

SCHOOLS AND LIBRARIES PROGRAM

NEWS BRIEF

September 30, 2016

TIP OF THE WEEK: Applicants may encounter a warning message before or immediately after they submit a BEAR Form (e.g., the service provider has not yet filed a SPAC Form). **Applicants receiving this warning should proceed and submit their invoice.** USAC will consider an invoice submitted on the day it is filed, whether an applicant receives a warning message or not.

Commitments for Funding Years 2016 and 2015

Funding Year 2016. USAC is scheduled to release Funding Year (FY) 2016 Wave 15 Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs) on October 3. This wave includes commitments for approved applications for all service types and at all discount levels. As of September 30, FY2016 commitments total over \$612.2 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).

Funding Year 2015. USAC will release FY2015 Wave 65 FCDLs on October 6. This wave includes commitments for approved requests for all service types and at all discount levels. As of September 30, FY2015 commitments total over \$3.31 billion.

The day after the wave runs, you can check to see if you have a commitment by using USAC's [Automated Search of Commitments](#) tool. FCDLs for FY2015 will continue to be printed and mailed to applicants and service providers, and emailed to service providers who have signed up to receive electronic notifications.

FCC Form 498 Status Tool Available

Applicants file and certify FCC Form 498 online to provide banking information to USAC in order for USAC to make direct payments to those applicants. After the form is certified by a company officer, the applicant will receive a "498 ID," but the process is not complete. The applicant will need to submit banking documentation (a voided check or account statement) so that USAC can verify the banking information. Applicants can upload their documentation through our [secure website](#). Once USAC reviews and approves the FCC Form 498, the applicant can start submitting invoices to USAC.

- FCC Form 498 must be approved by and on file with USAC before USAC can make direct reimbursements to applicants who file FCC Form 472, Billed Entity Applicant Reimbursement (BEAR) Form.
- Applicants who request discounted bills from their service providers are not required to file this form. (Their service providers will file FCC Form 474, Service Provider Invoice (SPI) Form, to request direct payments for the discount amount of the service.)

Applicants who have certified an FCC Form 498 can now view the status of their form by using the [Search for FCC Form 498 Status tool](#) on the [Search Tools](#) page of the USAC website. This tool provides a complete list of FCC Forms 498 filed by applicants together with the status of each form. Note that if you identified any associated entity numbers in Block 14, there will be an entry in the tool for each of the associated entity numbers, all under the same 498 ID.

When you access this tool, the complete list of 498 IDs will take a few seconds to load. If you see a few entries but no scroll bar on the right-hand side of the list, we suggest that you switch to a different Internet browser.

The list is sorted by 498 ID. However, you can use the "Find" function on your browser (generally Ctrl+F) to search for your Billed Entity Number (BEN). The "Find" command will search the entire list and should highlight all of the entries that include the string of numbers you entered. This function will be particularly helpful if your BEN has certified more than one FCC Form 498 (see below).

The list of 498 IDs includes three statuses:

- **Certified:** The school or library official has certified the form and USAC is reviewing it.
- **Approved:** USAC has successfully reviewed the banking account documentation submitted by the applicant and the 498 ID will now automatically appear on BEAR Forms filed by the applicant.
- **Rejected:** USAC is unable to process the FCC Form 498. Generally this occurs when:
 - information on the FCC Form 498 does not match information on file under the BEN's FCC Registration Number (FCC RN) or
 - the bank account documentation submitted by the applicant is not consistent with the information on the FCC Form 498.

If your form is rejected, USAC will send a detailed email to the general financial contact identifying the specific problem or problem we encountered. The applicant can then address the problem, which generally means:

- correcting the information on the form and/or
- correcting the information on the FCC RN by following the instructions on the [FCC's CORES website](#) and/or
- submitting acceptable documentation to verify the banking account information. You can call us at 888-641-8722, option 5, if you need assistance identifying alternative proof of your banking information (i.e., something other than a canceled or voided check or a bank statement).

If you want to view the entire table, some browsers allow you to copy the entire table and paste it in a spreadsheet program. To do this:

- Right-click in the table and choose "Select All." The entire table should then be highlighted.
- Copy your result (Ctrl+C).
- Open your spreadsheet program and paste the result (Ctrl+V) in the first field. The fields you selected should fill in the first three columns, although you may have to adjust the entries in the header row.

Modifying information on a certified FCC Form 498

Applicants can modify information on an FCC Form 498 after it has been certified. This can occur if USAC rejects the form because of inconsistent information that must be corrected, or because the applicant's situation has changed – e.g., the applicant has moved, changed telephone numbers, or opened a different bank account.

To modify an FCC Form 498, you must have School or Library Official rights or General Financial Contact rights. (Remember that your account administrator assigns rights.) You can then follow these steps:

- Log in to EPC.
- Click the "Records" tab and choose "FCC Forms 498."
- Choose the status "Certified" from the left-hand menu to see a list of certified forms. You can also enter your FCC Form 498 number.
- Locate and choose the form you want to modify.
- Click the "Modify FCC Form 498" button in the upper right-hand corner of the page.
- Go through the modification screens on the form and modify the appropriate information.
- When you are finished, you can certify your form if you are the School or Library Official or send it for certification if you are the General Financial Contact. The School or Library Official must certify the form.

USAC will continue to use the information from the original form until the modification has been certified.

- If the modification does not include changes to banking information, USAC can review the form.

- If the modification includes changes to banking information, the applicant must submit acceptable documentation as described above. You can submit this information immediately using our [secure website](#); you do not need to wait for us to send you an email.

After USAC has reviewed and approved the modified form, the modified information will take effect and USAC can again process invoices.

Note to entities who have changed status from the legacy system to EPC

Some entities changed status when USAC moved their organizations to the E-rate Productivity Center (EPC). For example, a school district may have used the entity number of its administrative building to file its program forms, or a library branch may have used the entity number of one of its branches. In EPC, only billed entities can file FCC Form 498, so these entities will not be able to file FCC Form 498, even if they are the entity identified in Block 1 of applications for FY2015 and previous funding years.

First, note the following:

- Only a billed entity in EPC (independent school, independent library, school district, library system, consortium) can file an applicant FCC Form 498.
- Only one bank account can be featured on an FCC Form 498.
- A billed entity can file more than one FCC Form 498.
- Other entities (including individual schools, library branches, and non-instructional facilities) can be listed on an FCC Form 498 as associated entities. These entities can file BEAR Forms with the billed entity's 498 ID, and the reimbursement will go directly into the bank account featured on the billed entity's FCC Form 498.

If you have one or more entities that have changed status because of the move to EPC but that need to file BEAR Forms for FY2015 and previous funding years, you should determine which entity is the appropriate billed entity to file the FCC Form 498 for the entity or entities that are not able to file this form. USAC will still need to verify that the FCC Registration Number, Federal Employer Identification Number, and other identifying information for the billed entity is correct – and that the funding will go in the correct bank account – but by following this guidance, entities who cannot file program forms in EPC will be able to complete their invoices for previous funding years.

Again, if you have any difficulty with this process, you can call us at 888-641-8722, option 5, to get more detailed guidance.

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](#)

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