SCHOOLS AND LIBRARIES PROGRAM

NEWS BRIEF

September 9, 2016

> **TIP OF THE WEEK: On an FCC Form 498 filed by an applicant, the Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN) or Tax ID must match the FEIN or Tax ID number that was provided when the applicant applied for its FCC Registration Number (FCC RN) on the CORES system.** USAC checks the information provided on the FCC Form 498 against the information in the CORES database, and cannot process an FCC Form 498 where this information is different.

Commitments for Funding Year 2016

Funding Year 2016. USAC will release Funding Year (FY) 2016 Wave 12 Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs) on September 9. This wave includes commitments for approved applications for all service types and at all discount levels. As of September 9, FY2016 commitments total over $440.5 million.

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

Summer Contact Procedure Ends Today

During the summer contact period (May 27 through September 9, 2016, which is the Friday before Memorial Day through the Friday after Labor Day), we put the Program Integrity Assurance (PIA) review process outlined below on hold if we were unable to make contact with the applicant.

Starting today, we will be reaching out on applications that have been on hold during the summer contact period, and also on applications that are entering the review process for the first time

In order to make a commitment decision on an FCC Form 471, PIA reviews the form and may have questions for the applicant or need additional information. Please respond promptly to PIA requests, and make sure you have provided complete responses to all of the questions.

In general, PIA follows the process below:

- PIA posts its questions in the applicant's organization account in EPC, notifies the applicant that the questions are available, and asks for a response within 15 days.
- After seven days, if there is no response or an incomplete response is received, PIA sends a reminder and also notifies the appropriate state E-rate coordinator.
- The applicant can request an extension of the response deadline. A seven-day extension is granted automatically; additional extensions may or may not be granted depending on the circumstances presented by the applicant.
- If the deadline or extended deadline has passed without a sufficient response, USAC may make a commitment decision based on the information available.

Filing an Appeal in EPC

Applicants and service providers who want to appeal a USAC decision for FY2016 can now file their appeals in EPC. We encourage filing appeals in EPC so that the submissions are automatically

categorized as appeals and can be easily located.

Appeals can be filed in EPC for funding request numbers (FRNs) featured on FCC Forms 471 that have been through the commitment process. The appeal procedure described below applies to both applicants and service providers.

- An applicant can file an appeal on FRNs from one or more forms certified by the applicant.
- A service provider can file an appeal on FRNs that feature its Service Provider Identification Number or SPIN (also known as a 498 ID).

Here are the steps for filing an appeal in EPC:

1. Log in to your EPC account.
2. If you have an FCC Form 471 that has been through the commitment process that either you filed (applicant) or that features your SPIN (service provider), you will see a link labeled "Appeal" in the links at the top of your landing page. Click that link.
3. On the "Create Appeal" page, create a nickname for your appeal, select the funding year, and identify the contact person USAC should contact with questions. (The contact person must have user rights on your organization's account.) Then click the "Continue" button.
4. On the **Select FRNs** page, you will see a list of funding request numbers (FRNs) for the funding year you selected. If you have a large number of FRNs, you can use the search criteria in the **Filters** section of the page to limit the FRNs displayed on your list. Check the box next to the FRN(s) you want to appeal.
5. Click the "Add (x) FRNs" button to add those FRNs to your appeal, then review the results. If necessary, you can check the boxes next to FRNs and use the "Add" and "Remove" buttons as appropriate to add or remove FRNs. When you are finished, click the "Continue" button.
6. On the "Enter Appeal Details" page, choose the type of adverse decision you want to appeal. Note that you can only make one choice from the dropdown. If you are appealing more than one type of decision, select the most appropriate option.
7. Provide a narrative that describes the specific reason(s) you are appealing USAC's decision. If you are appealing more than one type of decision, be sure to reference all the decisions and provide appropriate descriptions. You can also upload one or more documents using the **Upload Documents** section of the page.
8. If you would like to review your appeal before you submit it, click the "Back" button to view your work. When you are ready to submit your appeal, navigate to the "Enter Appeal Details" page and click the green "Submit" button.

After you have submitted your appeal, you can review it by clicking the link provided on the resulting screen. You can also go to the **Records** tab and choose "Appeals" from the list of options.

If you find that you need to add a document or provide more information on your appeal after it has been submitted:

- Go to the **Records** tab, choose "Appeals" from the list of options, and click the appropriate appeal.
- Click "Related Actions" from the left-hand menu, then click "Add Documents and Comment."
  - To upload a document, click the "Choose File" button under the **New Document** header.
  - To add a comment, you can type up to 2,000 characters in the "Comments" text box.
- You can also review the documents you have uploaded and the comments you have made by clicking "Supporting Documents & Comments" in the left-hand menu.

Filing appeals for previous funding years

If you are appealing a decision from FY2015 or an earlier funding year, we strongly suggest that you submit your appeal using Submit a Question. While we will make every effort to locate appeals filed by other means, we want to make sure that we do not miss your appeal, especially if it is not specifically labeled as an appeal.

To file an appeal for FY2015 or an earlier funding year:

1. Click Submit a Question from the left-hand menu of any Schools and Libraries web page.
2. Click the "Continue" button.
3. From the **Topic Inquiry** menu, choose "Appeals for FY2015 and Prior Years" (notice that this text has changed) and click the "GO" button below.
4. Choose "I want to file an appeal" then click the "Continue" button.

5. Provide the information requested. If you cannot enter all of the information for your appeal in a text box, we suggest that you indicate that you will be including an attachment.
6. Enter any other information required, and pay special attention to the instructions regarding attachments. Then submit your appeal.

Filing requests to waive FCC rules

If you are requesting a waiver of an FCC regulation or program rule – for example, if you certified your FCC Form 471 after the application filing window closed or you requested an invoice deadline extension after the last date to request an extension – you must file a request for waiver with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Do not file waiver requests with USAC.

For guidance on submitting waiver requests with the FCC, you can refer to the July 29 SL News Brief.

Search Commitments Tools Combined

USAC has combined the two Search Commitments tools into a single interface based on the FY2016 tool. Users can now access commitment information for all funding years from one location.

To start, click the Search Commitments tool link on the Search Tools page. At the top of the page, you will see links to FY2016 and to previous funding years. Click the appropriate link.

We have made several improvements in the search results for previous funding years:

- The calculations featured in the National Statistics section for each funding year now represent the actual amounts committed. However, please note the following:
  - FRNs that have been through the funding commitment process will feature the current amount committed – that is, they will reflect changes in the committed amount due to appeals, COMADs, and other program changes.
  - FRNs that have not been through the commitment process will not appear. For example, if an FRN was split during the funding year due to a SPIN change, the original FRN and the amount featured on the original FRN will appear, but the newly created FRN and the amount featured on the new FRN (which does not have an original wave number) will not.
- Commitments will show the day after a wave is run, not the day the letters are issued, for all funding years. Generally, commitments for FY2015 and prior funding years will appear four business days before the day the paper letters are issued.
- Some additional information, such as Congressional district, is also available.

Note on Congressional districts for FY2016 searches: If the state is an at-large state – i.e., the entire state is one Congressional district – the Congressional district field will be blank.

Last Week in "File Along with Me":

- CIPA compliance. Read More

"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