You cannot request an extension of the October 30, 2017 invoice deadline now. An invoice deadline extension request for an FRN must be submitted on or before the original invoice deadline for that FRN.

NOTE: If you need a Personal Identification Number (PIN) to file a BEAR Form, please send your request in EPC to the Client Service Bureau no later than noon EST on Monday, February 26. We will email you your PIN on Tuesday morning, February 27.

To request a PIN:

- Open a customer service case in EPC. (From the **Actions** tab at the top of any EPC page, choose **Contact Us**.)
- Download the [PIN Template](#) from the [PIN page](#) on the USAC website, even if you only need one PIN.
- 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**.

Getting Ready to File an FY2018 FCC Form 471

Now that February 22 has passed, applicants should have certified all of their FCC Forms 470 they need for FY2018. Below are reminders for some of the actions you should be undertaking before the application filing window closes on March 22.

Wait the full 28 days before selecting your service provider(s) and certifying your FCC Form 471.

You are required to wait at least 28 days after your FCC Form 470 is posted to the USAC website (i.e., certified in EPC) before you choose a service provider, sign a contract (if applicable), and certify your FCC Form 471. Waiting less than 28 days is a competitive bidding violation, which could lead to denial of your funding.

If you certify your FCC Form 470 after February 22 (or make a cardinal change after February 22 to the scope of services you are requesting), wait the required 28 days before you complete the above activities. When you certify your FCC Form 471, you will receive an out-of-window message. You can then submit a request for a waiver of the application window deadline with the FCC.

Make sure that you are able to work on an FCC Form 471.

If you can't log into EPC, talk to your account administrator. They must have created you as a user with full or partial rights (permissions) and you must have created a password, logged in with your password, and accepted the terms and conditions for EPC use.

If you can log into EPC, click the **FCC Form 471** link at the top of your organization's landing page to verify your access.

- If you don't have access to the form (if the link does not appear or you cannot use it to navigate to the form), check with your account administrator to verify your rights. You must be a partial-rights user on an FCC Form 471 to enter information on the form, and you must be a full-rights user on an FCC Form 471 to certify the form. Your account administrator can update your rights.

- If you have access to the form but cannot enter data or take other actions, call our Client Service Bureau (CSB) at 888-203-8100 so they can investigate.

Start your FCC Form 471, even if you are not ready to provide funding request details.

Log into EPC and click **FCC Form 471** from the quick links at the top of your landing page. At this point, all you need to decide is the nickname you will give to your form and who will serve as your contact person.

Starting your form now gives you the following advantages:

- You will have started the process and have somewhere to return to. The system will create a task in your **My Tasks** list on your landing page after you start a form, and you can accept that task and continue your work later.
- You can review the information for your organization and for any related entities (schools in your school district, libraries in your library system, consortium members in your consortium) without doing any data entry or providing any other information.
 - Review your organization's information (e.g., name, address, telephone number, attributes) and note any necessary corrections.
 - Review your related entities' information (e.g., name, address, urban/rural status, attributes, student counts for schools, library square footage and library main branch designation for libraries) and note any necessary corrections.
 - Because entity profiles are locked, you will not be able to make any changes at this point. However, by making a note of your desired updates now, you will be ready to submit a Receipt Acknowledgment Letter (RAL) modification to inform us of those updates immediately after you certify your form.

Review the answers to your connectivity questions, even if you answered them last year.

Independent schools, independent libraries, school districts, and library systems must answer specific questions about the sufficiency and speed of their internet access, wide area network connections, and internal connections (Wi-Fi). These questions appear in your organization's profile, and can be answered or updated even though EPC profiles are currently locked.

You can provide or review your answers independently from the FCC Form 471. Then, the answers to the connectivity questions will be automatically uploaded to your FCC Form 471 right before you reach the certification page.

