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Universal Service
Administrative Co.

Schools and Libraries Program News Brief

November 12, 2021

TIP OF THE MONTH: Each year, USAC updates applicant profiles in the E-rate Productivity Center (EPC) using the reviewed and approved profile information from their current year FCC Form 471 application(s). The EPC administrative window allows applicants to make updates to their profile information to prepare for the upcoming FCC Form 471 application filing window. The administrative window is open now and will close in early January 2022. Visit the [EPC Administrative Window](#) page to learn more about updating your profile information.

Commitments for Funding Year (FY) 2021 and FY2020

FY2021. USAC released FY2021 Wave 31 Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs) on November 11. As of November 12, FY2021 commitments total over \$2.4 billion.

FY2020. USAC released FY2020 Wave 76 FCDLs on November 10. As of November 11, FY2020 commitments total just under \$2.4 billion.

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

PQA Request for Information

The 2021 Payment Quality Assurance (PQA) assessment program is underway. PQA is a program that assesses E-rate payments based on invoices submitted during the past 12 months to verify that the E-rate payments were properly made – in other words, that all program rules were followed correctly when the payment was authorized and disbursed.

For disbursements made each month, a certain number of payments will be chosen, and applicants will be asked to provide specific documentation – for example, customer bills that support invoices submitted to USAC – to verify that those payments were made correctly. It is important that you maintain proper documentation in order to be able to respond correctly and completely to PQA-related requests. The email notifying applicants whose payments have been selected for PQA review are currently being sent from the domain name PQA@USACcms.i-sight.com. Please check your email and respond promptly if you receive an email from USAC's PQA Program. Also check your spam folder or junk email folder to see if it contains an email from this domain. This will help expedite your review.

- Do not hesitate to contact your reviewer if you have questions. Contact information is provided in the email.
- Also, contact your PQA reviewer if you are unable to respond by the deadline.

What to Do if You Missed Your October Invoice or FCC Form 486 Filing Deadline

October 28, 2021 was the deadline for most program participants to:

1. [Submit an invoice](#) for FY2020 recurring services.
2. [Request an invoice deadline extension](#) for FY2020 recurring services.

Missed Invoice Deadlines for FY2020

If you missed your invoice filing deadline and your deadline to request an invoice deadline extension for FY2020 recurring services, you must file a waiver request with the FCC before submitting your invoice to USAC to be processed. The FCC must grant your waiver request before USAC can extend the invoice filing deadline.

If your invoice was submitted by the deadline but USAC reduces or denies the amount invoiced, you must [submit an appeal to USAC](#).

You can verify whether your invoice filing deadline was extended by searching for your Funding Request Number(s) (FRNs) in EPC and clicking the **SDD/IDD History** tab.

Missed FCC Form 486 Deadline for FY2021

October 28, 2021 was also the deadline for most program participants to [certify an FCC Form 486](#), Receipt of Service Confirmation and Children's Internet Protection Act Certification Form, for FY2021.

If you missed your deadline to file an FCC Form 486 for FY2021 services, certify your form as soon as possible to avoid a penalty (see below).

FCC Form 486 Urgent Reminder Letters

USAC issues an FCC Form 486 Urgent Reminder Letter to applicants that appear to have missed the deadline to certify an FCC Form 486 based on the service delivery date in the FCC Form 471. The deadline to file an FCC Form 486 is 120 days after the date of the Funding Commitment Decision Letter (FCDL) or 120 days after the service start date, whichever is later.

USAC calculates the date to issue this letter based on the service start date reported on the FCC Form 471. If your actual service start date is later than the date you reported on FCC Form 471, your deadline may not have passed. In this case, you are responsible for calculating and meeting your actual deadline, as USAC will not issue a second reminder letter. You can use the [Deadlines Tool](#) to calculate your specific deadline.

Applicants that file their FCC Form 486 in EPC will receive this letter in the EPC **News** feed. They have 15 days from the date of the letter to submit and certify an FCC Form 486 online with no penalty (if the service start date reported on the FCC Form 471 was the actual service start date). **Note:** For FY2015

and previous funding years, the letter is issued on paper and provides a 20-day grace period (15 days plus five days for mail receipt).

If you miss this deadline, USAC will adjust your service start date to a date 120 days before the date you certified your form, and your funding commitment may be reduced to reflect the reduction in service time.

If you want to [appeal a decision](#) related to a late-filed FCC Form 486, you must file your appeal first with USAC. If USAC denies the appeal, then you may appeal to the FCC.

