

SCHOOLS AND LIBRARIES PROGRAM

NEWS BRIEF

June 3, 2016

TIP OF THE WEEK: We encourage libraries and consortia to start filing their FCC Forms 471 now if they have all the necessary information and if their profiles are in order.

Libraries that are not in the correct status (e.g., library system instead of library) and libraries and consortia that still have issues with calculating their discounts should open customer service cases in EPC now so that USAC can help them well in advance of the close of their filing window.

First FY2016 Application Filing Window Closes Successfully

The first application filing window for Funding Year (FY) 2016 closed May 26. Over 42,700 applications were received for nearly \$3.2 billion in funding requests. Thanks to all of you who worked through the first year of EPC challenges together with us and successfully submitted applications. The next filing window for libraries and consortia will close July 21. Meanwhile, we are reviewing applications and the first wave of decisions will be issued in the near future.

Summary of the FCDL Process in EPC

USAC will soon start issuing funding commitments for FY2016 applications. We would like to provide applicants and service providers with a high-level summary of the process so that they know what to expect and where to look for information. Additional information about this process, including a video, will be available on the USAC website in the near future.

Waves are generally issued once a week for current funding years. A wave contains Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs) for all FCC Forms 471 for which USAC is ready to issue a funding decision since the last wave. Both applicants and service providers are notified of the decisions.

What is changing?

FCDLs will now be issued in the E-rate Productivity Center (EPC). The FCDLs will show up in the **Notifications** section of your landing page and in the **News** feed for both applicants who have a commitment in the wave and for service providers whose Service Provider Identification Numbers (SPINs, also called "service provider 498 IDs") are featured on those commitments.

- **Applicants** are notified weekly of each wave, shortly after the wave runs. The contact person listed on the FCC Form 471 will receive an email notifying him or her that an FCDL has been issued for a specific application. If you filed multiple FCC Forms 471 and more than one is included in the same wave, the contact person will receive an email for each form.
- **Service providers** are notified weekly as well. The General Contact for the service provider will receive an email telling him or her that one or more FRNs appear in the FCDLs in the wave. If a service provider has more than one SPIN and USAC issues funding decisions for more than one of the SPINs, the General Contact will receive an email notification for each SPIN that appears in the wave.

To view the FCDL, the contact person clicks the link in the email to log in to EPC and go to the landing page. In the new **Notifications** section of the organization's landing page, choose the notification type "FCDL" and funding year "2016," then click "Generate Notification" in the right-column of the FCDL you would like to view. The text will change to "View Notification." At this point, any user can click "View

Notification" to be taken to the FCDL in the organization's **News** tab.

- **Applicants** will see the short text of the applicant version of the FCDL and three attachments at the bottom:
 - An FCDL supplement that contains related program information – for example, how to appeal a funding decision and the obligation to pay the non-discount portion of the cost of the services. The identical document will be attached to all FCDLs for FY2016.
 - A link to a *.CSV file, which contains a simple table of the data about the commitment – the approved discount rate, whether or not the FRN was approved, the FCDL comment, and so on – that in the past would have been in the funding commitment report in the paper version of the FCDL. This table will have one FRN per row and will include all FRNs that were listed on the FCC Form 471. This file can be opened with any spreadsheet program.
 - A link to the FCC Form 471.
- **Service providers** will see the short text of the service provider version of the FCDL and three attachments at the bottom:
 - An FCDL supplement that contains related program information such as how to appeal a funding decision and the applicant obligation to pay the non-discount portion of the cost of the services. The identical PDF document will be attached to all FCDLs for FY2016.
 - A link to a *.CSV file, which contains a simple table of the data about the commitment – the approved discount rate, whether or not the FRN was approved, the FCDL comment, and so on – that in the past would have been in the funding commitment report in the paper version of the FCDL. This table will have one FRN per row and will include all FRNs in the wave that featured the service provider's SPIN. This file can be opened with any spreadsheet program.
 - An *.FSP file, which in the past would have been emailed to a service provider who had requested electronic notifications. Service providers who have designed their systems to receive and process these files can load this version into their current system. You can find a [list of the fields in the *.FSP file](#) on the [Electronic Notifications](#) page of the USAC website. This file is meant to be machine-readable – that is, it does not contain any header rows or formatting.

What is not changing?

USAC continues to run occasional funding waves and appeal waves (waves of funding decisions on appeals) for FY2015 and previous funding years. The process for funding years before FY2016 has not changed.

- Applicants will continue to get paper letters.
- Service providers will continue to get paper letters, electronic notifications, or both depending on what they have requested.

How will the search tools work?

USAC is working on a set of public search tools (that is, tools available outside of EPC) that will feature information on funding waves and related data. We expect the first of these tools to be available in about a month. For the short term, USAC will post an Excel file of FY2016 funding data and some related information on the USAC website. This temporary file will be available from a link in the "Funding Tools" section of the [Search Tools](#) page until the new search tools are available.

The existing search tools that contain funding information – specifically, the [Search Commitments](#) tool, the [Data Retrieval Tool](#), and the current views of FCC Forms 471 for [FY2015](#) and [FY2014 and previous funding years](#) – will continue to be updated as waves, appeal waves, and other program activities occur for those funding years. However, they will not contain FY2016 information.

Processing of FCC Forms 498 Filed by Applicants

Applicants have been able to [file FCC Forms 498](#) for about six months. Applicants must file – and USAC must approve – this form in order to make direct payments to applicants who file an FCC Form 472, Billed Entity Applicant Reimbursement Form. The direct BEAR payment process will start on July 1, 2016 and will apply to BEAR Forms filed for all funding years.

USAC has received permission to start the outreach necessary to complete the approval process for FCC Form 498. As applicants file these forms, USAC will reach out to request confirmation of some of the details on the form – specifically, the automated banking information. Applicants will be asked to

provide a canceled check, bank statement, or other verification that the bank account is not a personal bank account and actually belongs to the entity filing the form.

Now that we are able to start processing these forms, the approval process should only take about a week if the applicant has the necessary information on hand and can respond quickly. If you have filed or will soon file this form, please send the requested documentation back to USAC promptly so that your form can be approved.

Last Week in "File Along with Me":

"File Along with Me" is a blog that covers the E-rate Program application process step-by-step, and serves as a schedule you can follow to manage your application. Ready to join us? [Read the Blog](#)

Commitments for Funding Year 2015

Funding Year 2015. USAC will release Funding Year (FY) 2015 Wave 53 on June 9. This wave includes commitments for approved requests for all service types and at all discount levels. As of June 3, FY2015 commitments total over \$3.29 billion.

On the day the FCDLs are mailed, you can check to see if you have a commitment by using USAC's [Automated Search of Commitments](#) tool.

To subscribe, click here: [Subscribe](#).

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