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Universal Service
Administrative Co.

Schools and Libraries Program News Brief

SPECIAL EDITION

January 9, 2020

E-rate Funding Year 2020 Application Filing Window Opens January 15, 2020

Dear E-rate Participant:

I am pleased to announce the Funding Year (FY) 2020 FCC Form 471 application filing window will open on Wednesday, January 15, 2020, at 12:00 noon EST and will close on Wednesday, March 25, 2020, at 11:59 p.m. EDT.

Applicants can begin preparing now for the successful filing of their FY2020 funding applications by taking the following steps:

- **Install Browser Updates:** Google Chrome is the recommended browser for the [E-rate Productivity Center \(EPC\)](#), 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 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 FY2020.
- **Update Your EPC Profile Now:** To ensure a smoother filing process, **EPC profiles will lock on January 13, 2020, at 11:59 p.m. 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. The [October 25, 2019 SL News Brief](#) includes important reminders for updating your profile.
- **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. **For FY2020, you must certify your FCC Form 470 on or before February 26, 2020 to be able to wait 28 days and then certify your FCC Form 471 before the window closes.**

As always, we are here to help. Contact our Client Service Bureau at (888) 203-8100 for assistance or open a customer service case in EPC.

This will be the 23rd E-rate Program application filing window, and through the past year we have worked together to improve the E-rate experience in the following ways:

Funding decisions

In FY2019, we received over 36,000 applications for just under \$2.9 billion in funding requests. On April 27, 2019, one month after the application filing window closed, USAC issued its first funding wave for FY2019, providing decisions on over 18,500 applications for over \$530 million. By September 1, we had issued decisions on over 95% all workable applications.

We are dedicated to continuing to review applications and issue commitments efficiently in FY2020.

Implementing program participant suggestions

During 2019, we requested your suggestions to improve our E-rate information technology systems and program participant trainings. We made a number of improvements in our online systems, including the addition of a **Pending Inquiries** section on applicant landing pages in EPC. This new section collects all pending USAC requests for information for reviews of applications and post-commitment requests in one convenient location.

Also based on your feedback, we conducted in-person participant training for all experience levels – two service provider training sessions in Washington DC and eight in-person applicant training sessions around the country. Each session consisted of a half-day beginner session followed by full-day session with opportunities to attend some beginner and advanced learning track options. We also held two in-person full-day Tribal training sessions.

In addition to our regular webinar series offered throughout the year, we introduced office hour webinars. For an office hour webinar, we announced a topic and assigned homework in advance (generally watching one or more online training modules or recorded form walkthroughs) in order for attendees to be prepared to participate in a moderated question-and-answer open session.

Redesigning the USAC website

On November 11, 2019, USAC launched an updated version of its website. The updated site features design and functionality changes to help users find the information they need, when they need it. The site's new program homepages put key dates and resources front and center.

Expanded menus make it easy to navigate to program information, and improved search functionality makes it easier to find answers. The site responds to mobile devices and all operating systems and meets 508 accessibility standards.

Updating online training

We have updated our applicant online training series, which provides a learning option for those program participants who were unable to attend our fall training events or who want a refresher. We encourage you to view the offerings in this series and let us know what you think. We are also hard at work preparing guidance materials and an online tool that will help applicants prepare for the changes in Category Two budgets that will take effect starting with FY2020.

Please continue to share your feedback through our in-person trainings, our webinars, and our [Share Your E-rate Technical System Ideas](#) page to help us continue to improve the program.

I always tell my team that it takes a village for the E-rate Program to succeed. Whether you are an applicant, a service provider, a consultant, or a state coordinator, your hard work and dedication impacts the lives of students and community members, allowing them to learn, grow, and thrive in an ever-evolving digital world. I look forward to continuing to work together as we meet the challenges and opportunities of the next decade.

Sincerely,

Catriona Ayer
Vice President, Schools and Libraries Division

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