New E-rate Entity Search Tool Available

Today, USAC launched a new [Entity Search Tool](#) that helps users filter the [E-rate Supplemental Entity Information](#) open dataset to make finding entity related data easier. Open Data tools are a part of USAC's [Open Data initiative](#), which strives to make universal service fund data available to the public in an equitable and reliable way.

With this tool, users can:

- Filter for entities using the school or library name, Billed Entity Number (BEN), city, state, and more just like in the Entity Download and Search Tools.
- Determine the urban/rural status of an entity for purposes of calculating your E-rate discount just like in the Urban/Rural Status Lookup and Report by State tools.
- Download entity and urban/rural information in common formats such as CSV (comma separated values) or Excel.

Where can I find the new tool?

Users can access the tool on USAC's Open Data website directly or through the [E-rate Tools](#) page.

Will USAC offer training for the new tool?

To learn how to use the tool with some common use-cases, watch our [Entity Search Tool walkthrough video](#) and download [the dataset glossary](#). If you are new to USAC's Open Data platform, E-rate has [beginner-level videos](#) that introduce the platform and explain how to get started.

Fall 2021 Training Reminder

From November 16-18, 2021, USAC is offering a series of online sessions for Schools and Libraries (E-rate) Program participants, including Tribal applicants. USAC will conduct two one-hour webinars each day, starting at 1:00 p.m. EST and running through 4:00 p.m. EST, with one-hour breaks between training sessions. All of the sessions will be recorded and will be available to watch in November. You can register to attend the sessions using the event registration links below.

Below is the full list of sessions that are available under the Upcoming Trainings section of the E-rate [Webinars](#) page. Please note that the slides and recording of the sessions will be published on the Webinars page.

[E-rate Program Overview](#): E-rate experts will provide a high-level overview of the application process from beginning to end and explain basic program concepts for applicants and service providers.

[E-rate Pre-Commitment Process](#): Presenters will discuss the E-rate Pre-Commitment Process (getting started, competitive bidding, applying for discounts, and Program Integrity Assurance (PIA) review).

[Eligible Services 101](#): E-rate experts will provide an overview of E-rate eligible services. After the presentation, we will conduct a Q&A session.

[Category Two Budgets](#): Presenters will discuss Category Two (C2) budgets. We will provide an overview of C2 budgets and C2 budget guidance for Funding Year (FY) 2022.

[EPC Administrative Window](#): Presenters will discuss the administrative window – the period during which applicants can make updates to their profile information in EPC to prepare for the upcoming FCC Form 471 application filing window for FY2022.

[E-rate Post-Commitment Process](#): Presenters will discuss the E-rate Post-Commitment Process (starting services and invoicing) and other post-commitment activities (service substitutions, appeals, and more).

Save the Date for E-rate Tribal Training

Post-Training Series FAQ Session for Tribal Applicants

Tuesday, December 14, 2021, 4 p.m. EDT

Registration: To Be Announced

This session provides an opportunity for Tribal applicants to ask the USAC E-rate Team questions generated during the E-rate Fall Training Series to be held November 16-18, 2021. View the full list of sessions that are available under the **Upcoming Trainings** section of the E-rate [Webinars](#) page.

New FCC Form 486 Process for Older Funding Years (FY2015 and Earlier)

For FY2015 or earlier only, USAC has changed the way that an FCC Form 486 is submitted. Information on how to submit these forms is available on the [FCC Form 486 section](#) of the USAC website. To submit an FCC Form 486 for FY2015 and earlier, complete this [form online](#) in the E-rate program legacy system following the instructions on the page as you click through. Then create a PDF of the certified form and use a digital or ink signature to sign the certification page.

Once you have created the form and signed the certification, create a customer service case in EPC by logging into [One Portal](#) to access EPC. In EPC, select the **Contact Us** link from the upper right menu on your landing page.

In the Customer Service Case, enter the following fields:

1. Enter a **Nickname** and for **Description** enter "Certification of FCC Form 486 for FY1234."
2. For **Topic**, choose "FCC Form 486."
3. For **Subtopic**, choose "Other."
4. For **Form Type**, choose "FCC Form 486."

5. Under **Document**, click the "Upload" button (or drag and drop the file) and upload the signed copy of the form to the Customer Service Case.

When completed, click **Submit** located in the lower right-hand corner.

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USAC | 700 12th Street NW | Suite 900 | Washington, DC 20005

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