Back

Universal Service Administrative Co.

Schools and Libraries Program

News Brief

April 16, 2021

TIP OF THE WEEK: Applicants will be able to file an FCC Form 486 for Funding Year 2021 as soon as they receive a funding commitment from USAC. Be sure to verify your status under the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) and, if you are a member of a consortium, that you have completed your FCC Form 479 and provided it to your consortium leader.

Commitments for Funding Year (FY) 2021 and FY2020

FY2021. USAC plans to release FY2021 Wave 1 today, April 16.

FY2020. USAC released FY2020 Wave 51 Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs) on April 15. As of April 16, FY2020 commitments total over $2.37 billion.

On the date that USAC issues FCDLs, you can access your FCDL notification from the **Notifications** section of your landing page in the E-Rate Productivity Center (EPC).

Invoicing Dataset To Be Posted Next Week

Next week, USAC will post a new dataset in the E-Rate section of USAC's Open Data website. This dataset will provide information on invoice line items for all funding years that were completed on or after July 1, 2016. We will also post a tool to help less experienced users search for and download data from this dataset.

The dataset and tool will include invoice line items from both FCC Forms 472 (BEAR Forms) and FCC Forms 474 (SPI Forms). In addition, they will feature some additional data on each line item, including the applicant 498 ID and related information from the associated FCC Form 471.

Note that there are some limitations on which invoice lines appear in the dataset and the associated tool:

- Invoice line items will be limited to those that have completed the review process and for which USAC has issued a payment decision.
- Pending and canceled invoice line items are not included in the dataset.
- Processing a payment for an invoice is not immediate. It may take several business days after the invoice line item's completion date you see in the dataset and tool for funds to be posted to the recipient's bank account.

We will provide more details in next week's SL News Brief, along with links to the dataset and the tool. Meanwhile, here are some common questions and answers about Open Data to get you started:

Q1. What is Open Data?

A1. Open Data is a data platform that allows the organization and sharing of large amounts of data in a format that is easily accessible and searchable to users. You can also download the data in an Open Data dataset into a spreadsheet, use the data to create a visualization such as a pie chart, or access the data via an Application Programming Interface (API).

Q2. What is a dataset?

A2. A dataset is a finite grouping of data that shares a common source and/or common data element.

For example, the FRN Status (FCC Form 471 and Related Information) dataset includes the Funding Request Number (FRN) listed within each FCC Form 471 and its related information from EPC (from FY2016 and forward). In this dataset, you can find information about a specific funding request or search your entity's funding requests by funding year. To begin your search, go to the **Find in this Dataset** search box located directly above the data on the right-hand side of the screen. Then, type your FRN or Billed Entity Number (BEN) in the search box and press, "enter" on your keyboard. This will filter the data by only displaying the rows that have the data entered in the search box in any of the available columns.

Q3. How do I know which data I will find in a dataset?

A3. Go to the dataset main page. Under the heading **Columns in this Dataset**, you can find a list of the fields (columns) in the dataset with the column name, a short description of the data in the column, and the format of the data (e.g., plain text, number, date & time).

If there is a dataset glossary, you can find it in the **About this Dataset** section of the dataset's main page under **Attachments**. (You may have to click the **Show More** text in the lower right-hand corner of this section to see it.) A glossary contains detailed descriptions of the data you will find in each of the columns in the dataset.

Q4. I'm not used to manipulating data. Does each dataset come with an associated tool?

A4. A few of the current datasets come with an associated tool. Going forward, we will create a tool for a new dataset if it makes sense to do so. (Note, for example, that the Annexes dataset only has 11 fields, so a tool is not necessary.) However, we encourage you to become familiar with Open Data, as more and more of our data will be stored in and easily searchable in Open Data datasets.

Q5. How do I learn more about Open Data?

A5. You can start with the stock training videos on the Open Data Video Guides web page. These basic videos will show you how to sort, filter, and search data in a dataset; how to create a map or chart; and how to aggregate data. We also have E-Rate–specific videos in the **Open Data Platform** section of the Videos page.

You can create an account in Open Data, open a smaller dataset (e.g., Annexes), practice the sorting, filtering, searching, and visualizing techniques described in the videos, and save your work in your account. Your saved work will automatically update each night (or on our regular schedule, if updates run less frequently than daily). To create an account:

- Go to the Open Data main page and click the blue **Sign In** button in the upper right-hand corner.
- At the bottom of the following screen, click the **Sign Up** text below the **Sign In** button.
- Enter your email address, choose a display name, create a password, verify that you are not a robot, and click the **Create My Account** button.
- Accept the License Agreement by clicking the **Accept** button.

When you are logged in to your account, you will be able to save a report or visualization you create as an "asset," which will appear in your list of assets on your profile page. You can tell if you are signed in because your display name will show up in place of the **Sign In** button at the top of the page.

Q6. Where do I go if I have questions?

A6. Click the **Contact Dataset Owner** link on the main page of the dataset to send an email to the owner for questions on the dataset itself – such as data included (or excluded) from the dataset – and to provide feedback on the dataset.

The Client Service Bureau (CSB) can answer questions about E-Rate program rules and policies and information that appears on the USAC website. You can contact CSB by opening a customer service case in EPC or calling (888) 203-8100.

Back