# E-Rate News Brief

**October 20, 2022**

**E-RATE TIPS:**

• Learn about **USAC's system consolidation work** to integrate invoicing, appeals, and post-commitment functions into EPC. Visit the E-Rate System Consolidation page on the E-Rate website or see the October 12, 2022 E-Rate News Brief Special Edition for more details.

• In two recent orders, **the FCC's Wireline Competition Bureau (WCB) waived certain rules and deadlines for USF participants in areas affected by recent Hurricanes Fiona and Ian**. See the October 10, 2022 E-Rate News Brief Special Edition for more details.

• **On November 16, 2022, USAC will update the FCC Form 498** for all service providers. This update will require entities to have an active SAM.gov assigned Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) in order to submit a new, or modify an existing, FCC Form 498. See the September 15, 2022 E-Rate News Brief for more information.

• **Don't forget to file your** FCC Form 486 if you have received a positive funding commitment and your services have started. USAC cannot process invoices for FY2022 services from applicants or service providers without an approved FCC Form 486 on file.

• USAC strongly encourages all service provider companies and organizations to **review and update their FCC Form 498 data on an annual basis**, and revise as necessary, **including contact information or adding and removing users**. Go to the Manage Your 498 ID page to learn more.

• You can now **register for one or more of our Fall training sessions** from the Webinars page on the USAC website (see below). All sessions include a Q&A session at the end and will be recorded and posted to the Webinars page so you can watch a session if you are not able to attend the live session. You can also submit questions when you register.

• **Visit our recently updated web content** on the following pages: E-Rate System Consolidation and Competitive Bidding & FCC Form 470 FAQ page.

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## Commitments for Funding Year (FY) 2022 and FY2021

**FY2022.** USAC released FY2022 Wave 26 Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs) on October 13. As of October 19, FY2022 commitments total over $2.57 billion.

**FY2021.** USAC released FY2021 Wave 64 FCDLs on October 13. As of October 19, FY2021 commitments total over $2.67 billion.

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

## Fall 2022 Training Reminder

USAC is offering a series of online sessions for Schools and Libraries (E-Rate) Program participants, including Tribal applicants. USAC is conducting one-hour webinars starting at 2 p.m. ET and running through 3 p.m. ET. All of the sessions will be recorded and will be available on the Webinars page. You can register to attend the sessions using the event registration links below. Eligible Services training will be scheduled once the FY2023 Eligible Services List is released.

Below is the full list of sessions that are available under the Upcoming Trainings section of the E-Rate Webinars page. The slides and recordings of the sessions will also be published on the Webinars page.

- **October 18** E-Rate Program Overview: E-Rate experts provide a high-level overview of the application process from beginning to end and explain basic program concepts for applicants and service providers, followed by a Q&A session. View the recording on the Webinars page.

- **October 20 (Today)** E-Rate Pre-Commitment Process: Presenters will discuss the E-Rate Pre-Commitment Process (getting started, competitive bidding, applying for support, and Program Integrity Assurance (PIA) review), followed by a Q&A session.
- **October 25** Category Two Budgets: Presenters will discuss Category Two (C2) budgets. We will provide an overview of C2 budgets and C2 budget guidance for FY2023, followed by a Q&A session.
- **October 27** EPC Administrative Window: Presenters will discuss the administrative window – the period during which applicants can make updates to their entity profile information in EPC to prepare for the upcoming FCC Form 471 application filing window for FY2023, followed by a Q&A session.
- **November 3** 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), followed by a Q&A session.

- **Eligible Services List** – to be announced

## Extended Delivery Deadline for Certain FY2020/FY2021 Funding Requests

The FCC's Wireline Competition Bureau (WCB) extended the E-Rate service implementation deadlines for some Funding Year (FY) 2020 and 2021 applicants with non-recurring service deadlines for Category Two services that expired on September 30, 2022. In an order issued September 19 ([DA 22-976](#)), WCB extended the service implementation deadline an additional year from September 30, 2022 to **September 30, 2023**, due to global supply chain disruptions and other delays that schools and libraries are facing regarding FY2020 and FY2021 requests. This relief applies **only to FY2020 and FY2021 non-recurring service funding requests that had September 30, 2022** as the service implementation deadline for these services.

This change does not affect the contract end date (CED). If you have any CEDs before the new service delivery deadline (SDD), your CED will need to be updated by filing an [FCC Form 500](#) before invoicing.

USAC has processed these SDD extensions per the FCC order. Applicants can see their new SDD in EPC or by using the [FRN Status Tool FY2016+](#) in Open Data to view the current SDD and CED for any FRNs. **Applicants do not need to submit an FCC Form 500 for the SDD change granted by this order to take effect**. But the FCC Form 500 must be submitted if you are updating the CED as noted above.

WCB declined to extend the service implementation deadline for the other FY2020 requests that had September 30, 2021 as the service delivery deadline because they already should have asked for an extension if they needed one as this deadline expired nearly a year ago. If these applicants have special circumstances, they may file a waiver request to the FCC, but they will need to justify why the waiver request is being submitted late.

## Use Open Data to Confirm Your Invoicing and Service Delivery Deadlines

As mentioned above, due to the service delivery deadline relief provided in recent FCC Orders, your Invoice Deadline Date (IDD), and/or Service Delivery Deadline (SDD) for non-recurring services may have changed.