To answer or update your answers to the connectivity questions:

1. From your landing page, click the name of your organization to go to its organization page for the parent organization (the independent school, school district, independent library, or library system).
2. Click **Related Actions** on the menu at the top of the page.
3. Click **Manage Connectivity Questions** from the list of options.
4. Review your answers and make any necessary corrections.

Create a contract record for each new contract or legally binding agreement.

You must have a contract record in your profile for each contract or legally binding agreement you intend to cite on your FY2018 FCC Form 471. You then cite the contract record for each funding request for services that will be provided under that contract when you create the funding request on your form.

- If you created a contract record last year for a multi-year contract, you can cite that contract record this year.
- If you created a contract record last year for a contract with voluntary extensions, you do not need to create a new contract record if your extension covers services for FY2018. First, work with your service provider to exercise the extension for your FY2018 services. Then, when you cite that contract record on a funding request, enter the last date of service for FY2018 in the appropriate field on the funding request. You do not have to create a new contract record simply because you exercised your option to extend the contract.

To create a contract record in EPC:

1. From your landing page, click the name of your organization to go to its organization page for the parent organization (the independent school, school district, independent library, or library system).
2. Click **Related Actions** on the menu at the top of the page.
3. Click **Manage Contracts** from the list of options.
4. Click the **Add a New Contract** button at the bottom of the screen to start working on your new contract record.
5. Remember that you cannot cite an FCC Form 470 in your contract record if it has not been posted for at least 28 days.

Ask CSB to create missing entities for you and, if possible, attach them to your organization.

CSB can create related entities (schools for school districts and libraries for library systems) for you if they are missing from your profile. If adding those entities will not affect discount calculations or cause other system problems, CSB can link those entities to your organization.

However, if CSB cannot link the entities, you can submit a RAL modification and USAC can add them to your organization during Program Integrity Assurance (PIA) review.

Here are some reasons we may be unable to link entities to your organization at this point:

- Adding an individual school to a school district can change the discount for the school district (both because of a change in student counts and for the urban/rural status calculation), for the independent library or library system whose main branch is located in that school district, and/or for a consortium that has featured that school district or library system as a member.
- Adding a library branch to a library system can change the discount for the library system (for the urban/rural status calculation) and/or for a consortium that has featured that library system as a member.
- We may be unable to change the parent or child status of an entity if that entity filed an FCC Form 470 or FCC Form 471 under its current status. (A parent entity is a school district or a library system; a child entity is a school in a school district or a library branch in a library system.)

If CSB cannot make a change for you, certify your FCC Form 471 without the change and then submit a RAL modification to notify us of the correct information. We suggest that you also add the correct information to the narrative section of one of the funding requests on your form.

Create a customer service case in EPC to provide us with detailed information or if you want a written response to your question.

While we encourage you to call CSB to discuss your questions and issues, in some cases you may prefer to open a customer service case. CSB can work customer service cases when call volumes are lighter and still be able to respond within a reasonable timeframe.

Here are some specific reasons that you may prefer to open a customer service case:

- **Entity creation.** For instances when you need more than three entities created, it is easier for CSB to work from a spreadsheet rather than from information provided during a live call. For entity creation, we strongly encourage you to provide the entity details in written form, such as a spreadsheet, for requests for more than three entities. You can find the details we need under the **Creating Entity Numbers** heading on the [Entity Numbers](#) web page.
- **Written response.** We can provide a response in writing as an entry in a customer service case.
- **Attached document.** If you want to provide a document for our reference – for example, a copy of a letter or email you received from USAC that you have a question about – you can attach the document directly to a customer service case, making it easier for us to provide an accurate answer.

Do not wait until the last minute to contact us with questions or issues.

The sooner you let us know if an issue you have identified that you need help with, the sooner we can assist you. Calls and cases increase in number the closer we get to the close of the application filing window, and we want to be able to provide you with the information you need in order to file successfully and in a timely manner.

Remember that the FY2018 application filing window closes at 11:59 PM EDT on Thursday, March 22, 2018.

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[Back](#)