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Universal Service
Administrative Co.

Schools and Libraries Program News Brief

March 9, 2018

TIP OF THE WEEK: The E-rate Productivity Center (EPC) will be unavailable for two periods this Sunday, March 11 for maintenance – from 12:00 AM EST to 7:00 AM EDT (note that daylight saving time goes into effect during this period) and 7:00 PM to 8:00 PM EDT. During these times, users will be unable to log in to and use EPC. We apologize for any inconvenience.

Commitments for Funding Year 2017

Funding Year 2017. USAC is scheduled to release Funding Year (FY) 2017 Wave 46 Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs) on March 15. As of March 9, FY2017 commitments total over \$2.23 billion.

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

CSB Hours During the Last Week of the Filing Window

While we encourage applicants to complete and certify their FCC Form 471 early, we realize that last-minute questions can arise. This year, we are publishing the extra hours the Client Service Bureau (CSB) will be open during the last week of the window to allow applicants to take advantage of the opportunity to get answers to those last-minute questions.

Date	CSB Open	CSB Close
Saturday, March 17	9:00 AM EDT	6:00 PM EDT
Sunday, March 18	9:00 AM EDT	6:00 PM EDT
Monday, March 19	8:00 AM EDT	10:00 PM EDT
Tuesday, March 20	8:00 AM EDT	10:00 PM EDT
Wednesday, March 21	8:00 AM EDT	10:00 PM EDT
Thursday, March 22	8:00 AM EDT	12:30 AM EDT (Friday, March 23)

Generally, CSB has the highest call volumes during the following hours:

- Weekday mornings from 11:00 AM through 12:30 PM ET

- Weekday afternoons from 2:30 PM through 4:00 PM ET.

If an agent is not able to answer when you call, please leave your telephone number at the prompt, and we will return your call as soon as possible.

Newly Deployed EPC Modifications

Last night, we deployed the following minor modifications to help program participants:

Copy FRN function

This feature was generating error messages that applicants were not able to clear. The problem that created the error messages has been cleared and this feature should now work normally.

FCC Form 486 Urgent Reminder Letters

These letters were not being sent by email to organizations in EPC that had one or more inactive users. (The **News** posts in EPC were always generated.) These emails are now going to all organizations.

FCC Form 471 Bulk Upload Templates

The **Click to Validate** buttons on the **Recipients of Service** tab in the three Category Two bulk upload templates were not working correctly. We have fixed the templates and posted new versions to the USAC website and in EPC.

The templates and the version numbers are:

- Internal Connections version 18.1
- Basic Maintenance of Internal Connections version 18.0
- Managed Internal Broadband Services version 18.0

You cannot upload the earlier versions of these templates – you must use the current versions. If you have already entered data in the earlier version of one of these templates, you can copy your data from the earlier template (**NOT** the header information, just the data you entered) and paste it into the new version of the template.

NOTE: The Category One template has been re-saved so that users can start entering data in line 5 (the first line that will accept data) instead of line 14. If you are having validation problems with this template, use the re-saved version of this template or simply scroll up to line 5 on the template you are using to start your data entry.

You may have to clear your browser cache to see the re-saved and new templates.

FRN Balance Verifications

Each year, USAC undergoes an audit – called an agreed-upon-procedures (AUP) engagement – to examine its operations. As part of this process, the firm performing the audit emails a number of balance verifications ("confirmations") to applicants and service providers to verify that the balances reported by USAC on specific Funding Request Numbers (FRNs) match the balances in the records of the applicants and service providers.

Each confirmation features the balance reported by USAC on a specific FRN as of October 31, 2017. Applicants and service providers should review their records and respond by either:

- agreeing with the balance featured on the confirmation or
- if it is different, noting the balance as of October 31, 2017 on their records and explaining how they determined that balance.

The confirmations are being sent from **confirmations@pwc.com**. Please check your email and respond promptly if you receive a confirmation.

Contract Reminders Related to Filing FCC Form 471

Below are some additional reminders for applicants who have not yet filed an FCC Form 471 for FY2018. Remember that the application filing window closes at 11:59 PM EDT on Thursday, March 22, 2018.

Contract details are entered in a contract record in your profile, not on the FCC Form 471.

If you are receiving services under a contract, you must create a contract record in your organization's profile in EPC for that contract. You then cite that contract record when you create a funding request on the FCC Form 471 for services provided under that contract.

You do not necessarily need to create a new contract record if you have a multi-year contract or a contract with voluntary extensions.

- For a multi-year contract, search for the record when prompted to do so in the form.
- For a contract with voluntary extensions, work with your service provider to exercise the extension, cite the existing contract record and then indicate the expiration date of the extension in the form.

Services provided under a contract are reported as contracted services.

Services provided without a contract – generally, services provided under tariff or on a month-to-month basis – must be rebid each year. In other words, to receive discounts on these services, you must certify an FCC Form 470 for that funding year, run a competitive bidding process, evaluate the bids received, and choose the most cost-effective solution.

If you sign a contract – even for services that are provided under a tariff – we consider those services to be contracted services. Before you file your FCC Form 471, create a contract record for your contract in your profile so that you can cite that contract on your form.

NOTE: If you considered a pre-existing contract (a contract signed before the posting of an FCC Form 470) as a bid response, you can evaluate that contract along with the other bids you received. When you perform your bid evaluation, you can choose your pre-existing contract as the winning bid if it is the most cost-effective solution. When you create your contract record in EPC, enter the date you decided to stay with your current contract as your contract award date. (Remember that this date must be at least 28 days after you posted your FCC Form 470.)

For state master contracts, cite the correct FCC Form 470 on your funding request.

Applicants who are eligible to purchase services from a state master contract must cite the correct FCC Form 470 on their FCC Form 471 funding request. The four most common situations are:

- ***The state posted an FCC Form 470 and chose a single winner.*** The applicant cites the state's FCC Form 470.
- ***The state posted an FCC Form 470 and chose more than one winner.*** The applicant must conduct a mini-bid to choose the most cost-effective solution from among the winners that can provide service. The applicant cites the state's FCC Form 470.
- ***The applicant posted an FCC Form 470 and chose a state master contract to consider as a bid response.*** The applicant must also consider ALL other state master contracts that can provide the services as bid responses along with any other bids received, and choose the most cost-effective solution. The applicant cites its FCC Form 470, even if the state also posted an FCC Form 470.
- ***The applicant posted an FCC Form 470 and received a bid response from a service provider who already has a contract with the state.*** The applicant can consider that bid response with any other bids received, but does not have to include other state contracts in its evaluation. The applicant cites its FCC Form 470, even if the state also posted an FCC Form 470.

To be eligible for discounts, state replacement contracts must comply with all of the requirements.

We refer to a state replacement contract as a state master contract that replaces another state master contract, but that replacement will not occur until after the application filing window closes. The entries on the FCC Form 471 will differ, depending on whether the original contract expires before or during the funding year.

The original state master contract must have been signed pursuant to an FCC Form 470 filed by the state, and that is the FCC Form 470 that the applicant cites on its FCC Form 471. (Note that the state must also post a new FCC Form 470 to open the competitive bidding process at the appropriate time for the replacement contract.) It is very important that the state review and follow all the steps in the [State Replacement Contract](#) guidance on the USAC website so that the services under the state replacement contract will be eligible for discounts.

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