USAC CONNECTION
Universal Service Administrative Company®

SCHOOLS AND LIBRARIES PROGRAM
NEWS BRIEF

SPECIAL
EDITION

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Guidance Materials for the FY2016 Application Filing Window

This year, USAC has developed a number of different outreach activities to help you through the application process. Along with our usual website updates, guidance documents, and SL News Briefs, we have added stakeholder engagement activities, detailed webinars, and even a blog called "File Along with Me." We will also continue to add documents and update guidance during the filing window in response to feedback you provide.

Filing Guidance on the USAC Website

The USAC website has already been updated with the program changes detailed in the First and Second E-rate Modernization Orders, and now includes more specific information on the E-rate Productivity Center (EPC) and filing program forms for FY2016. You can access the three special pages that have been created by clicking the appropriate banner image at the top of the Schools and Libraries main page. NOTE: You can scroll through the three images more quickly by using the three small navigation buttons on the right-hand side of the current image.

- **Log in to your (EPC) account**. If you are new to the E-rate Productivity Center (EPC), this is the place to start. EPC is the account and application management portal for the Schools and Libraries (E-rate) Program. Applicants, consultants, and service providers participating in the E-rate Program use this tool to manage program processes and to submit questions. The glossary, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), filing guides, and video tutorials will help you log in, set up your account, create new users, and navigate within EPC.
- **Don't wait – File your FCC Form 470 today in EPC**. This page contains a short description of the FCC Form 470, the first form applicants must file to start the application process. In the grey area at the top of the page, you can find links to additional program guidance, including updated guidance on the Requirements for Fiber. It also contains links to user guides and video tutorials to assist applicants in filing the form. NOTE: Additional guidance on fiber is available on the Fiber and the Dark & Lit Fiber FAQs guidance documents
- **All you need to know about the FY2016 filing window**. The page is your primary source of information on the FCC Form 471 and the FY2016 application filing window. In addition to the links for more basic EPC information, this page has quick user guides for different applicant types and bulk upload templates and instructions for all five service types.

Category Two Budget Tool

The FY2015 Category Two budget tool provides both high-level and detailed information on the original and remaining Category Two budgets for FY2015 for eligible entities. We will add a link to this tool tomorrow under the heading "FCC Form 471 Tools" on the Search Tools page.

Users can enter one or more entity numbers or choose entity numbers through a search function by clicking on the magnifying glass icon. A search will return results for each eligible entity number.

- The search results include the total budget, total allocation, and remaining balance.
- By clicking the plus sign ("+") to the left of the entity name, a user can review the specific allocations by FRN line item. The FCC Form 471 application number and FRN are provided, along with a link to the FCC Form 471 Display Tool, if the user needs more information.

NOTE: The original Category Two budget amount for FY2016 will appear in EPC. However, this amount may have changed from FY2015 if, for example, the student count in a school changed or a library added square footage or downsized. Applicants should subtract the total amount charged against their

Category Two budget for FY2015 (from the Category Two budget tool) from the total Category Two budget for FY2016 (from EPC) to arrive at the remaining budget for FY2016.

Webinars

USAC will conduct two sets of webinars, one set for beginners and another set for all interested FCC Form 471 filers.

- The first set of webinars for beginners will cover basic program information and the application process.
- The second set of webinars will provide a detailed walkthrough of specific sections of the FCC Form 471 and be conducted in three parts. These three separate webinars will provide filing tips and navigation assistance for all FCC Form 471 filers.
- For each webinar, the recorded walkthrough will be followed by a live question-and-answer session. We will post more detail on the length of each webinar and the time allotted for questions and answers on the Trainings & Outreach page, along with registration information.

Schedule of webinars for beginners

- **E-rate 101: Introduction to the E-rate Program** – Tuesday, February 16 at 3:00 PM EST
- **E-rate Program Application Process, Part 1** (FCC Forms 470 and 471) – Wednesday, February 17 at 3:00 PM EST
- **E-rate Program Application Process, Part 2** (PIA and Invoicing) – Thursday, February 18 at 3:00 PM EST

Schedule of webinars for all FCC Form 471 filers (times subject to change)

- **How to Complete Basic and Entity Information to Prepare for Filing FCC Form 471** – Tuesday, February 23 and Thursday, February 25
    - Schools and school districts at 1:00 PM EST
    - Libraries and library systems at 2:30 PM EST
    - Consortia at 4:00 PM EST
- **How to Complete Category 1 Funding Requests on FCC Form 471** –Tuesday, March 1 and Thursday, March 3 at 1:00 PM EST
- **How to Complete Category 2 Funding Requests on FCC Form 471** – Tuesday, March 1 and Thursday, March 3 at 2:30 PM EST
- **How to Understand and Complete the Certifications Section, and Complete FCC Form 471** – Tuesday, March 8 and Thursday, March 10 at 1:00 PM EST

Registration for these events will be available in the "Upcoming Events" section on the SL Trainings & Outreach page. Note that each webinar for all FCC Form 471 filers will occur twice – please register for only one session.

File Along with Me

File Along with Me is USAC's new blog that will take readers through the application filing window from beginning to end at a steady pace. If you follow along, read the blog, and take the actions described in each posting, by the close of the window you should end up with a certified FCC Form 471.

There will also be a **File Along with Me** archive so that you can catch up if you miss a post.

File Along with Me will start shortly and appear several times a week at least through the close of the window. We will provide subscription information and more detail in the SL News Brief this Friday, with an update every Friday on the material covered during that week.

FINAL NOTE: The same guidance appears in all of the paths described above. You can choose to follow a single path, or access specific guidance as you need it. You do not have to feel that you must read every document and watch every webinar to be able to successfully file your application.

For example:

- If you have applied in the past and feel comfortable with EPC, you could choose to refer to the FCC Form 471 quick filing guide for your applicant type and the detailed FCC Form 471 filing guide to get the information you need to complete your application.
- If you have applied in the past but are still learning about EPC, you could watch the three webinars about the FCC Form 471 filing process, and refer to a particular FCC Form 471 user

guide if you have a specific question.
- If you are completely new to the application process, you could watch the three beginner webinars and subscribe to **File Along with Me**.

In each of the above situations, you would have or be introduced to all of the information you need to complete the application process.