You can use USAC's [Open Data](#) platform to confirm these deadlines. This data is located in the [FRN Status Tool FY2016+](#). Please reference the [video](#) on how to use the tool to determine your deadlines.

## Tips for the EPC Administrative Window

The administrative window is the period during which applicants can make updates to their entity profile information in EPC to prepare for the upcoming FCC Form 471 application filing window. The **administrative window opens Tuesday, October 25** and will close shortly **before the FY2023 application filing window opens** early in 2023 when applicant entity profiles will be locked.

Here are a few things you should consider while you are preparing to update your entity profile information in EPC during the administrative window.

**Update Category Two Student Counts.**
During the COVID-19 pandemic, schools were given flexibility to serve all kids free meals by USDA. Because of this flexibility, schools were not collecting National School Lunch Program (NSLP) applications and E-Rate applicants were permitted to use existing enrollment numbers. Because many of those

options expired, applicants should prepare to update their enrollment and NSLP numbers when the FY2023 administrative window opens.

**Need to add an entity? Do it now.**
To add a new entity (an individual school to a school district or a library branch to a library system) to your organization's profile, open a customer service case in EPC or call the Customer Service Center (CSC) at (888) 203-8100. After the administrative window closes, CSC can still create the entity for you, but generally, you will have to file a Receipt Acknowledgment Letter (RAL) [modification request](#) to add it to your organization's profile. However, be sure to read the caveat below about FY2022 RAL modifications and appeals.

**Have RAL modifications or appeals for FY2022 applications? Submit those before you update your EPC profiles.**
Submit any FY2022 RAL modification requests or FY2022 appeals before you add new entities or new entity subtypes to your organization's entity profile information. This will allow us to process your FY2022 RAL modification or appeal more quickly.

**Are you a small school district (ten or fewer schools)? Consider reporting your student counts for Category Two (C2) budget purposes on a school-by-school basis.**
School districts will be reporting their student counts separately for two different purposes – to calculate their discount rate and to calculate their C2 budget. For the C2 budget calculation, they now have the choice to update their individual school profiles or to report a total number of students in the school district profile.

Often, small school districts or library systems have a higher C2 budget under the per-site basis calculation (see the per-site basis explanation on the [Category Two budget](#) page for a school and library example). However, EPC will not perform this calculation if the school district reports a total number for the school district in the school district's EPC profile instead of updating individual school profiles.

**Are you a charter school associated with a school district? If you want to apply using your own C2 budget, you will need to demonstrate financial and administrative independence.**
If a state law considers a charter school to be part of a school district, the charter school will be presumed to be part of the school district unless the charter school can demonstrate financial and administrative independence from the district. If it is able to demonstrate that independence, it can have its own C2 budget and discount rate calculation.

**Are you an independent school with only part-time students? You can count those students as full-time.**
Beginning in FY2021, school districts must count each full-time student one time when calculating their district-wide C2 budget. Independent schools that are attended by students from multiple districts on a part-time basis only, can continue to count these students as full-time students.

**Are any of the schools in your school district showing zero students? Make sure they can still count toward your C2 budget calculation.**
There are only five school subtypes that can have zero students and still be included in your C2 budget calculation. They are new school construction, juvenile justice, general-use schools, detention centers, and swing spaces. All other school subtypes must have a student count greater than zero for the purposes of calculating a C2 budget.

**Are any of the library branches in your library system showing zero square footage? They will not count toward your C2 budget calculation.**
All types of library branches – including bookmobiles and kiosks – must have a square footage number greater than zero. For each library branch that has no entry or a zero in the square footage field, you

are reducing your C2 budget by a minimum of $25,000 (the funding floor). Please review your library branch profiles and update their square footage entries.

**Need more information on updating entity profiles? Attend our EPC Administrative Window webinar.**
The EPC Administrative Window webinar (October 27) will include additional information on recent changes to EPC entity profiles for FY2023. You can also open a customer service case in EPC or call CSC at (888) 203-8100.

## Recent EPC Updates to FCC Form 498 for Applicants

USAC recently rolled out enhancements to the FCC Form 498 in the E-Rate Productivity Center (EPC) to minimize potential errors when applicants are entering data on the form.

A new system validation of the ACH Financial Institution Transit Number (routing number) will allow the authorized user of a billed entity to see if it is valid before submitting the form. If the routing number is not validated, the user will have to check and re-enter a valid routing number.

The document upload fields will now appear on the **Remittance Information** page in EPC, which allows users to upload their documentation at the same time they are submitting the FCC Form 498.

EPC will also validate the Employer Identification Number (EIN) information entered by the applicant with the FCC Registration Number (FCCRN) information available in the FCC's Commission Registration System (CORES) file to ensure the FCC Form 498 is submitted accurately and reducing the chances of rejection during the review process.

When an authorized user modifies information on an approved FCC Form 498 **other than in the Financial Information section**, the system will auto-approve the changes and send the authorized user an email notification. If an authorized user modifies data in the **Financial Information** section, the status will change to "Certified" and the form will require a manual review by USAC.

When the FCC Form 498 is modified by the authorized user and the form is "Rejected" or "Bank Rejected," the user will receive an email with instructions on how to update the form and the form will update to a status of "Certified." The form will also require a manual review by USAC.

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